



# Key Asks for... England



In England 69% of land is used for agricultural purposes.<sup>126</sup> 55% of this land is used to cultivate arable crops - primarily cereals like wheat and barley - with 41% as permanent grassland, typically used for rearing livestock.<sup>127</sup> Many farmers in England are already practising nature friendly techniques to enhance biodiversity and achieve greater resilience; however, the agricultural policy landscape in England is uncertain and ever-shifting, which is making it challenging for farmers to know what to expect. To facilitate a transition to a nature friendly food system, the government in England needs to undertake the following actions:

**Lead with holistic, pro-nature food strategy.** Despite having laid out a Food Strategy in 2022. There is not a strong enough link between England's Food Strategy and the Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs). Neither ELMs nor the Food Strategy go far enough. We call for a Food Bill that seeks to bring together England's food and agricultural sectors to promote a nature friendly food system – aligned with the country's net zero and biodiversity goals.

**Support a just transition to payments that support nature friendly farming.** The transition away from CAP-style payments toward 'public

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money for public goods' via Environmental Land Management is crucial in locking in a transition to a more resilient farming sector. The three-scheme structure must be maintained with one

scheme to address widespread environmental objectives, another to deliver spatially targeted environmental land management, and a third which helps build landscape resilience at scale. Funding must reflect the scale of the challenge.

**Develop land use strategies for food and environment.** Land use frameworks can help mitigate trade-offs and maximise co-benefits agriculture and conservation. Currently England has no process to prioritise and weigh up competing pressures on land. DEFRA needs to develop a Land Use Framework for England based on a three-compartment model to guide decision making and ensure that food production and land use help us meet the country's climate and biodiversity goals.<sup>128</sup>

**Fund farmer peer-to-peer learning.** In England there isn't currently specific government investment into knowledge sharing. We ask England to follow the Scottish model and facilitate knowledge exchange to support the transition to a nature friendly food system.

**Facilitate collaboration to drive sustainable dietary change.** We can only expect so much change to come from individual behaviour shifts and changing retailer sourcing practices. Government intervention and legislation is required to drive sustainable dietary change. We call on the English government to support the transition to a lower-impact sustainable diets across the country.

*"Many farmers are demonstrating how ambitious action for nature and climate is key to building resilient, profitable farm businesses that deliver sustainable food production, growth, and rural prosperity. Government must reaffirm their commitment to policies that unlock this potential, from how land is managed, to wider changes across our food system."*

Lottie Alves Sustainable Farming Lead for England