



Why Nature is Good for Business

Nature is good for business and essential for our future. There is increasing recognition in financial investment and business communities that environmental production practices are essential for robust supply chains – in short, to ensure we have food on the table. The Nature Friendly Farmers Network believes that the farming industry has a moral responsibility to address the damage caused to the natural world by agriculture, and that only by adopting sustainable nature friendly practices can future productive capacity be secured.

Nature friendly farming is an umbrella term to describe farming systems and practices that enhance and protect biodiversity and contribute to tackling climate change alongside food production. Nature friendly farming is not only better for nature but also ensures that our land remains productive, ensuring we can go on producing food forever. Regenerating our soils, improving our air and water quality, and protecting the UK from flooding are essential for a sustainable and profitable farming sector and healthy society.

Many farmers are already playing an incredible role in helping wildlife flourish on their farms – we believe that they should be better supported and rewarded by the market for their good work.

Ecosystem resilience is economic resilience

A healthy farmland ecosystem means a healthy bottom line.

- **Restoring soils** to fertility is vital for food production as well as nature and climate: without healthy productive soils, our food system will fail and with it many businesses.
- **Thriving populations of pollinators** and beneficial insects mean that crops are more productive and natural pest management is at its most effective.
- **Natural flood management** is essential to mitigate economic shocks to the food system and wider economy – good management of our uplands and watercourses by restoring natural processes means our landscapes can soak up and slow down the flow of water.
- **Functioning watercourses, wetlands and floodplains** also provide drought resilience, allowing the landscape to naturally store water essential for nature and food production in dry periods.
- **Disease resilience** is also a benefit of nature friendly farming – extensive, low density livestock who spend time roaming are healthier are less likely to spread disease compared to tightly packed factory systems.

Business benefits of nature friendly systems

In addition to the resilience and decreased risk outlined above farm businesses can benefit economically by adopting more nature friendly production practices. For example:

- **Better business planning** can reduce costs and boost nature and sustainability. A recent report found that reducing stocking levels on upland farms in line with the carrying capacity

of the land can reduce overheads and allowing the business to take advantage of agri-environment funds resulting in an overall increased profitability.¹

- **Diverse income streams** – nature friendly farms can offer more products to consumers, through a diverse farmed landscape e.g. agroforestry products, legumes, and ecotourism experiences.
- **Premium, in-demand products** – consumers are rapidly becoming aware of the climate and environmental impacts of the foods they buy. Demand for local, nature friendly products that consumers have confidence in will only increase.

Corporate social and environmental responsibility (CSER)

In response to the recognition of supply chain and reputational risk associated with poor practice in relation to the nature and climate emergencies, businesses are increasingly seeking ways to manage these risks and demonstrate good practice. This can be seen by the rapid uptake of Fairtrade products, growing base of '[B Corps](#)', and other schemes such as Marks and Spencer's [Plan A](#).

Through robust certification and labelling schemes, the provision of reliably nature friendly produce can reassure consumers of high environmental standards, creating a loyal consumer base. These labels will foster trust and support resilient brands, consequently enabling profitable economic models into the future.

Membership of such schemes can provide a business advantage for producers, but this relies on eliminating unsustainable practices which may undercut them.

What are we recommending?

NFFN welcome the increased recognition of farmers' role in tackling the ecological and climate crises. We ask the government to acknowledge the vital role that nature friendly farming has in a sustainable economy by:

- Ensuring that there are **sufficient funds** to support farmers in their transition to nature friendly systems and continuing to reward public goods production.
- Guaranteeing **long-term funding** and rewarding practices which go **beyond the regulatory baseline**.
- Enforcing **regulatory baselines** to ensure responsible producers are not undermined by rogue operators.
- Ensuring that farmers are fairly rewarded via the market by **eliminating abusive practices** in the supply chain and **mandating CSER requirements** to support producers.

¹ Hill Farm Profitability Report (2019) <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/new-report-shows-nature-friendly-hill-farms-can-be-more-profitable>