A PEOPLE'S FOOD POLICY

Transforming our food system

A People's Food Policy
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info@peoplesfoodpolicy.co.uk
www.peoplesfoodpolicy.org

Written and researched by:

Dee Butterly (Land Workers' Alliance/Southern Roots Organics CSA)
Dr. Ian Fitzpatrick (Freelance researcher)

With:

Oli Rodker *(Ecological Land Co-operative/Land Workers' Alliance)*
Rebecca Laughton *(Land Workers' Alliance/Tamarisk Farm)*
Colin Anderson *(Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience)*
Heidi Chow *(Global Justice Now)*
Lauren Simpson *(Ecological Land Co-operative)*
Andy Goldring *(Permaculture Association)*

Chapters co-edited by:

Joy Carey (Bristol Food Policy Council), **Angela Raffle** *(Bristol Food Policy Council)*, **Trinley Walker** *(Campaign to Protect Rural England)*, **Graeme Willis** *(Campaign to Protect Rural England)*, **Dee Woods** *(Community Food Growers Network/Granville Community Kitchen)*, **Josh Brem-Wilson** *(Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience)*, **Corinna Hawkes** *(City University,Centre for Food Policy)*, **Chris Smaje** *(Ecological Land Co-operative/Vallis Veg Farm)*, **Patrick Mulvany** *(Food Ethics Council)*, **Geoff Tansey** (Food Systems Academy), **Ruth Hayward** (Freelance researcher), **Guy Shrubsole** (Who Owns England), **Jean Blaylock** *(Global Justice Now)*, **Lynne Davis** *(Land Workers' Alliance/Open Food Network)*, **Jyoti Fernandes** *(Land Workers' Alliance/Five Penny Farm)*, **Adam Payne** *(Land Workers' Alliance/Southern Roots Organics CSA)*, **Stephen Devlin** *(New Economics Foundation)*, **Duncan McCann** *(New Economics Foundation)*, **Harry Greenfield** *(RSPB)*, **Tom Kenny** *(Shared Assets)*, **Toby Lloyd** *(Shelter)*, **Rachel Harries** *(Soil Association)*, **Tom MacMillan** *(Soil Association)*, **Vicki Hird** *(Sustain)*, **Simon Shaw** *(Sustain)*, **Tom Wills** *(Traidcraft)*, **Saranel Benjamin** *(War on Want)*

Copy-edited by:
Cate Chapman
www.skylarkediting.com

Designed by:
Angus Macpherson
www.angus-macpherson.co.uk

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In order to move forward and put into action the solutions for changing our food system, we need to work together. Over 150 food and farming initiatives, community groups, grassroots organisations, unions and NGOs have contributed to the analysis, ideas and proposals in A People's Food Policy. However, the scope of this document is wide and the input and/or support of an organisation and/or person does not necessarily imply endorsement of everything covered.

FOREWORD

BY OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER

There are four reasons why England needs A People's Food Policy, and why the presentation of this blueprint is an important and welcome step in this direction.

The first reason is the most obvious: how we produce food and the way we eat is influenced by a range of policies. Policies range from decisions about farming subsidies to land zoning ordinances; from educational campaigns about healthy eating to choices made by school canteens; from trade policies and marketing strategies of the food industry to health claims labelled on food products; and from income support schemes to work-life balance policies. These various policies fall under the remit of different government departments, including agriculture, health, education and trade. Some of these policies are decided at Westminster and cover England and Wales; others are decided at region or city, county, district or ward levels.

This dispersion could be seen as an asset, as it may support a form of experimentalist politics in which different authorities launch policies that – whether they are deemed successes or failures – others may learn from. However, the lack of coordination across sectors and across levels of government reinforces the tendency for the policies in place to be heavily path-dependent: far from providing freedom to experiment, **this lack of coordination discourages experimentation as the mainstream system remains inert and – in the absence of a single food policy – obstructs change, or at least fails to support it.**

Experimentation in food systems requires an enabling environment. But authorities and social actors currently seeking to try out new approaches are largely blocked by an environment which they cannot influence and which remain trapped in logics that have largely passed their sell-by date.

We come thus to the second reason why a food policy is required. Since the 1950s, our food systems have been focused on increasing productivity per area of land. We've been obsessed with supplying large volumes of food so as to ensure that food is affordable for all, including low-income families. Farmers were gradually encouraged to become providers of cheap raw materials for the food processing industry, and consumers' needs were considered to be satisfied by the dumping of cheap calories on the shelves of supermarkets. The keywords were efficiency, economies of scale, low-cost, and quantity.

Now, since the turn of the century, a different set of priorities have emerged. Resilience in the face of weather or economic shocks, rather than efficiency alone, has emerged as a major concern. Rather than economies of scale and rewarding bigness, supporting smaller farms and thus stemming the process of land concentration appears essential in achieving thriving rural areas and the preservation of the ecosystem. Quality and nutrition, and not simply quantity and a sufficient amount of calories, are increasingly underlined.

These revisions did not come about by chance. They are a 'counter-movement', resulting from a growing awareness of the current challenges created by the productivist approaches of the past. With an average of 84 hectares per farm and one fifth of the total number of farms using almost three quarters of the utilised agricultural area, the United Kingdom has one of the highest rates of land concentration in Europe. Almost a quarter of the adult population in Britain is obese. This figure has risen by almost 10% over the past twenty years, and is leading to a rise of obesity-related non-communicable diseases, especially type 2 diabetes and heart disease. Low-income families, especially women, are the most affected: the low-cost food economy, which was meant to support these families' access to food, is in fact making them sick.

The shift required is from efficiency to resilience, from supporting bigness and economies of scale to rescuing small farms from disappearance, and from quantity (of calories) to quality (of nutrition). For such a shift to occur however, the natural inertia of the mainstream food system must be overcome. This system is not made of one single piece. Rather, it should be seen as composed of a number of elements that have co-evolved over the years, so as to become mutually reinforcing. Technological choices, subsidies and taxation, investments in infrastructure and the regulatory framework are all converging to maintain the system currently in place.

These components are aligned with hurried lifestyles that prioritise convenience, and as such play a large role in explaining the success of processed and ultra-processed foods. Therefore, amending one part of the system (taxing junk foods, say, or tinkering with the subsidies scheme to support small farms) will do little to change the system as a whole. Any such reform would be easily absorbed and the mainstream system would simply perpetuate itself, adapting to the evolving expectations. **Only a coordinated policy, bringing about changes in all of these different components, can have a systematic impact.**

We need a food policy for a third reason: to escape the tyranny of the short term. After all, the main claim for legitimacy of the mainstream food system, which we have inherited from the policies pursued during the past 60 years, is that it works: it delivers, all year long, a cornucopia of food items to the population, at a reasonable price for most. It has met enormous logistical challenges and, for politicians of all stripes, it has served a very convenient purpose: cheap food, in practice, has functioned as a substitute for more ambitious (but potentially divisive) redistributive social programmes that would have allowed all families to afford higher-quality foods and benefit from more adequate diets.

All this means that we're trapped in short-term considerations. Can we move away from the low-cost food economy without hurting the poorest families, who can only afford the low-quality foods that discount grocery stores provide? Can we impose further environmental constraints on farmers without reducing levels of production and thus increasing the dependency on imports? **Only by opting for a multi-year strategy, defining clear timelines, and allocating responsibilities across different branches of government, can we move towards a different vision. This requires pathway thinking. Not just an end vision, but also a sense of how to get there. We need backcasting, metrics to measure progress, policy tools to coordinate changes at different levels and in different sectoral areas: a food policy.**

Finally, there is a fourth reason why we need a food policy: because it can be a people's food policy. Policy choices in the past have largely been based on what political scientists once called a 'garbage can' logic: problems have been framed depending on which solutions were at hand, and unless such ready-made solutions were available, they were conveniently ignored. That such 'solutions' came, in general, from the agrifood industry does much to explain the dominance of industry actors in the political system; the other part of the explanation, of course, is the sheer power of their lobbying efforts. In the process however, long-term concerns for the health of the soils and of the people risk being neglected.

We must reclaim control of food systems: food democracy is both an end in itself, a way to deepen democracy beyond the ritual of elections, and a means to ensure that the general interest is no longer sacrificed on the altar of narrowly defined economic interests.

I welcome the presentation of A People's Food Policy for England. I know it will inspire many others in Europe. In time, this vision shall become reality. As Victor Hugo once wrote: '*There is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come*'.

BY OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER
Former United Natiaons Special Rapporteur on the right to food (2008 - 2014)
Co-Chair, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)

SECTION A WORKING TOWARDS A PEOPLE'S FOOD POLICY

Credit: The Kindling Trust's Citizen Army, Manchester © The Kindling Trust

1. Our vision

We have a vision of a food system where:

There is strong democratic control and participatory governance over our food system. Food and farming policy-making includes the active participation of a vibrant and politically engaged civil society.

Sustainable farming, fishing and horticulture provide healthy food for all, while enhancing the environment, strengthening communities and supporting good livelihoods for farmers, food workers and fisherfolk.

Everybody, regardless of income, status or background, has secure access to enough good food at all times, without compromising on the wellbeing of people, the health of the environment and the ability of future generations to provide for themselves.

Land is recognised and valued as an essential resource for food and shelter and the basis for numerous social, cultural and spiritual practices. Land is no longer treated and traded as a commodity; instead, it is understood as a common good of the people.

We enjoy a healthy and thriving food system that supports the wellbeing, social welfare and economic stability of people working in it. Everybody earns a living wage and works in a safe environment, free from all forms of exploitation, discrimination and racism.

Resilience is at the heart of farming, fishing, processing and distribution. Our food systems works within the finite limits of our earth, protect and regenerate natural resources and communities, build soil, cool our planet and preserve our rich inheritance of agricultural biodiversity.

People's values and perceptions have shifted to support a more democratic and diverse food system by building stronger links between farms, food workers, schools, adult education programmes and communities. This system provides for the intellectual and cultural needs of everyone, as well as their nutrition.

Food is still traded internationally but is not treated simply as a commodity ripe for speculation.

There are a diverse range of places where food can be purchased including farmers' markets, community supported agriculture schemes, online distribution networks, and independent and community retail outlets. These markets provide nutritious, delicious and affordable food for everyone.

Justice, sustainability and resilience have been prioritised by the government, as an investment in the wellbeing and prosperity of our future generations. This is a food system which guarantees everybody's right to food, that protects and regenerates our land, rivers and seas, and pays people fairly for the work they do.

2. Why we need A People's Food Policy

We have created *A People's Food Policy* because the current food system does not reflect our vision. Our vision is rooted in the desire for change shared by so many people in this country. A vision where farmers are able to work the land and produce nutritious food that everybody has access to and is able to eat. A vision where we are at the heart of decision-making that affects our lives and our food system.

And yet we are experiencing a deeply unjust struggle in our food system every day, characterised by inequality and exploitation at all levels.

We currently have a food system where:

There is no place at the table for civil society and agricultural workers to participate in policy-making and develop democratic food governance.

An estimated over eight million people across England, Wales and Northern Ireland experience food insecurity and struggle to eat even one meal a day.[1]

64% of farmers earn less than £10,000 a year,[2] eight supermarkets control almost 95% of the food retail market,[3] and farmers receive less than 10% of the value of their produce sold in supermarkets.[4]

Working in the food and farming sector is characterised by insecure, precarious and unpredictable labour conditions.

There is hardly any support available for new entrant farmers or funding for farmers producing food on less than five hectares (twelve acres) of land,[5] and over 33,000 small to medium farms have been closed down or consolidated into larger holdings between 2005 and 2015.[6]

We have one of the highest levels of concentrated land ownership in the world,[7] industrial agriculture continues to produce a tenth of all greenhouse gases (GHG) in England, and food production is reliant on unsustainable inputs of fossil fuels and chemicals that threaten our ability to produce in the future.[8]

And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Despite this, there is a growing grassroots movement working to change the situation. The voice of the corporate food industry has held a virtual monopoly in how food policy is shaped. It is clear that the worldview they hold is incompatible with a food policy that puts people and the planet at its centre. Together, all of us with a stake in the food system – anyone who grows, prepares, distributes or eats food - have the answers. Many of the solutions we need are already being sown through our everyday actions, but to make our vision a reality we also need the support of policy makers and government.

We do not currently have a national food and farming plan, policy or legislative framework[i] that integrates the compartmentalised policy realms of food production, health, labour rights, land use and planning, trade, the environment, democratic participation and community wellbeing. This lack of integration is having long-term and negative impacts on each of these sectors.

To see real and significant shifts in the way our food system operates, we need to drastically change the way that food governance takes place. *A People's' Food Policy* aims to map out what an integrated food policy would look like if people were put at the heart of decision-making. A growing group of people from different civil society organisations, unions and community groups working across the food system have come together to develop the ideas and positions in this document.

The Brexit vote can be interpreted in part as people wanting to reclaim a voice in decision-making from distant policy makers. The government must not perpetuate the same dynamic. Policy makers now need to incorporate the views and needs of civil society and grassroots organisations into domestic policy, rather than focussing on the interests of the corporate food industry and international free trade agreements.

i While Defra has committed to publishing a 25-year food and farming plan (which has been delayed by the Brexit process), indications show that it will likely take a 'business as usual' market-based approach to food policy.

Credit: Sandy Lane Farm, Oxfordshire © Walter Lewis

Brexit represents an opportunity to create a food policy that is visionary, progressive and guarantees that everyone in this country is able to realise, without restriction, our right to food. Over the coming years, all of our economic and agricultural policies that were previously subject to European Union (EU) law will need to be revisited and rewritten. This is an enormous task and there are calls now from all corners of our food system to develop food policies and governance structures that are coherent, complementary and protect our food system and food cultures.

This document focuses on England, rather than the United Kingdom (UK) as a whole, because Scotland,[9] Wales[10] and Northern Ireland, through their powers of devolved governance, have already taken steps towards shifting how their food systems function and are governed. In Scotland for example, due in part to the highly-organised work of civil society, the devolved governments are beginning to develop policies and practices that shift the food system from a market-based approach to a rights-based approach to food.[ii] There is much to learn from each other, and our hope is that the proposals in this document will cross pollinate with similar ideas and actions currently gaining pace across the UK.[iii]

ii Nourish Scotland in collaboration with other food and farming organiations formed the Scottish Food Coalition. In their report *Plenty* (2016),[9] the coalition calls for (a) the right to food to be enshrined in Scots law (b) a Good Food Nation Act. The Scottish government is now considering both these proposals and recommendations.[12]
iii Where possible in this document we used statistics and data sets that provided information about the state of food and farming in England. When only UK wide data sets were available we used these instead.

Credit: Chagfood Market Garden and Communist Supported Agriculture Scheme, Devon © Walter Lewis

3. Food security, the right to food and food sovereignty

In England, as in many countries, food policy has been substantially shaped by a 'market-driven' approach that has focused on large-scale distribution, economic efficiencies and increasing productivity as the primary guide for food policy-making. This emphasis on the economy has led to a policy-making environment that is largely driven by the interests of multinational corporations and powerful private sector interests.

In contrast, *A People's Food Policy* is based on two complementary frameworks that offer a strategy for changing food policy in England: 'the right to food' and 'food sovereignty'. These two frameworks put the needs of people and planet at the heart of decision-making. They make democratic reform, health, ecological regeneration and social justice the primary aims of food policy.

Food security

Food security comes from an intention to ensure all people have sufficient, nutritious food to eat.

It is defined by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) as, *'A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.'*[11] However, a major problem with food security as a framework is that is does not say *how* food should be secured. It does not mention the conditions of production, trade or consumption. As a result, it has been distorted by governments and multinational corporations to the point that it means almost nothing.

In real life, the situation is significantly more complex and we do not believe that we can have genuine food security without improving the conditions of those producing and distributing food. Systems that are based on exploitation are always more fragile that those that offer justice and dignity.

Food security does not address the critical question of how a country wants to feed itself, but simply sets the intention to have enough food for its people. In the current times of climate change and political instability finding a road map to a genuine food security is essential.

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations (UN) by world leaders from across the globe. The SDGs are universal and all countries are expected to implement them domestically, and to report regularly about their progress both at national and international levels. With SDG No. 2, 'End Hunger', the UK committed to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.[13]

There are numerous ways to be food secure; we believe that food sovereignty and the right to food offer the most convincing and resilient road maps to achieve this.

The right to food

The right to food is a basic human right. This framework sees food as a public good, and one that we should have the means to access at all times. It protects the right of all to live free from hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

The right to food approach rejects charity as a solution to food poverty, which has been a key part of the 'big society' policy approach in the UK. Instead it places the state as a guarantor of people's right to food, obligated to ensure everybody has the capacity to feed themselves at all times.

A rights-based approach to food is one in which everyone has financial and geographical access to adequate, safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food, with dignity and choice now and in the future.

> "The right to food is the right of every individual, alone or in community with others, to have physical and economic access at all times to sufficient, adequate and culturally acceptable food that is produced and consumed sustainably, and preserving access to food for future generations.
>
> Individuals can secure access to food (a) by earning incomes from employment or self-employment; (b) through social transfers; or (c) by producing their own food, for those who have access to land and other productive resources."
>
> **OLIVIER DE SCHUTTER** *former UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food, 2008 - 2014* [14]

In order to guarantee a right to food we need food policies that future-proof the food system based not on the pursuit of profit, but on the needs of people. Food sovereignty is a framework through which we can map out and achieve this right now. While the right to food approach provides a legal mechanism to address problems of food insecurity, food sovereignty provides a broad framework to guide policy-making across the food system.

Food sovereignty

Putting the principles of food sovereignty into practice will enable us to develop food policies in England which facilitate the transition to a just and sustainable food system based on the right to food. Food Sovereignty is defined by La Via Campesina,[15] the largest international union representing millions of farmers around the world, as:

> "The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, process and consume healthy and local food at the heart of our agriculture and food systems, instead of the demands of market and transnational companies [16]"

People around the world are joining hands with other social movements, organisations and communities to develop radical social, economic and political transformations to take back control of the food system. Food sovereignty is a framework that emerged from the grassroots and there is no other food and farming governance framework which provides such a powerful alternative to the current food system. It has taken over twenty years of work, advocacy and campaigning for this framework and its foundations to gain the momentum and recognition they now have at both national and international levels.

There have been some misconceptions and resistance in England towards food sovereignty.

It is not:

- A programme solely for protecting and developing peasant farms in the Global South.
- A vague notion about supporting community farms.
- Synonymous with autarky or national self-sufficiency in food production
- Anything to do with the monarchy!

It is:

- A framework that places producers, distributors, food workers, and those who eat food at the heart of food systems, and advocates for a rights-based, democratic and participatory approach to food policy-making.
- Developed and supported by those worst affected by the current food system, and by the biggest farming and food workers' unions around the world.
- Advocating for policies of: relocalisation of production; agroecology; and sustainable access to, and protection of, natural resources. Food sovereignty makes it possible to develop culturally adapted food systems that prioritise nutrition, health, and the environment.[17]

Credit: European Coordination Via Campesina, Europe

Developing food policies based on the principles of food sovereignty and the right to food is a process that is gaining traction across Europe and globally. Nyeleni Europe, a thriving network of unions across the continent, is building the food sovereignty movement, developing campaigns to re-orientate national and European-wide public policies governing our food and agricultural systems towards a food sovereignty model. Food sovereignty has been referenced in national legislation in Ecuador, Bolivia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Senegal, Uruguay, Venezuela and Mali.[18] Canada[19] and Australia[20] have already completed their own People's Food Policy processes, Scotland is putting together a Good Food Nation Bill[21] and IPES-Food is in the process of developing a Common Food Plan for Europe.[22] The food sovereignty framework and civil society partition in food governance are both increasingly part of mainstream discourse in international institutions such as the UN Committee for World Food Security (CFS) through their Civil Society Mechanism (CSM).[23]

The food sovereignty framework comprises six key principles,[24] which offer a map for what a truly democratic food system looks like. They can be adapted and developed to suit local and national food policy contexts, including here in England. In order to guide the transition to a just and sustainable food system we need to shift from a market-driven approach to a rights-based approach to food. In order for this to happen, the principles of food sovereignty need to be used as critical references points in the negotiations and development of a post-Brexit national food policy.

THE PRINCIPLES OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

(in a UK context)

1. Food is for people

Guaranteeing the right to food will ensure that everybody, regardless of income, status or background, has secure access to enough nutritious, culturally appropriate, good food at all times. Agriculture should focus on producing food to feed people, as opposed to food as a commodity for the global market.

2. Food producers are valued

The people who produce and provide our food should be properly rewarded, protected and respected. This means decent living wages, secure contracts, fair representation and good working conditions for everyone involved in getting food from the field to our plates.

3. Food systems are localised

Good food should be easily accessible across villages, towns and cities, in both rural and urban areas, through numerous local outlets. Local provision and short food supply chains should take precedence over global export markets.

International trade will and should always be part of the global food system, but we must promote the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of all people to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable food production and ensure that we do not undermine the food sovereignty and food systems of people in other parts of the world.

4. There is democratic control over the food system

Control over the resources to produce, distribute and access food should be in the hands of communities and workers across the food system. Civil society should be at the centre of food policy-making, with the power to shape the way the food system functions and influence the policies and practices needed to transition to a just food system.

5. We build knowledge and skills

The knowledge and skills needed to produce, process, distribute, and prepare food should be protected and invested in. The cultures of food producers and communities should be valued, including the ability to develop and pass on knowledge and skills to future generations. This should be supported through democratic and decentralised forms of education, and appropriate research and innovation.

6. Our food system works with nature

Food production and distribution systems should protect natural resources, reduce environmental impact and work in harmony with nature. Agroecology should be the basis for all food production, where food is produced within the finite limits of our planet's resources, protecting and respecting our environment and communities, and without compromising the ability of future generations to provide for themselves.

Credit: A People's Food Policy consultation, London

4. Our engagement process

Over the past year we have run consultations, workshops and a survey, and received testimonies, proposals and strategies from over 150 organisations, unions, community and campaign groups, workers across the food system and civil society.

A People's Food Policy illustrates what is possible if food policy-making is undertaken through a participatory process that reflects and includes the most pressing issues and lived experiences of people from across England.

The aims of *A People's Food Policy* are:

1. To challenge the current approach to food policy-making in England.
2. To articulate a vision of the kind of food system we need in England and how it can be realised.
3. To lay out interconnected policy proposals that could be included in a national food and farming policy.
4. To provide a framework to organise, campaign and lobby around transforming our food system in England.
5. To continue to build the foundations and pillars of a food movement in England, which people from across the food system collectively engage with and shape.

Based on the ideas and experiences that have emerged so far, we have put together a publication that lays out a vision for a better food system and offers policy proposals and recommendations for how to get there.

SECTION B TRANSFORMING THE FOOD SYSTEM

1

GOVERNANCE

Democratising the governance of our food system

'The daily choices we make about our food means that everyone who eats is a constituent in our food systems. But to truly create an equitable, inclusive and sustainable food system we also need to participate in shaping the policies and strategies that affect our food. That is the real food revolution: to sit at the democratic table, as ordinary people and active food citizens.'

DEE WOODS
Granville Community Kitchen and Community Food Growers Network (A People's Food Policy consultation)

'National and local food policies should serve people – not corporate profit.' In working towards this vision, the notion of communities having better democratic control of their food systems is key'

DAN ILES
Global Justice Now (A People's Food Policy consultation)

'The rationale for establishing a Food Policy Council is to create a high-level strategic grouping combining the different elements of the food system (including production, processing, distribution, retail, catering, consumption and waste disposal) with the common objective of achieving a healthier, more sustainable and resilient food system.'

ANGELA RAFFLE
Bristol Food Policy Council (A People's Food Policy consultation)

'We need for a far more joined-up policy approach that truly integrates food-related policy areas and issues that are inherently interlinked and that have a profound effect on society.'

CHARLIE POWELL
Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: Organiclea Food Sovereignty Gathering, London © Joanna Bojczewska

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which we collectively have strong democratic control and participatory governance over our food system. Food and policy-making takes an integrated approach and includes the active participation of a vibrant and politically engaged civil society.

In this future, our transition to democratic food governance has involved the development of new processes and new attitudes.

Reflecting the diverse range of experiences and realities of people in England, we are able to meaningfully participate in decisions that ensure our food system is just and sustainable. We have the power to influence the food policies and practices that affect our lives. Special attention is given to ensure that those most affected and marginalised in the food system are able to participate and have an active role in changing it.

The fragmented approach that previously dominated food policy has been replaced with a cross-departmental and integrated strategy, able to address the complex and interconnected nature of our food system. The lobbying power of corporate agri-business had been curbed and our government institutions have become more transparent, accountable and accessible.

We have shifted from a market-based approach to a rights-based approach in the food system. The government has taken seriously its obligation to ensure that the right to food in England is being met by implementing it through legislative frameworks.

The case for change

After the referendum vote to leave the EU in June 2016, there is little doubt that the food system in England will change enormously and unpredictably over the coming years. The extent of these challenges requires us to transform the way we think about, talk about and govern our food and farming system. This chapter therefore focuses on transforming two main problems with the governance of food: fragmented policy-making and a democratic deficit.

Fragmented policy-making

The fragmented governance of our food system and lack of co-ordination between departments and sectors has resulted in disjointed policy-making which offers little prospect for a joined-up and well-functioning food system.[25] The food system is shaped by policies related to public health, agriculture, the environment, the labour force, trade and international development and our financial markets. In England, policies originating from different government departments tend to be developed in isolation from each other, and there is currently no clear leadership or overarching framework to guide food policy. Currently food policies are formed by policy-makers working within narrow policy areas, taking into consideration the views of industry groups and scientific bodies who are often working within the same political and disciplinary silos. The disconnect between these departments has led to fragmented and contradictory policies that are having long-term negative impacts on our food and farming system.

At a national level, there are hardly any mechanisms in government to develop a holistic approach, integrating the different aspects of our food system into a joined-up policy framework. However, at a municipal level, Food Councils, Food Partnerships and Food Strategies are becoming more common, appearing in a growing number of cities including London,[26] Bristol,[27] Brighton, Plymouth,[28] Bournemouth and Leeds.[29]

These bodies have demonstrated an approach that takes into account the overlaps and common interests between different issues at an early stage in the policy-making process. By doing so they can begin to create the coherence and synergies we need. However, a mechanism to properly link these forums with national policy-making is still much needed.

These approaches take into account the overlaps and common interests between different policy areas at an early stage in the policy-making process. However, these processes and local policies do not currently feed into central government food policy development. There is consequently no mechanism for food-related policies at local and national levels of government to be linked together to create clarity and co-operation.

The UK as a whole is bound to secure the right to food under international law[iv] **and yet *'there have been large increases in the levels of malnutrition, hunger and food bank usage, all of which are indicative of the UK being in breach of its international legal obligations in respect of the right to food.'*** [30] [v] The right to food is recognised in the 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[31] and was enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).[32]

Although the government has implemented individual right to food related policies (including, for example, a free school meals plan) it lacks an overarching rights-based food strategy to guarantee this right to adequate food for everyone through a domestic legislative framework.[33] The government currently has no action plan, indicators, benchmarks or time-bound targets to work towards realising the right to food.[34]

iv The Right to Food is recognised in the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and was enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The UK ratified the ICESCR, including the human right to adequate food, in 1976. However, since the ICESCR is an international treaty, it is binding in international law only, and has had limited impact on UK domestic law.

v In 2016, The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights made public its latest Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It raised concerns about how the UK government is failing to ensure the right to food and made specific recommendations that the government will be expected to report on.[30]

Calls for, and progress towards, the right to food in the UK

In 2015, The Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty report *Hungry for Change* called for English, Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh government leaders to *'take responsibility for the duty of UK nations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to food, while civil society organisations should form an alliance to monitor government compliance.'*[35]

In Scotland, The Scottish Food Coalition and Nourish Scotland have already called for the right to food to be enshrined in Scottish law.[36] In November 2016, the Scottish government announced that, based on recommendations from the Independent Working Group on Food Poverty, it is considering enshrining the right to food into Scottish law.[37]

The government is failing to ensure the right to food in England. In order to put the right to food and the mechanisms for its realisation at the centre of our food and policy, it is vital that a framework of domestic legislation is developed to protect and progress the right to food, and is accountable to and monitored by civil society.

Democratic deficit

In England, food policy-making processes are opaque and inaccessible, with hardly any opportunities for participation from civil society. Powerful private sector actors and special interest groups have privileged access to influence over policy-making. The lack of transparency around how policy decisions are developed and implemented limits public access to information about how our food system is governed and makes it very difficult for civil society to have any power to influence it, especially as there are very few mechanisms or suitable political platforms for full civil society participation.

Decision-making processes are generally limited to 'experts' and professionals, excluding people with lived experience and disconnecting policy from lived realities. The most marginalised people in society also have the least capacity to participate in consultations and policy processes. The apparent prioritising of large-scale commercial interests over wider societal concerns disempowers people from feeling they can influence food policy. One example is in agricultural policy, where The National Farmers' Union of England and Wales (NFU) currently has significant influence in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) over food and agriculture policy-making, but represents only a small percentage of the farmers in England.[vi] [38]

At an international level, the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) provides an innovative example of how to involve representatives from diverse food and agricultural constituencies in complex food policy-making processes. The CFS is an intergovernmental policy-making body, and the CSM autonomously facilitates civil society participation by providing technical support and co-ordination activities. It gives us an inspiring example of greater democratic involvement in food policy-making, which could inform similar initiatives at local, national and international levels.

Public consultations are currently viewed as tokenistic. Addressing the democratic deficit will ensure authentic and sustained influence on food policy decision-making at all levels. Creating democratic decision-making which enables different constituencies to participate[vii] will enhance the legitimacy and efficacy of food policy-making, ensuring that it reflects a wide set of interests, is grounded in the needs of people and is based on an open and inclusive process.

vi An Ethical Consumer Research Association report showed that with just over 55,000 members, the NFU represents only 19% of the 294,000 registered commercial British farmers, and a mere 11% of the recorded 476,000 farming workforce.[38] Yet the NFU are the only farmers' union that has an obligation to be consulted by Defra and which other government departments are obliged to consult.

vii The notion of constituencies is used to purposefully represent groups with a particular position or shared interest in regards to the food system to ensure that multiple perspectives inform debates and decisions and to prevent any one constituency from dominating. These could focus on a particular role in the food system (e.g. farmers, fisher-folk), a demographic (e.g. youth or women) or a region (e.g. west midlands).

Credit: Land Workers' Alliance Post-Brexit Agricultural Policy launch event at Defra, London © Rohan Ayinde

Policy proposals

1.1 Create a Fair Food Act for England

1.1.1 Create a Fair Food Act for England based on the right to food, agroecology and a food sovereignty framework.

1.1.1 (a) Form a statutory Food Commission to draft the Fair Food Act. This would be similar to the establishment of the statutory Food Commission in Scotland.[39] The commission should include MPs, local council authorities, NGOs, unions, workers from across the food system and representatives from civil society.

1.1.1 (b) Commission a full independent review of current food policy. This would provide a basis to develop the Fair Food Act, and would evaluate which government departments and levels are involved in current food policy-making. This would involve evaluating the impact of the various policies and mapping out the current channels through which civil society actors can participate in food system governance.

1.1.2 Establish legislation to protect and progress the right to food, to ensure the government upholds its obligation to ensure the right to food as a signatory of the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

1.2 Establish democratic structures and mechanisms for public participation in food policy-making and governance

1.2.1 Establish statutory Food Partnerships in each regional, metropolitan and local authority in England built on broad civil society and cross-sector participation.

1.2.1 (a) The structure and remit of each partnership should be appropriate to local needs and circumstances - whether in the form of a Food Policy Council, a Food Board or a Food Partnership - and, wherever possible, should build on existing bodies such as the 50 Sustainable Food Cities Food Partnerships that already exist in towns, cities and boroughs across the UK. Guidelines should ensure representation across food system constituencies and guarantee adequate participation of women, farmers and workers across the food system, people from marginalised backgrounds, those experiencing food insecurity, young people, and religious and cultural minorities.

1.2.1 (b) The Food Partnerships should consider all aspects of food culture and the food system, with a focus on tackling food insecurity, inequality and injustice and promoting health and well-being, a prosperous local food economy and improvements to the local and global environment.[viii]

1.2.1 (c) Based on the policies, recommendations and strategies of the Fair Food and Farming Act, these Food Partnerships should be financially supported through central government funding to develop and deliver local good food strategies.

viii The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) has a criteria-based representation system for civil society representation that balances the types of people who need to involved, including by gender, age, occupation and regional balance. Similar criteria could be developed here.

1.2.2 Establish a National People's Food Policy Council (NPFPC). The council would enable public participation in the formulation of strategic policy for national level food and agricultural agencies in England.

1.2.2 (a) The purpose of the NPFPC would be to ensure that the active participation, values and concerns of wider civil society are at the core of policies developed and implemented through a Fair Food and Farming Act for England.

1.2.2 (b) The NPFPC would ensure representation and participation from the statutory FPCs (1.2.1), the food and farming sector, and civil society, to ensure integration between local, regional and national levels of governance.

1.2.3 Introduce public observatories, citizens' juries and other deliberative methods on any major policy change that will affect our food system. This includes, but is not limited to, policies on trade agreements, health, work and welfare or controversial issues such as genetically modified (GM) crops. The government should be using the precautionary principle in implementation of the concerns highlighted by public consultations.

1.2.4 All farming unions and organisations must be invited to participate in Defra policy-making consultations. Small- to medium-scale farmers and agricultural workers must be recognised as key investors in agriculture and consulted as central actors in all food and agriculture policy-making.

1.3 Establish training programmes to help develop the capacity of public officials to facilitate inclusive policy-making

1.3.1 Provide training to enable public officials to support and participate in inclusive food policy-making. This would allow public officials to better appreciate the needs and experiences of people who want to participate. It would also support them to acknowledge the 'contentious' nature of apparently neutral or technical decision-making. Such training would equip public officials with knowledge of the range of available techniques and opportunities for facilitating meaningful policy inclusion.

2

FOOD

Changing the way food is produced

`We want a food system where small farmers make up large co-operatives which together have enough power to challenge the supermarkets. We need subsidies for organic farming, extensive grass-fed livestock systems, incentives for young people to get into farming, and/or to obtain training in agroforestry and agroecology. There should be allotments and community gardens within walking distance of every community.'

CAROLINE KEMP
Climate Challenge Fund
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`Our vision of a better food system is one dominated by small-scale mixed farms and food producers working in accordance with agroecological principles and selling most of their food direct to their customers. These food producers not only provide their customers with nutritious food but also give them the chance to connect more directly with their food through educational activities.'

CLARE HORRELL
Funding Enlightened Agriculture network
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`[We'd like to see] a city area that, through a more joined-up local food-cycle, is able to produce, provide and distribute regenerative sources of healthy and affordable food, supporting the community economy and an inclusive participatory culture.'

MARTYN GOSS
Exeter Food Network
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: Patches Farm, London © Walter Lewis

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which sustainable farming, fishing and horticulture provide healthy food for all, while enhancing the environment, strengthening communities and supporting good livelihoods for farmers, farm workers and fisherfolk.

In this future, there has been a revival in small- and medium-scale farming and food is produced by a mixture of family, community and co-operative farms of different scales using the principles of agroecology. These farms are diverse, mixed, and adapted to the land, culture and territories within which they are embedded.

Farmers have more autonomy from industrial supply chains; inputs are sourced locally where possible; and waste has been minimised by closer integration of livestock, arable farming and horticulture. Agriculture has been integrated with wildlife conservation, and care for soil, water, energy and the climate is at the heart of all food production decisions, while the provision of affordable, nutritious food for local people is its driving force.

GHG emissions have been cut to a third of 2010 levels, due to the uptake of agroecological food production methods, combined with a healthier diet involving less meat and dairy produce and more fruit, vegetables and grains.

Farm animals are well cared for and able to exhibit natural behaviour, resulting in better quality meat, and the overuse of antibiotics in agriculture has been ended. Farms are deeply integrated into their communities, providing nourishment through local markets, opportunities for non-producers to connect with agriculture and nature, and building community in both rural and urban areas.

Community food growing and urban agriculture have expanded in all parts of England, leading to further capacity for people and communities to produce food. Horticulture has expanded to meet demand, creating meaningful and skilled employment. A rigorous fishing policy helps to protect marine environments and fishing livelihoods by focusing on supporting long-term fish stocks and small-scale fisheries.

The case for change

The agri-industrial food system today emphasises productivity, profits and competition. It favours consolidation in order to improve competitiveness, at the expense of human health, ecologies, and farmer livelihoods. An alternative model is a multifunctional approach to food production, which would explicitly prioritise outcomes related to healthy diets, environmental sustainability, community development and sustainable farm livelihoods.[40] Pressures on farmers and fisherfolk to industrialise production have been compounded by narrow government policy, the excessive power of supermarkets over the food supply chain and changing diets. Agriculture and fisheries are threatened by a growing number of contradictions that undermine the food system and the integrity of the ecosystems on which it depends.

Agroecology is the application of ecological principles to sustainable agriculture systems.

It is based on the scientific principles of ecology combined with farmers' knowledge and practices. It provides a framework for ecologically, economically and socially regenerative agriculture systems. Agroecology is being developed by farmers around the world to replace the current industrial model of food production and strengthen food sovereignty.

Within its broad umbrella, agroecology includes a wide range of farming techniques and scales, and is supported by a range of social and environmental standards, legislation and economic models. Agroecology enables the autonomy of farmers and communities and rejects the corporate control and manipulation of food for profit.

'Agroecology is political. It requires us to challenge and transform structures of power in society. We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons in the hands of the people who feed the world.'
Declaration of the International Forum for Agroecology (2015).

The industrial farming model has led to an ecological crisis in the UK. Increasingly, we are witnessing ecological deterioration in terms of soil depletion, environmental contamination from agrochemicals, disease and antibiotic resistance, biodiversity loss, high GHG emissions, and huge amounts of food waste. More sustainable forms of agricultural production like organic farming have remained marginal, only occupying 2-3% of the total farmed area across the UK. The area of land farmed organically has fallen by 30% from a peak in 2008,[41] despite growing demand for organic products in recent years.[ix]

The industrial model has led to a crisis in farm livelihoods. Farming businesses of all sizes are dependent on subsidies (except those under 5 hectares) and non-agricultural sources of income to survive.[42] Today over 50% of farm business income depends on subsidy,[43] and 64% of farmers earn less than £10,000 a year.[44] Between 2014 and 2015 the United Kingdom showed the third largest fall in farm income in the EU with a 19% drop,[45] and farm gate share of retail price has dropped on average 15% between 1988 and 2015.[46]

In the UK, the number of farms has declined by around 14% in the last ten years.[48] This is mostly due to a sharp decrease in the number of small farms in an ongoing trend of farm consolidation, where small farms no longer considered viable are being folded into larger farms.[49] The concentration of land ownership in England and the price of land per hectare are both among the highest in Europe.[50] This makes it particularly hard for a new generation of farmers – who are desperately needed given that the average age of a farmer in the UK is 59 years[51] – to get access to land and money to start farming.

Small and medium-scale agroecological producers and processors, who offer resilience through diversity and environmental stewardship, are unable to compete with industrial economies of scale despite producing sufficient quantities of nutritious food and multiple social and environmental benefits. The closure of over 30,000 small farms in the UK over the past ten years in particular implies a major loss of skills, knowledge and culture related to farming and food production.[52]

ix The 2017 Organic Market Report by the Soil Association showed that the UK organic market was in its fifth year of strong growth, with total sales of organic products increasing by 7.1%.[47]

The industrial food model has led to a crisis in our diets, contributing to obesity, diet-related disease and malnutrition. There is a fundamental mismatch between agricultural policy and public health priorities. Food policy must take a lead in prioritising production of healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables, over foods such as sugar, meat and dairy that, when consumed to excess, contribute to disease.

The UK relies heavily on food imports. Just over half of the food eaten in 2016 was produced in the United Kingdom (compared to almost 80% in 1984).[53] Fruit and vegetables are the largest category of food imports into the UK. The UK is currently only 57% self-sufficient in vegetables and 18% self-sufficient in fruit.[54] Some varieties cannot be grown here, but many fruits and most vegetables can. The approach to agricultural policy taken by the UK government has focused on commodity crops, over-reliance on imports (which are often produced under appalling working conditions) and maintenance of low food prices, despite the inevitable negative impacts of this on the livelihoods of farmers and food workers in the UK and worldwide.

Over the last 30 years, land allocated to horticulture production has declined by 25%.[55] This decline has occurred at the same time as public health policy has been promoting the consumption of 'Five a Day'. Rates of fruit and vegetable consumption are far lower than government guidelines, despite recent evidence that high fruit and vegetable intake significantly reduces risk of heart attack, stroke, cancer and early death. While some important work to develop community and urban food growing has already taken place, further support is needed to expand these community initiatives, which provide not only food but also opportunities for social, health and environmental benefits.

The UK produces little of its own organic seed: 85% of organic open pollinated vegetable seeds are currently imported.[56] Globally, just six companies control nearly 60% of the global seed market, and the world's largest seed company – Monsanto – now controls 26% of the seed market.[57]

Animal welfare standards have improved but serious concerns remain. Farm assurance schemes' standards vary greatly across the UK.[58] Progress has been made with, for example, the ban on barren battery cages for laying hens and the ban on keeping pregnant sows in narrow stalls. But widespread intensive livestock production (two in every three farm animals are factory farmed) means that animals still have little room to move, are still transported long distances for slaughter, and that antibiotics continue to be overused in farming, despite antibiotic resistance posing a 'catastrophic threat'[59] to human and animal health.

The real solution to this crisis is not to tweak or to conform to the current system, but rather to transform it based on the principles and practices of agroecology.[60] Agroecology is widely practiced around the world[61] and has become part of mainstream global and European policy discourses on food and farming. The report of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD, 2009) promotes agroecology as a replacement for the industrial model. The French government has taken on agroecology as the main pillar of their food policy. Yet in England, despite the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agroecology (including the draft Agroecology Bill composed in 2014), agroecology is almost completely absent in food policy.

Agroecology is not the same as sustainable intensification, which tends to apply a 'technological fix' approach, while leaving the root causes of the food crisis unexamined.[62] Agroecology is more than a narrow set of technologies, but an entirely different way of organising food and society. While food policy in England has given some attention to organic farming and sustainable intensification, it has done this within the industrial model. Agroecology provides the foundation for a holistic redesign of farming and food in England.

Credit: Wheelbarrow Farm, Gloucestershire © Walter Lewis

Policy proposals

2.1 Promote the use of agroecology

2.1.1 **The government should support an Agroecology Bill**. This was originally proposed by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Agroecology in 2014.[63] This bill would legislate support for a transition to agroecological principles and practices as the basis of farming and food production.

2.1.2 **The government should implement a 'human right to seeds and biological diversity'.** This would be an addition to the right to food (see policy recommendation 1.1.2), and help to protect and extend people's access to and use of seeds, plants, and animals.[64]

2.1.3 **Provide economic support for farmers to transition towards agroecology, and support for food workers across the food system where sectors are transitioning to sustainable food practices.** This could be achieved through a combination of financial incentives, start-up funding and grants, market supports, and environmental taxes on non-renewable resources and high-input agricultural systems.

2.2 Increase local food production and consumption

2.2.1 **Promote local food production on Green Belt and peri-urban land.**[x] This could be achieved by identifying underused land and removing planning restrictions for market garden projects and agricultural dwellings, and associated self-build homes and peri-urban smallholdings.

2.2.2 **Increase access to local, sustainably produced and fair food in public sector organisations such as schools and hospitals.** This could be achieved through procurement policies and buying standards that emphasise provenance and enforce sustainability, welfare and labour standards (see policy recommendations 3.4.2 and 3.9.1).

2.2.3 **Local authorities should increase funding for community growing projects.** Projects that can demonstrate wider social benefits should be supported to ensure their long-term financial security and sustainability, as many such projects currently rely on volunteers and staff paid low or no wage. Efforts should be made to integrate community horticultural and farming projects with local health and social service contracts.

2.2.4 **Develop national planning policies and guidance that support community food growing.** This includes training officers in local planning authorities to recognise the benefits of food production projects.

x Local food production needs to be encouraged, but it is not a panacea. As a general principle, the UK should aim to be producing the majority of the food products which can be produced in this climate to ensure a measure of self-sufficiency in food.

2.3 Increase horticultural production

2.3.1 **Develop a comprehensive strategy to increase horticultural production based on agroecological farming principles**. This should include an infrastructure and investment plan to support growth in the horticultural sector, as well as plans to increase the number of horticultural workers so that domestic production can replace imports. The promotion of agroecological horticulture as a fulfilling career requiring diverse skills would attract more people in England to the sector.

2.3.2 **Provide grants and small farm support to new farms and to support farm diversification practices**. This should include incentives for current arable farmers to increase horticultural production, as well as incentives to livestock farmers to diversify and move towards more mixed farming models of production (See *Chapter 9: Finance* for more on grants, subsidies, and support for new farmers).

2.4 Improve animal welfare and reduce environmental impact of livestock farming

2.4.1 **Introduce rigorous standards for how all livestock are kept, cared for and slaughtered, based on the 'five freedoms' of animal welfare.**[65] [xi] This should include:

2.4.1 (a) Guaranteed humane treatment of all animals on farms, in markets, during transport and at slaughter. This is both for welfare reasons and disease control.

2.4.1 (b) Higher penalties than are currently used, to be applied when conditions and practices do not meet these animal welfare standards.

2.4.1 (c) A moratorium on live export of animals destined for slaughter.

2.4.1 (d) A ban on husbandry systems that do not enable animals to express their natural behaviours. This would include phasing out mega-dairy, battery cage systems and other forms of intensive livestock production. This needs to be part of a wider shift towards less intensive, higher welfare livestock systems.

2.4.2 **Prevent the use of 'critically important' antibiotics and ban the prophylactic use of antibiotics on healthy animals.** Industrial livestock and fish production systems have become reliant on the overuse of antibiotics, imported animal feed, and low animal welfare standards. Antibiotics are also being overused in human medicine. This overuse in both farming and medicine is resulting in the emergence of antibiotic resistant bacteria, which poses a 'catastrophic threat' to our ability to use antibiotics in the future.[66]

xi The Animal Welfare Act 2006 has not been effective at addressing the appalling conditions of animals in factory farms.

2.4.3 **Set a target to reduce farm antibiotic use by at least 50% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.** This is the target set by the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics.[67]

2.4.4 **Support grass-fed and extensive livestock farming systems through grants and subsidies.** These grants and subsidies could be offered on a transition basis only, rather than permanently, to encourage a shift from intensive to extensive models of livestock farming.

2.4.5 **Limit the import of animal feed produced on deforested land overseas.** This could be achieved through the application of tariffs and other import barriers.

2.4.6 **Promote growth of UK protein crops as a substitute for imported soy-based feeds.** This could include lupins and field beans and would help to diversify crop production and act as a valuable add-in to rotations with leguminous plants.

2.5 Develop a rigorous post-Brexit fish policy

2.5.1 **Set catch limits for all commercial stocks at 'maximum sustainable yield'**. These limits relate to scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. For Europe's shared stocks, this would mean setting limits and agreeing to share catches with other states; for UK stocks, depleted local stocks must be allowed to rebuild to a sustainable level.

2.5.2 **Maintain beneficial EU laws that have proven benefits on the marine environment.** This includes, for example, the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive, which aims to protect marine biodiversity.

2.5.3 **Ensure that fishing fleets and associated industries are protected.** This should be achieved by: a) supporting the growth of UK markets for UK-landed fish; and b) rebuilding commercial fish stocks to allow catches to increase and boost takings.

2.5.4 **Use fisheries policy to support fish stocks long-term and to benefit small-scale fisheries**. This particularly applies to the allocation of fishing rights, which have in the past tended to benefit larger-scale fishing companies.

2.5.5 **Establish funding to replace the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.** This would help the UK fishing and aquaculture sector transition to sustainable fishing, demonstrate sustainability, and develop domestic markets for UK-landed fish.

2.5.6 **Develop government aquaculture standards which progressively adopt the overall principles recently outlined by the Soil Association**.[68] These include the sustainable exploitation of fisheries, limited use of chemically synthesised inputs, the exclusion of GM organisms, and *'respect of regional, environment, climatic, and geographic differences and appropriate practices that have evolved in response to them'*.

3

HEALTH

Making good food accessible to all

`At the highest level, tackling poverty, housing costs etc. would mean that people then had the resources to invest in good food. At a more micro level, initiatives like community kitchens, local buying co-ops and community gardens are really helpful to enable people to access decent food.'

KATE MCEVOY
The Real Seed Catalogue
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`Continuing poverty levels in the UK, exacerbated by austerity policies, are a key driver of food poverty. When people have less money overall, they have less money to spend on good food resulting in reliance on cheap, and often unhealthy, food options on offer from large corporations. So austerity needs to be ended.'

DAN ILES
Global Justice Now (A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: Food for Life partnership scheme © Soil Association

Our vision

Our vision is of a future with a food system where everybody, regardless of income, status or background, has secure access to enough good food at all times, without compromising on the wellbeing of people, the health of the environment and the ability of future generations to provide for themselves. Food is nutritious, tasty, high quality, local, fair, culturally appropriate, fresh and sustainably produced.

In this future, all health-related food policies recognise the right to food. The structural inequalities, austerity measures and welfare cuts that have led to health inequality and household food insecurity have been redressed.

Good food is readily available in neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces, with improved standards in public institutions such as schools, hospitals, prisons and care homes.

Food production is linked to health by supporting and promoting sustainable diets and ecological food production. Food policies focus on developing agricultural systems that produce nutritionally rich foods and dietary diversity.

Regulations and legislation have been put in place to prevent powerful food companies from marketing junk food and to reduce the sugar, salt and saturated fat content of processed foods.

The influence of the food industry lobby has been reduced, and all food and health-related policies are developed in consultation with the public.

The case for change

Today, one in three people around the world suffer from some form of malnutrition (undernutrition or overweight and obesity).[69] In England, almost two thirds of adults are either malnourished, obese or overweight, and a quarter of 2-10 year olds and one third of 11-15 year olds are overweight or obese. It is estimated that by 2034, 70% of adults will be either overweight or obese.[70]

We have shameful levels of food insecurity and diet related ill health. The UK[xii] is the 6th largest economy in the world and yet in 2014, over 8.4 million people living in UK households reported having insufficient food.[71] 13% of healthcare costs are from diet-related ill health, costing the NHS £6 billion a year.[72] In 2016, it was estimated that malnutrition (or 'undernutrition') affected 3 million people in the UK.[73] Emergency food aid is currently provided by a range of voluntary organisations through both food packages and meals. For example, over 1 million 3-day food parcels were given out at food banks in the Trussell Trust network in the last year.[74] Food banks must be seen only as a temporary measure responding to a crisis; they must not be institutionalised or seen by government as a viable 'big society' solution to food insecurity across the UK.

In England, the benefit cuts and sanctions introduced in 2009 by the Conservative government have been cited as the leading cause of food insecurity,[75] and have led to a gap in provision and services which charities have been trying to fill.[76] Access to fresh, affordable and nourishing food, as well as the fuel to cook it and time to prepare it – the very basic right to food – is not available to millions of people across England. Cheaper food and consumer education around food choices are frequently offered as the main solutions to food poverty and diet-related ill health in England. This implies that it is individuals who are to blame for their own poverty and fails to address structural inequality as the root cause of poverty and food poverty.

England's food system is dominated by an 'industrial diet' where highly processed and low nutrient foods are widely available and most easily accessible, making up a large proportion of people's food intake. Although government dietary guidelines mention eating five to ten portions of fruit and vegetables per day, as well as a wide range of proteins, carbohydrates and dairy products, there is no mention of sustainability (except for 'sustainably sourced fish') or the importance of eating freshly sourced rather than processed food. Given that the National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that people are consuming too much saturated fat, added sugars and salt, and not enough fruit, vegetables, oily fish and fibre,[77] it is clear that we need a new approach to make healthy food available, accessible, affordable and appealing to everybody.

Children's health is in jeopardy due to high levels of inequality and the influence of the food industry lobby. A recent report by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health highlighted the state of child health in the UK, with nearly one in five children living in poverty, high levels of obesity, and one of the highest rates of infant mortality in Western Europe.[78] It criticises the government's Childhood Obesity Strategy[79] for not banning junk food advertising and price promotions, and for the public health cuts in England, which have disproportionately affected children's services.

Elderly people have particular and underappreciated vulnerability to food poverty. Due to issues related to poverty, health, reduced mobility and cuts in social care, older people face a highly challenging food environment. For example, a third of all elderly people admitted to hospital are at risk of malnutrition and elderly women are twice as likely to be malnourished than men.[80] Food must be considered as an integral part of a rounded healthcare strategy and support system for the elderly.

The industrial food lobby continues to ensure that its own interests – the promotion and consumption of cheap, unhealthy and unsustainably-produced food – are unaffected by government policy-making, which generally prefers 'soft-touch' regulation with voluntary agreements and 'responsibility deals' over stronger enforcement through legislation.

xii We use data that relates to the UK when England-only data is not easily available.

Credit: Granville Community Kitchen, London

Policy proposals

3.1 Eliminate household food insecurity

3.1.1 **Appoint a new cross-departmental minister charged with eliminating household food insecurity**.[xiii] Any new food policy should include strategies to reduce household food insecurity. This proposal, and many of the ones below, come from the Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty report *Hungry for Change*.[81]

3.1.2 **Commit to annual government-led national measurement of adult and child food insecurity**.[82] There is currently no national measurement of food insecurity, and studies have in the past relied on surveys based on small samples.[83]

3.1.3 **Support local authorities to develop local food policies which include food poverty action plans**.[84] This would help to increase access to healthy and affordable food.

3.1.4 **Local authorities should improve physical access to affordable good food to eliminate 'food deserts'.**[xiv] This could be achieved by working in a co-ordinated way with planners, retailers, caterers, manufacturers and advertisers.

xiii The Fabian Commission defined 'household food insecurity' as 'the inability to acquire or consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so.' [35]
xiv Food deserts are areas that lack access to fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthy foods. The term is a bit of a misnomer as these areas don't in fact lack 'food' – they are usually swamped with unhealthy, highly processed food with little nutritional value.

3.2 Support child health

3.2.1 **Government and local authorities should develop an integrated programme to increase Healthy Start uptake**. Healthy Start food vouchers represent a potentially valuable support to improve diets. Local authorities and local food partnerships should establish a target for the uptake of Healthy Start vouchers in their area that meets or exceeds the national target of 80%.

3.2.2 **Government, local authorities and schools should ensure that children from low income households have access to good food, 365 days a year**. This should include increasing uptake of free school meals and providing free meals at breakfast-time, after school and during the school holidays.

3.2.3 **Support campaigns to encourage greater fruit and vegetable consumption**. One example of a campaign already doing this is Peas Please, run by the Food Foundation.

3.3 Address public health contradictions in the agricultural subsidy system

3.3.1 **Subsidies that currently support the production of unhealthy foods must be redirected to support the production of healthier foods**. For example, financial support for sugar beet production, which conflicts with the need to reduce sugar consumption and tackle obesity and diabetes, should be redirected to support local horticulture production.

3.4 Improve public procurement

3.4.1 **Update Government Buying Standards (GBS) for food and catering services.** Environmental standards for food, farming and fishing need to be strengthened. This would lead to a better and increasing market for producers working to conserve natural resources. GBS should also include a commitment to specify that meat and dairy products must be sourced from higher welfare production systems (such as cage-free eggs), and especially those that ban preventative use of antibiotics in groups of healthy animals and/or are reducing non-essential antibiotic use overall.

3.4.2 **Reward public institutions that implement sustainability criteria in their procurement policies.** For example, include such criteria in the new Healthy Schools rating scheme which the UK government is planning to introduce (see policy recommendations 2.2.2 and 3.9.1).

3.4.3 **Introduce legislation to make mandatory school food standards (which already covers maintained schools) apply to academies and free schools created between 2010-2014**. This would close the current gap and ensure pupils in all schools benefit from the 'nutritional safety-net' offered by the school food standards. The standards should be independently monitored and enforced.

3.4.4 **Hospital food standards should be enshrined into legislation so they are on the same legal basis as school food standards**, to ensure hospitals have to mandatorily meet minimum standards in terms of food served to patients, staff and visitors. Those standards should be independently monitored and enforced.[xv]

3.4.5 **Hospital food standards legislation should include legal standards on the food sold in vending machines on hospital premises**. This could be similar to the Healthy Living Award Plus scheme currently active in Scotland.[xvi]

3.5 Increase sustainable food consumption

3.5.1 **Sustainability criteria should be included in the government's dietary guidelines**. Guidelines should emphasise that good food and health are about more than just eating nutritionally balanced meals.[xvii]

3.5.2 **Health and agricultural policies should be connected.** For example, policies such as 'Five a Day' should be linked to an agricultural policy that encourages the domestic production of fruit and vegetables.[88] This could be achieved by increasing access to land and affordable housing for horticultural workers, training in sustainable production methods and investment in research and development in agroecological production methods.

3.5.3 **Develop and support campaigns to increase awareness about the importance of sustainable meat and dairy consumption**. Examples of campaigns that are trying to do this already include the Eating Better alliance in the UK, and 'meat-free days' as promoted by cities such as Ghent (Belgium) and San Francisco (USA).

3.6 Improve food labelling

3.6.1 **Legislate to make food 'traffic light' labelling mandatory.** The Food Standards Agency labelling system of red, amber, green should be mandatory, not optional. The Department of Health introduced the scheme as a voluntary measure in 2013, but the labels still do not appear on about one third of all food sold.[89]

xv For more on improving hospital food standards, see the Campaign for Better Hospital Food website: https://www.sustainweb.org/hospitalfood/
xvi School food standards already meet similar requirements with a ban on sugary drinks and junk food in school meals and vending machines.[85]
xvii The *Square Meal* report was one of the first to construct sustainable dietary guidelines by considering health, food, farming and nature in an integrated way.[86] Brazil offers a useful model of food-based dietary guidelines that incorporate sustainability criteria.[87]

3.7 Regulate junk food promotion and consumption

3.7.1 **Implement stronger controls preventing the marketing of junk food and drink to children under 18 in both broadcast and non-broadcast media**. This should include new rules reducing children's exposure to such advertising whilst they watch their favourite TV shows, and in those areas which the Committee of Advertising Practice refuses to cover (such as packaging, brand characters, sponsorship and curricula materials).

3.7.2 **The Committee of Advertising Practice and the Advertising Standards Authority should ensure companies follow both the letter and the spirit of the new non-broadcast rules being introduced in July 2017**. A comprehensive and transparent definition of what constitutes marketing 'directly appealing to children' should also replace the currently weak definition.

3.7.3 **The UK government should monitor the impact of the Soft Drinks Industry Levy.** This should include: monitoring the health benefit from ring-fencing the money raised via the tax; and carrying out pilot studies for the introduction of further diet and health related food taxes and regulations, including the ban of energy drinks to children under 16 years of age (see *Chapter 9: Finance*).[90]

3.7.4 **Legislate to reduce sugar, salt and saturated fat in food products.** The current Public Health Responsibility Deal, through which food industry actors voluntarily sign up to self-monitored pledges to reduce sugar, salt and saturated fat in their products, is not working.[91]

3.8 Support community food resources

3.8.1 **Government and local authorities should provide more support to existing community food resources.** These include community kitchens, food buying co-ops, community gardens and food hubs, all of which make an important contribution to improving access to healthy food, education, skills and people's social lives. Support could include providing grants for start-up costs and advice to develop financially sustainable models.

3.8.2 **Support development of new community food growing initiatives, community meals and kitchens**. These are all important community-led attempts to increase access to healthy food in deprived areas or 'food deserts' (see policy recommendations 7.1.2 and 9.4.1)

3.9 Ensure older people have access to good food

3.9.1 **Develop and implement nutritional standards** for sustainable food provision in care homes across England.[92] These need to include sustainability criteria so that older people are guaranteed access to food which good for both themselves and the environment (see policy recommendations 2.2.2 and 3.4.2).

3.9.2 **Halt the decline in 'meals on wheels' services.** This must be combined with the adoption of 'more than meals' services, tackling social isolation and supporting active ageing.[93] Buying and cooking food maintains older people's skills, confidence and routines. Care packages that provide ready meals need to take this into account and support older people in maintaining food skills.[xviii]

3.9.3 **Carry out or fund research into how markets can support an ageing population to maintain independence**, for example by implementing a delivery service for goods bought, and providing nutritional information.

3.9.4 **Develop an emergency process to flag up when care given to elderly people is failing**. This would empower social workers to identify failures in the care given to older people in their own homes. There have been instances of older people cancelling their care packages because of poor treatment, leaving no one to prepare food for them at a critical time when having sufficient good-quality food is particularly important.

3.10 Improve transport infrastructure for better access to food

3.10.1 **Implement free or reduced-cost public transport for low income groups.** This would improve access to food outlets in city centre markets and rural areas. Transport plays an important part in food choices, particularly for low income groups, disabled groups and older people. Any changes to public transport provision should be assessed against access to food retail sites.

3.11 Reduce the influence of the food industry lobby

3.11.1 **Reduce the influence of the food industry lobby on national public health campaigns and policy-making.** At present, the food industry heavily influences national public health policy and campaigns. For example, in 2010 MPs voted against a traffic light food labelling system devised by the UK Food Standards Agency in favour of a Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA) system supported by food manufacturers.[95]

xviii An example of good-quality sustainable meals on wheels is Fair Meals Direct.[94]

4

LAND

Reforming land governance

'Access to land is impossible. Land is too expensive and very little comes up for sale, particularly quality farmland. There is also never affordable housing associated with the land.'

JONATHAN AGNEW
Blackhaugh Farm
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'One of the primary challenges for urban community gardens is accessing land, with many local authorities unable or unwilling to deal with organised citizen groups, preferring instead large registered charities or profit-making enterprises.'

CHRIS YAP
Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'The high price of agricultural land is prohibitive to many of us and land tends to be bought by existing large scale farmers, developers and as an investment. We need land near the houses so people can walk to community gardens and financial help for entrants to a new small scale farming landscape.'

NIKKI GILES
FlintShare CSA
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'New entrants to farming have almost no possibility of buying a farm in England: the cost of land and rural housing is just too high. Yet new farmers have the passion, vision and skills needed to reduce the negative environmental impacts of conventional farming and globalised food distribution. Small farms are also vital to rural communities, helping to support other small rural businesses and services.'

ZOE WANGLER
Ecological Land Co-operative

Credit: The Cotswolds, Flickr Creative Commons © Neil Howard

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which land is recognised and valued as an essential resource for food and shelter and as the basis for numerous social, cultural and spiritual practices. Land is no longer treated and traded as a commodity; instead it is understood as a common good of the people.

In this future, a Land Commission has been established and is carrying out a full and transparent investigation into the effects that concentrated land ownership is having on our food and farming system, housing, local economies, our cultures and our livelihoods.

As part of reforming land tenure, communities now have strong rights over the control and management of public land and resources. A variety of land trusts and land agencies have been established to monitor land and hold it for the common good. Access to land for new entrants into farming has been improved, along with clear strategies to enable succession and reduce the average age of UK farmers.

People who make their livelihood from the land have secure and equitable access to, and control over, the resources they need. Tenant farmers enjoy secure long-term tenancies and the county farm stock has been increased. Planning policy has been reformed to guarantee a secure supply of accommodation for land workers and supports agroecological development of land.

Everyone enjoys a just and sustainable food system capable of ensuring long-term food security. Fair and secure access to land is understood as fundamental to this.

The case for change

> 'The greatest and most enduring source of wealth in any community is land, and it is the most valuable commodity in any economy. For that reason, the monopoly of land ownership is the greatest source of injustice in our community, and yet it is very rarely talked about. A lot of the assumptions about land ownership and the need for many, many people to pay rent to have their share of a piece of land whilst others have acquired that same land, for whatever reason, historically, and can now live off the proceeds, is very rarely challenged. We should be taxing people for the privilege of owning land, rather than rewarding them. And this is a crucial political change we need to make.'
>
> **MOLLY SCOTT CATO** *(MEP)*

The UK has one of the highest levels of concentrated landownership in the world, with less than 1% of the population owning over half of all agricultural land.[96] Land in England is subject to a huge number of pressures, from the historically unequal distribution of ownership to the need to accommodate food production, housing, energy, wildlife and recreation. This is compounded by the recent increased use of land as a vehicle for investment and financial speculation.

In recent years, rapid increases in land prices have caused huge challenges for regeneration in agriculture as new entrant farmers find themselves locked out of the industry. The price of land for sale in England has more than trebled between 2004 and 2014,[97] and over the past 50 years increased by 4,763%.[98] The price of land on average is now around £19,207/hectare (£7,773/acre)[99] putting land beyond the reach of those who want to make a livelihood from agriculture but do not have significant financial backing.

Small farms make up over 70% of all farms in the UK, and yet only 25% of all agricultural land is being farmed by small scale farmers.[100] The amount of agricultural land farmed by small scale farmers has decreased by 25% in the past twenty years, with nearly 40% of small farms closing down in the same amount of time.[101] Farms being sold are now routinely broken up; the land typically goes to investors or existing big farms while the farmhouses are sold at prohibitively high prices for the majority of people living in rural areas. This process contributes to the increasing consolidation of holdings and the pervasive lack of affordable rural housing.

Land access issues are compounded by the increasing privatisation of much of our remaining publicly owned farmland. These farms traditionally provided the first step on the farming ladder for new entrants not from a farming background. Since 2001, more than 1000 council-owned farms have been sold by local councils under pressure from the Government to raise capital and meet fiscal deficits. In Somerset, 1149 hectares (2839 acres) of council-owned farmland have been sold off since 2009, generating over £35m for the local authority.[102] The sell-off of the public farmland estate is part of the £37bn of privatisation sales made by George Osborne since 2010. What used to be a public asset is being sacrificed for political purposes.[103]

The current agricultural subsidy system encourages concentrated land ownership. Under the current Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) payment rules, subsidy is distributed according to the number of hectares owned and maintained in a state fit for cultivation. These subsidies are not simply tied to production, and are not available to small farms with less than five hectares (12 acres) of land. The subsidy is a payment that directly stimulates the creation of larger and larger farms, as it rewards farms by size.[104] In many instances these subsidies amount to financial support for some of the UK's richest people.

In 2015, 100 landowners received between £395,000 to £1.4m each in agricultural subsidies. In total this came to £87.9m in agricultural subsidies, of which £61.2m came from the single payment scheme. This is more than the combined total paid to the bottom 55,119 recipients in the single payment scheme over the same period.[105]

The subsidy system, combined with rapidly increasing land values, global financial insecurity and a total lack of regulation, has encouraged speculators to look on farmland as an increasingly attractive investment.[106] Because agricultural land is free of inheritance tax if actively farmed for just two years, people have been using land as a way of passing on assets. Farmland investment is becoming a tax haven for people trying to secure inheritance and capital gains tax exemptions.[107] According to a Savills market survey of UK agricultural land in 2015, arable land prices have increased by 277% in the past decade, whilst the portion of farmland buyers that were actually farmers represented only 45% of all arable land purchases.[108]

In urban contexts, land speculation and property development have increased pressure on community gardens and peri-urban market gardens. On the ground, this has led to evictions of long established community growing spaces and reluctance from urban landowners to give secure tenancies to community groups seeking access to urban land. Access to urban land for food growing is further limited by the refusal of most local authorities to make more land available as allotments, despite a statutory obligation to provide allotments and the huge numbers of people on waiting lists.[109]

Land and housing inequality are intimately connected. Increases in the price of land and housing, along with speculative property purchasing have contributed towards growing inequalities. There is an increasing divide between two classes separated not by their contribution to production or society, but by property ownership and the control of a scarce natural resource: land.[110] As house prices – and land values – rise, this divide will continue to widen, as the wealth of those at the bottom remains zero or negative while that of the top 10% grows quickly. Since 1970, housing and land ownership has accounted for 87% of the increase in the wealth to income ratio.[111] Because land is fixed in supply and does not usually depreciate, its relative price tends to increase as the economy and demand grows.

If land ownership was evenly distributed across the population then at least rising land values might benefit everyone. Sadly, this is not the case; as set out above, the distribution of land in the UK is highly unequal. While home ownership did spread in the 20th century,[112] the last 15 years have seen a decline from 70% to 50% of the population owning their own home.[113]

The need for more affordable tenure options (i.e. social housing, shared ownership and other subsided tenures) and truly affordable housing is critical. Currently only 8% of rural housing stock and 20% of urban housing falls under these categories.[114] This disparity makes it harder for local people to remain living within their local communities, and can contribute to villages becoming commuter dormitories and the preserve of older generations.

The planning system makes it extremely difficult for agricultural workers to build homes and live on their farms. Farming in general and agroecological farming in particular can be labour intensive. Farmers needs to be on site frequently in order to manage a farm effectively. Living on site also makes farming more economically viable as a business. Yet the planning system is a huge hurdle, particularly for new entrants. Prospective farmers must face the risk of being denied permission to build essential infrastructure or to live on their holding. With the loss of agricultural ties and increasing rents, living *and* working in agriculture in rural areas becomes almost impossible.

Over 60 UK registered companies and transnational corporations are engaging in numerous land grabbing deals around the world, and between them control almost two million hectares (almost five million acres) of land outside the UK, almost four times higher than any other European country.[115] In the past five years an estimated 80 million hectares (almost two million acres) of land around the world, in particular in Asia and Africa, have been acquired by international investors through lease or purchase.[116] This acquisition of land has hundreds of years of colonial history behind it. This continuation and renewal of exploitative practices that undermines the right to food and food sovereignty in other countries is often defended as outsourcing food production to ensure food security for investing countries.[117]

At an international level, the sugar and biofuel industry have been some of the worst offenders driving this land grabbing crisis.[118] The UK based sugar company Tate and Lyle has been accused of being complicit in land grabbing in Cambodia.[119] In 2013, a complaint was filed in the UK High Court against Tate and Lyle (*Song Mao v. Tate & Lyle Industries Ltd*, case ongoing) on behalf of over two hundred displaced villagers and farmers from Cambodia's Koh Kong province.[120] The most frequent and immediate impact of land deals is the loss of access to and control over land and land-related resources by local communities and has resulted in forced displacements and human rights abuses.[121]

Policy proposals

4.1 Establish a Land Commission for England

4.1.1 Establish a Land Commission for England in order to reform land governance.

4.1.1 (a) The Land Commission should be premised on the acknowledgement that land should be used as a 'common good of the people', as is already the case in Scotland. A Land Commission for England could be similar to that recommended for Scotland in the 2016 Scottish Land Reform Act.[122]

4.1.1 (b) The Land Commission's remit would be to carry out a full and transparent investigation into the impact of concentrated land ownership on our food and farming system, housing, local economies, our cultures and our livelihoods. This would partially form the evidence base for any future land reform measures introduced by the UK government. The Commission's remit should extend to both urban and rural land in England and cover all matters relating to land, including ownership, land rights, land management and the use of land.[123]

4.1.2 Make the Land Registry transparent and complete. The Land Registry should include a full cadastral map of land ownership in England and be freely available, except in circumstances where personal privacy would dictate otherwise. These changes must be enacted as soon as possible, as this is a crucial democratic step in allowing people access to information about their locality.[xix]

4.1.3 *The UN Voluntary Guidelines on The Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests* and its recommendations should be used as the basis for a clear and comprehensive policy for land use, covering governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests.[xx] [xxi] [xxii]

4.2 Strengthen community access to land

4.2.1 Strengthen community rights over the ownership and management of public land and resources.

4.2.1 (a) Introduce a 'Community Right to Manage'. This could be built on the Localism Act (2011),[127] which would enable communities to propose new management arrangements for assets of community value (including agricultural land and buildings) currently held or delivered by government, or indeed by private or charitable institutions.[128]

xix We acknowledge the UK government's recent proposals to: remove fees for finding out who owns land held by UK firms and offshore companies (datasets scheduled for release Autumn 2017); ensure a complete register of ownership by 2030; and to better record all those who have a stake in parcels of land.[124]
xx When consulting and drafting the Scottish Land Reform Bill, these guidelines were used a basis.
xxi The European Co-ordination of La Via Campesina is campaigning for the EU to implement *The Voluntary Guidelines on The Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests* through a directive on land tenure in Europe.[125]
xxii *The Voluntary Guidelines on The Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests* was used as a key framework for developing recommendations in the Scottish Land Reform Act.[126]

4.2.1 (b) Extend the 'Community Right to Bid' in the Localism Act (2011) to include: (a) agricultural land and buildings in both urban and rural areas; (b) land which is 'wholly or mainly abandoned or neglected' or the condition of which causes harm to the wellbeing of the community;[129] (c) the right of first refusal; and (d) access to public funding to assist community purchase. This could be similar to the recommendations in the Scottish Community Empowerment Act (2015).[130]

4.2.1 (c) Make Council Asset Registers transparent and publicly available. Ensure asset registers detailing what buildings and lands are owned by each local council are easily accessible. These should also be extended to include use of farmland and agricultural buildings.

4.2.1 (d) Significant land holdings owned by local authorities must be registered as 'assets of community value', ensuring that local communities are consulted on any change of use.

4.2.2 Protect and increase the number of county farms in England.

4.2.2 (a) Stop the sell-off of county farms and resultant loss of livelihood for tenant farmers. In general, the stock of county farms (and municipal land that is agricultural) should be maintained and increased wherever possible.

4.2.2 (b) Review the management of all county farms to orient towards horticulture and agroecology.[xxiii] Consider the subdivision of some county farms, especially those near towns, into smaller units, to make them available to market gardeners and other horticulturalists. Additional agriculturally tied housing may need to be provided in conjunction with new holdings, to enable tenants to live on site.

4.3 Improve tenant farmers' rights[131]

4.3.1 Restrict the 100% relief from inheritance tax, currently available to all landlords regardless of the length of time for which they are prepared to let land, to apply only to those prepared to let for ten years or more.

4.3.2 Reform stamp duty land tax to end the discrimination against longer tenancies.

4.3.3 Require landlords to default to a minimum ten year farm tenancy except in special circumstances.

4.3.4 Create and develop a 'Tenant Farmer Right to Buy' policy. Such a policy should support tenant farmers to buy the parcel of land they farm from the land owner (there would need to be restrictions on future sales to prevent unreasonable/unwarranted private gain).[xxiv]

xxiii There are many good recommendations in the *Guidance for Local Authority Rural Estate Asset Management Plan* produced in 2015.[132]
xxiv Examples include the Crofters' Right to Buy in Scotland: http://tinyurl.com/croftersright

4.4 Create a Land Sales Agency

4.4.1 A Land Sales Agency must be informed of all pending agricultural land sales, and should review land use in any given locality to ensure a certain amount of land is kept for food production. This agency should have the power to prevent sales when land is being taken out of agricultural use or where there is serious risk of negative environmental consequences.

4.4.2 In certain circumstances the agency should have the power to buy land and give or sell it to community organisations, local active farmers or the county farm estate. There are already non-profit land trusts such as the Soil Association Land Trust, the Biodynamic Land Trust and The Ecological Land Co-operative, all of which are public orientated, have objectives to support agroecological farmers, and which could take on land such as this. These trusts in England are currently small, however with more support and funding they could have much greater capacity. These trusts could also manage the stewardship of farms where there is no succession.

4.5 Reform planning policy

4.5.1 Agricultural ties on dwellings should be protected to guarantee a secure supply of accommodation for land workers and prevent land being taken out of agricultural use.

4.5.2 Planning policy should be reformed to support agroecological development of land based on social and ecological value.[133] In particular, there should be a clear policy route for low impact farming operations to provide residential accommodation. This could be a One Planet Development Policy, as is currently in force in Wales.[134]

4.5.3 Planning officers and local council authorities should be trained in low impact development planning and local authorities should establish clear plans to support the development of new agricultural holdings.

4.5.4 Planning legislation should support self-build accommodation for agricultural workers. We welcome recent steps to facilitate self-build accommodation, but this needs to be encouraged by further government legislation. In particular, measures should be taken to ensure support for self-build housing is focused on affordable housing, not luxury housing. Single plot exception sites for self-build affordable housing (already a policy in some local authorities) should become a national policy.[135]

4.5.5 Peri-urban areas should be prioritised for food production. Land around cities should be re-zoned accordingly, and unused, equestrian and brownfield land should be progressively taxed at an increasing rate the nearer the land is to cities and the longer it sits empty.[xxv]

4.5.6 All significant development on land should require improved multiple impact assessments to include not only ecological impact assessments as part of the planning process, but stronger and more comprehensive community and economic impact assessments.

xxv This should be brought into legislation to curtail the current speculation on the prospective increase in financial value of land once land-use designation is changed, a practice which has led to an increase in the cost of agricultural land and restricted the amount of land available to agriculture and horticulture.

4.6 Reform the fiscal framework of land use

4.6.1 Make transparent which offshore tax havens and overseas investors own land in England.[136]

4.6.2 Overhaul the relationship between land and inheritance tax.

4.6.2 (a) Create an upper limit for the value of farmland that is exempt from inheritance tax. Farms should be inheritable, but beyond a certain size and value land should be taxed at a higher rate with less exemptions. This should be dependent on the region, quality and per-acre value of the land.

4.6.2 (b) Inheritance tax exemption should be restricted to specific cases such as for family members who are actively farming inherited land and for landowners who transfer ownership to a land trust where land is used for high social and/or ecological values, e.g. social housing schemes, supporting new entrant farmers, carbon sequestration etc.

4.6.3 Create fiscal incentives to lower the concentration of land ownership. This would encourage the release of parts of large landholdings (perhaps at least 1% of holdings of 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) or more) and provide new affordable holdings near existing settlements. A community land trust or other similar structure could offer protection from sale for non-agricultural use, or a long lease could enable reversion to the existing owner if the land ceases to be farmed.[137] These should be granted where:

4.6.3 (a) Land owners release landholdings to support succession and bring in new-entrant farmers to work alongside and build up businesses with retiring farmers.

4.6.3 (b) Land is sold for fully or predominantly affordable housing (affordable in relation to wages, not market value) in rural areas.[138] Two tax incentives that could be applied are: capital gains rollover relief and relief from inheritance tax. The former would mean that Capital Gains Rollover provisions apply to land sold for development as a rural exception site, a site for 100% affordable housing, or for mixed market and affordable housing sites.[139] The latter would require that affordable rented housing is added to the asset classes eligible for 'Conditional Exemption from Inheritance Tax on Death'. [140]

4.6.4 Establish a Review Group to develop proposals for a 'Location Charge' (some forms of this are known as 'Land Value Tax')**.**[xxvi] This could be a review group incorporated into the Land Commission (see policy recommendations 3.1.1 and 9.6.1) or be a separate review process.

4.6.5 As part of the government's extraterritorial human rights obligations and in order to address land grabbing and human rights violations overseas, it must put into practice adequate and effective regulation of UK based corporate and financial actors.[143]

xxvi A Land Value Tax is an alternative property tax. Like business rates and council tax, it would be levied annually.[141] The benefit of progressive tax reforms such as a Land Value Tax or a Location Charge essentially encourage productive land use, starting with the most valuable land in both urban and rural areas. This would combine the benefits of avoiding speculative land hoarding at the same time as promoting greater care of natural resources.[142]

5

LABOUR

Valuing work and improving social conditions

`It is so incredibly hard to make a living producing food on a small scale. The cost of hand labour on the land is prohibitive, forcing producers to embrace technologies (both mechanical and chemical) that they may well know are detrimental to long-term production. Small farmers cannot compete in the marketplace with subsidised food from large producers/importers. If there was more financial return available for our product we could pay for skilled labour allowing our food to reach far more local households.'

NIKKI GILES
FlintShare CSA Ltd (A People's Food Policy consultation)

`Of prime importance is the need for recognition of the importance of smaller food producers and the contribution they make to sustainability. Small producers of whatever ilk survive despite policy rather than because of it. Many of those who have access to land still have to go out and earn some money off-farm to survive. Improvement of viability is vital and this would need more labour (our own or volunteers') and some capital for investment.'

PETER SAMSOM
Deneburn Meadows
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'The depressed price of food makes the task of making a livelihood a labour of love and financially precarious.'

RU LITHERLAND
Market Gardener, Organiclea
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`The food system has long failed to value the skills and knowledge of farmers, growers and agricultural workers.'

JULIE PORTER
Former Market Gardener
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`We need strong protections for producers and suppliers at all levels of the food supply chain, particularly the earliest stages, to prevent abuses of power by large manufacturers and retailers. We also need strong protections for workers involved in food production, particularly migrant labour used in agriculture.'

KIERRA BOX
Friends of the Earth
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: Coleshill Organic Farm, Oxfordshire © Soil Association, Future Growers Scheme

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which a healthy and thriving food system supports the wellbeing, social welfare and economic stability of people working in it.

In this future, everybody works in a safe and healthy environment, free from all forms of exploitation, discrimination, racism and immigration control. Workers have the right to secure contracts and are guaranteed fair political and union representation, including through sector collective bargaining. This includes, but is not limited to, farmers, seasonal and migrant agricultural workers, and workers in processing, distribution, retail and catering.

Changes to taxation, trade policy, supply chains and procurement contracts now support vibrant livelihoods for farmers and workers across the food system. All food and agricultural businesses can afford to pay at least living wages both to themselves and their employees.

There has been at least a doubling of the agricultural labour force, who have had access to education and training opportunities. A massive expansion in organic horticulture has created many jobs, which are popular due to the skilled and varied work they entail.[144]

People are able to work with dignity, respect and security. Workers in the food and farming sector are no longer classed as unskilled labourers. Instead, their work and knowledge about how to produce, process and prepare food is respected and valued.

We collectively understand that without farmers and food workers, there is no food. What we eat is no longer separated from the rights of the people that produce our food, here and around the world.

The case for change

Work in the food and farming sector is currently characterised by precarious and unpredictable labour conditions. The knowledge, skills and labour of food and agricultural workers are the foundations of our food system, and yet we do not currently have a system where people's work is respected, valued and celebrated. Across England, farmers and seasonal and migrant labourers struggle to find work in environments that are secure, safe and adequately paid. The sector is increasingly made up of a labour force faced with long hours, low wages, and short-term contracts. Today, over one million people work on zero-hours contracts across the UK,[145] leading to the current investigation by the House of Lords Work and Pensions Committee into the 'gig economy'.[146]

The rights and conditions of agricultural workers in the UK have been reduced over the last 40 years. Farm businesses are under severe economic pressure, and have been forced to cut costs wherever possible. Since 2000, the overall agricultural labour force has dropped by almost 20%,[147] due to automation, a more temporary and seasonal work force, and the unsustainable levels of food imports which rely on an external workforce.[148] The loss of supportive structures, (e.g. the Milk Marketing Board), means farmers in some sectors struggle to sell their produce above the cost of production. This has created a race to the bottom in labour costs and standards, while at the same time driving the demand for more 'flexible' seasonal and part-time work. The financial insecurity, pressures and growing isolation in farming have resulted in agriculture carrying one of the highest rates of suicide of any occupation,[149] **with on average one farmer a week in England or Wales taking their own life**.[150]

The average age of a farmer is now 59 years,[151] [xxvii] **and there are few opportunities for young people to enter into secure and financially viable agriculture professions.** The low pay and a negative cultural attitude towards farm work has acted as a powerful disincentive to young people considering a career in agriculture.

Agricultural work is dangerous. Whilst 13.5% of the labour force work in the food sector,[152] less than 1% in England are currently employed in agriculture and fishing.[153] However, this industry accounts for 19% of fatal injuries.[154]

Poor working conditions are compounded by low pay. The low incomes generated by farming are well-documented, especially so if one excludes subsidy payments. Numerous farms only survive by 'diversifying' into tourism or construction, but this does not help farming to remain a strong sector.

England is now the only UK nation without an Agricultural Wages Board, after the Westminster government abolished it in 2013.[xxviii] Since then, pay and conditions for workers have worsened. Wages across the food system are below the UK average.[155] The price volatility of agricultural products on both the domestic and international market creates significant uncertainty and precarious conditions for food workers and farmers (see *Chapter 8: Trade*).

Women working in the food system don't have enough opportunity, support and security, and are most affected by welfare cuts.[159] Across the food and farming industry, a disproportionate number of women work in underpaid, insecure, part-time roles in the food sector, while men disproportionately take up the managerial positions.[160] In 2015, 60% of students studying agriculture and related subjects were women,[161] indicating that there are a higher portion of women in agricultural training than actually working in food and farming. While women make up just over 25% of the agricultural workforce,[162] of the 96% of holdings in England that are owned by 'sole holders', the holders are predominately male. 84% of holders are men and only 16% are women, [163] and only 2% of them are women under 35 years.[164]

While women make up over 50% of family labour, non-family agricultural work employs only 24% women, and the majority work on small farms.[165] The gender imbalance is significantly higher in the UK compared to other parts of Europe, where there is a far more equal distribution between men and women working in agriculture and owning their holdings, in particular small to medium farms.[166]

Union protection has been continuously eroded and the UK now has the most restrictive trade union laws across Europe.[167] In 2016, the Conservative government's Trade Union Act was passed into Royal Assent, introducing changes in legislation including a 50% threshold for ballot turn-out and an additional threshold of 40% of support to take industrial action from all members eligible to vote in key public sectors.[168]

Almost 50% of the food we import and eat here is grown and harvested by an overseas labour force working to produce export crops, with over 70% of our fruit and vegetables coming from Europe.[171] [xxix] We have a trade pattern where the UK exports products that require low levels of labour and imports products that require high levels of labour from overseas (see Chapter 2 Food).

There is well-documented abuse and exploitation of overseas food and agricultural labourers who are forced to work in appalling and exploitative conditions to produce food we eat here in England,[172] including the recent (but not isolated) cases of Romanian women working as seasonal workers being sexually and physically abused on the farms they worked on in Italy.[173] However, in practice there are currently no effective procedures embedded in UK international procurement contracts to ensure that labour standards for overseas workers offer guaranteed rights, legal representation and protection.

Here in the UK, agriculture relies more heavily than most other industries on a seasonal labour force that faces an increasingly uncertain future. Each year up to 80,000 seasonal workers come to the UK from EU countries to work on farms,[174] while almost 35,000 non-UK workers are employed in UK farming on a permanent basis.[175] [xxx] The horticulture sector, which accounts for under 3% of total agricultural production,[176] requires the highest rate of labour per hectare,[177] employing over half of all seasonal and casual agricultural workers,[178] and is heavily reliant on seasonal labour from the EU.

In 2013, the UK government ended both the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme and the Sectors Based Scheme, which previously supplied labour to the food processing sector. Since then, there have been no government policies introduced to secure the rights of EU citizens from the European Economic Area (EEA) working in agriculture and the food sector in England.

There have been many incidents of failure to protect the rights and welfare of seasonal and migrant workers here in the UK. Several recent high profile court cases have investigated farm businesses and gangmasters in England for suspected cases of modern-day slavery and the exploitation of migrant workers.[179] A report into forced labour in the UK food industry documented widespread incidences of debt bondage, bullying, withholding of wages, excessive workplace surveillance and overcrowded substandard accommodation.[180] Social housing, in-work benefits and sick pay, and maternity leave are severely restricted for non-EU migrants.

Over past two decades, EU citizens in the UK have seen restrictions on their rights of access to welfare and other social assistance in comparison to their British counterparts.[181] Non-EU migrants often have no access to this social assistance, including in-work benefits.[182] This places migrant workers in an increasingly precarious situation. In practice, this erosion of rights is currently targeted at, and seriously impacts, people from Eastern Europe living and working here.[183]

There has been been a decline in the seasonal EU migrant work force since the EU referendum in June 2016,[185] **due to increasing uncertainty, the rise of xenophobia,**[186] **and the fall in value of the British pound.**[187] With the rights of EU nationals facing an increasingly precarious future and a potential repeal of freedom of movement, it is predicted that Brexit will heavily impact the agriculture industry and the rights of seasonal workers from Europe.[188]

The industrialisation of our food system has profoundly changed the very nature of what it means to be a food producer and food provider. These realities pose huge threats to the future of food security in England. With the steady erosion of the agricultural labour force, and the knowledge that comes with it, the ability to meet our food needs now and in the future is in jeopardy. Agriculture and food workers must no longer be dismissed as unskilled labourers and we must move beyond seeing the food system as a simple service provision. The social conditions, knowledge, skills and labour of food and agricultural workers are the foundations of our food system.

xxvii Across England, there is a resurgence in small-scale food production and distribution through micro-dairies, market gardens, urban growing projects and small-scale farming. However, because there are no official statistics, information or data on small-scale food production (as land holdings under five hectares (12 acres) are not eligible for subsidy and not classified as a farm), it is impossible to get an accurate and comprehensive picture of who is working in agriculture today.

xxviii The Welsh government, however, introduced the Agricultural Wages (Wales) Order 2016, and Northern Ireland has the statutory Agricultural Wages Board for Northern Ireland.[156] The Scottish Government retained the Agricultural Wages Board after a consultation showed that its removal could increase poverty in the agriculture sector,[157] and has announced that as of 1st April 2017, all agricultural workers irrespective of age and duties must receive a single minimum hourly rate at the National Living Wage of £7.50.[158]

xxix There are unions and grassroots organisations across Europe working with undocumented and seasonal migrant workers to protect their rights and livelihoods. For example, the Land Workers Union (Sindicato de Obreros del Campo),[169] The Andalusian Union of Workers (Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores) in Spain (where more than 30% of our vegetables and 15% of our fruit come from)[170] and The Base Union (Unione Sindacale di Base) in Italy, which focuses on the right to housing for seasonal and migrant workers.

xxx These statistics come from the Office of National Statistics (ONS), however the ONS acknowledges that this isn't the entire picture. In fact, the ONS survey does not cover workers living in a communal establishment, nor temporary foreign workers who are only in the UK for a few months and return home. Therefore, most seasonal workers are unlikely to be counted under this survey.[184]

Credit: Emma's Dairy, Gazegill Farm, Lancashire © Walter Lewis

Policy proposals

5.1 Support and adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas[189]

5.1.1 **The UK must support the process for a UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas,** providing a framework to protect the rights of farmers to their land, seeds, biodiversity, decent income and livelihood and means of production.

5.1.2 **Based on the guidelines in the declaration, England must take the relevant steps to incorporate the protection and realisation of the human rights of farmers and agricultural workers into its legislative framework.**

5.1.3 **Brexit negotiations should be used as an opportunity to secure stronger rights and protections for people from the UK, EU, and non-EU countries who work here as both seasonal and permanent workers across the food system.** Labour and migration policies for agricultural and food workers need to be guided by a food sovereignty framework, and people's welfare and human rights must be at the heart of decision-making that guarantees dignified livelihoods, social security and a decent income for workers across the food system.

5.2 Guarantee a living wage,[xxxi] as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation, and secure contracts for all workers in the food and farming sector[190]

5.2.1 **Legislate to make the living wage a legal requirement for all employees across the food and farming sector and other parts of the economy.**

5.2.1 (a) Employees in the food and farming sector should earn a living wage of £8.45 per hour (at time of writing), with a regional variation for London. [192] [xxxii]

5.2.1 (b) In the interim, support all employers in the sector to become accredited Living Wage Employers, as they identify and work to eliminate obstacles to providing a living wage for all workers. This is critically important, but must be carefully implemented in a way that doesn't undermine farmers in the short-term.[194] [xxxiii]

5.2.2 **Reintroduce the Agricultural Wages Board in England.**

5.2.2 (a) Reintroduce a robust Agricultural Wages Board to ensure decent employment opportunities, a living wage for all plus pay for skills and experience to build a career structure, and the wider benefits that come with having an independent bargaining body.

xxxi The living wage differs from statutory minimum wages in that it is calculated according to workers' needs, not the demands of the labour market. A living wage ensures that working people can earn enough to meet all their daily expenses and have some discretionary income left over to invest in their own or their family's future.[191]

xxxii This is part of a broader shift to a Universal Basic Income (UBI) and need for an adequate in-work tax and benefits system that meets the needs of workers, sick and unemployed.[193]

xxxiii Many farmers struggle to cover the costs of production and introducing a living wage without changing the wider economics of agriculture would disproportionately affect small farmers, leading to the further consolidation of the farming sector. If farmers are to secure a National Living Wage for themselves and their employees and respect the EU Working Time Directive, this will only be possible if farmers receive a fair return for their products (as laid out in *Chapter 8: Trade*) and there is investment in training and apprenticeships in agriculture (as laid out in *Chapter 7: Knowledge*).

5.2.2 (b) Monitor work conditions with fully resourced enforcement bodies including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), and HMRC and the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority through the Director of Labour Market Enforcement (DLME) and ensure fair pay and safe work for workers across the food system.

5.2.2 (c) In the interim to transitioning to a Living Wage (£.8.45 at the time of writing as calculated by the Living Wage Foundation), all agricultural workers – irrespective of age and duties – must receive at least a single minimum hourly rate at the National Minimum Wage of (£7.50 at the time of writing) as is currently the case in Scotland via the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board.

5.3 Create opportunities for training and apprenticeships in agriculture[xxxiv]

5.3.1 **Improve demographic representation and opportunities in the agricultural workforce.** Create bursary-funded apprenticeships and traineeships to support and encourage under-represented groups to take up agricultural professions.

5.4 Introduce a Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme open to all nationalities

5.4.1 **All workers on this scheme must be guaranteed the right to work with dignity and the same rights must be offered to all employees in England, regardless of nationality or status, namely:**

5.4.1 (a) The right to retain freedom of movement and residence for EU citizens living and/or working in the UK.

5.4.1 (b) The right to legally binding contracts to ensure all workers consistently receive a minimum National Living Wage rate of (£7.50/hour at the time of writing).

5.4.1 (c) The right to a maximum eight-hour working day, with mandatory set rest periods of at least 30 minutes for every 5.5 hours of work, as is standard in UK employment law.

5.4.1 (d) The assurance that the health and safety standards of all working environments, including those providing accommodation, are guaranteed through approval and regular monitoring by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This will require greater levels of staffing for enforcement.

5.4.1 (e) Access to appropriate training in operating any machinery and provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) kit where necessary.

5.4.2 **Continue government support for the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.** Strengthen and extend its powers, including increasing the amount of enforcement officers and inspections to ensure that employment agencies are not exploiting workers.[xxxv] Ensure that all employers in a supply chain comply with the law on deductions for transport and accommodation.[195]

xxxiv Refer to *Chapter 7: Knowledge*

xxxv The current approach of combining immigration enforcement and labour inspection must end if we want a safe environment in which victims of forced labour and trafficking can come forward. In the US, there is even a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Labor and the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that immigration enforcement does not interfere with labour inspection. Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX), a charity working to end human trafficking for labour exploitation, have stated that the current UK '*policies and practices putting immigration control above all else will result in increased forced labour and modern-day slavery in the UK.*'[196]

5.5 Ensure and protect access to union representation for all food and agricultural workers

5.5.1 **Ensure all food and agricultural workers, especially seasonal and migrant workers, women, and people who identify as LGBT, marginalised or vulnerable, are given fair representation** and have access to:

5.5.1 (a) Organisations that provide support for vulnerable workers and migrant workers.

5.5.1 (b) English language provision and support, to help migrant and seasonal workers to improve knowledge of their rights and be able to ask for help and advice.

5.5.1 (c) Readily available advice about how to seek legal redress and compensation in any instance where the terms of a work contract have been broken, amended or violated.

5.5.2 **The power of unions to represent and support workers must be protected through legislation.**

5.5.2 (a) Monitor discrimination from employers towards employees who unionise. Employees must have the right, protected through legislation, to unionise and organise through collective bargaining.

5.5.2 (b) Place a moratorium on any further changes imposed by government over the power of union organising and the right to strike.

5.6 Develop fairer trading laws[197]

5.6.1 **Incorporate the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Decent and Productive Work in Agriculture Agenda,[198] which was developed as a strategy for working towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.**[199] It focuses on employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue in order to deliver quality jobs along with respect for rights at work to achieve sustainable, inclusive economic growth and eliminate poverty.

5.6.2 **Give the Grocery Code Adjudicator more funding, staff and powers to extend their remit in all food supply chains and make adequate resources available for monitoring** (see policy recommendations 8.1.1, 8.2.1, 9.9.3)

5.6.2 (a) The GCA should not only have the ability to fine tier-one suppliers, such as supermarkets, that breach agreements with their suppliers,[xxxvi] but to cover the whole supply chain and protect indirect suppliers, including many farmers in Britain and abroad.[xxxvii]

5.6.3 **Policy makers should collaborate with, and seek advice and guidance from, workers' unions** here in England, our neighbouring countries and overseas.

xxxvi The GCA found that Tesco had breached the Groceries Supply Code of Practice by delaying payments to suppliers and requiring payments for better positioning of products.[200]

xxxvii This has been called for in an open letter in 2016 from Sustain, Traidcraft, the FairTrade Foundation and Feedback Global.[201]

6

ENVIRONMENT

A food system that works with nature

'We need a sustainable system (one that doesn't pollute our air, water, soil) that produces healthy food, free from harmful chemicals; that is affordable and accessible for people; that supports small-scale farms to flourish; that thinks about the long-term impact of decisions rather than profit and that does not exploit workers and the environment.'

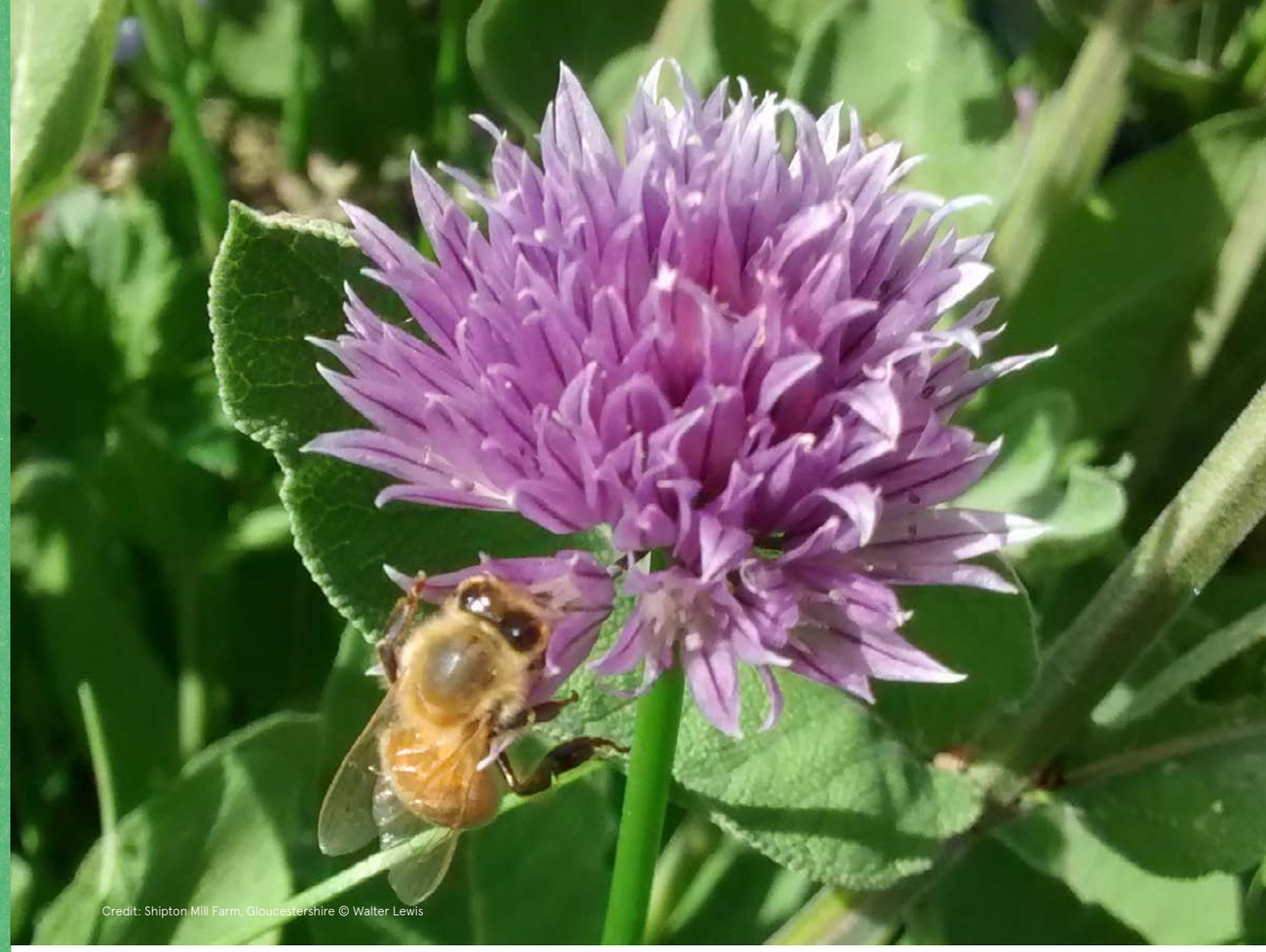
ANNA CLAYTON
LESS Lancaster
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'Look after the soil and the soil will look after us. The soil is like the microbiome of our bodies, fundamental to our health and depleted by wrong practices. It needs care and nurturing.'

NATASHA WILCOCK
Nutritional Therapist
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'Agricultural holdings should be paid to manage the landscape for river catchment management, biodiversity and public amenity as well as food, fuel, fibre and timber production.'

SIMON WATKINS
Gardener and Agroecologist
(A People's Food Policy consultation)



Credit: Shipton Mill Farm, Gloucestershire © Walter Lewis

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which our resilient food and farming system works within the finite limits of our earth; protects and regenerates natural resources and communities; builds soil; cools our planet and preserves our rich inheritance of agricultural biodiversity.

In this future, a participatory approach to agricultural science and farmer support services are helping us to adapt to a changing climate. Farmer and community organisations are thriving spaces for the development and sharing of regenerative and agroecological practices. Our farmers, food producers and land workers are supported through a mix of financial incentives and legislation.

Farmers are now incentivised to improve levels of soil organic matter, improve water storage capacity on their land, and adopt farming techniques that increase carbon sequestration and reduce GHG emissions, whilst also producing more food and timber.

Farming is now integrated with ecological restoration. Forestry, agroforestry, and the use of trees generally in the farmed landscape has become commonplace: for agricultural production; for cultural activities and recreation; and for the delivery of important ecosystem services like flood reduction and carbon sequestration. Subsidies and incentives encourage the use of trees in the farmed landscape, and foresters and farmers work together much more closely.

Our food economy has moved from being a linear supply chain to being part of regional and cross-sectoral circular economies. Nutrient and material loops have been closed with wastes transformed into useful resources. Collaboration across sectors and between rural and urban areas have created new livelihoods and business opportunities, adding value, increasing health and reducing pollution.

The case for change

Agriculture is a major global land use and has a significant impact on the environment. Globally, almost 40% of land is used for agriculture.[202] In the UK, agriculture accounts for around 70% of all land use.[203] Agriculture impacts the environment through soil (erosion, nutrient loss, and loss of soil carbon, soil organic matter and biodiversity), water systems (surface and groundwater pollution), air pollution (emissions of methane, nitrous oxide and other gases and pollutants with a resulting impact on climate change) and biodiversity loss.

As wealthier people in countries around the world eat more meat and dairy, which generally has a higher environmental footprint than plant-based foods, the pressure continues to mount on the environment and its ability to satisfy this expansion.

It is critical that policy makers realise the enormously important role that farming systems and farmers play in our environment and our cultural heritage. They should therefore support agroecological and smaller-scale farming systems which 'cool the planet' while producing healthy food for everyone.[204]

Globally, small-scale farms account for around 90% of all farms (with an average size of 2.2 hectares (5.4 acres)), and use less than 25% of the world's farmland to produce an estimated 80% of the food consumed in non-industrial countries.[205] In the UK, small farms make up a much smaller proportion of the total, but the impacts of big farms and the advantages of small farms are still similar.

Although big farms generally consume more resources, control the best lands, receive most of the irrigation water and infrastructure, get most of the financial credit and technical assistance, and are the farms for whom most modern inputs are designed, they have lower overall productivity when compared to small farms. Much of this has to do with low levels of employment used on big farms in order to maximise return on investment.

Beyond strict productivity measurements, small farms also are much better at producing and utilising biodiversity, maintaining landscapes, contributing to local economies, providing work opportunities and promoting social cohesion, not to mention their real and potential contribution to reversing the climate crisis.[206]

Climate change and GHG emissions are already having serious impacts on our environment, communities and food system. These impacts include: increased glacier melting (which could trigger 'tipping points' with catastrophic consequences across the world); increased species extinctions; reduced crop yields; increased incidences of extreme weather-related events; and direct impacts on people's livelihoods (due to crop yields, food insecurity and migration).[207] The catastrophic impact of climate change has been highlighted as the biggest potential threat to the global economy.[208]

Our global food system – which includes the processing, packaging and transport of food – accounts for up to one third of all global human-related GHG emissions.[209] In the UK, agriculture accounts for 10% of total GHG emissions, with emissions falling by 17% since 1990,[210] but given that roughly 50% of food and animal feed is now imported,[211] the 'real' figure (including import-related emissions) is substantially higher. Since 1990, other industries have cut emissions twice as quickly on average, but there is no clear plan for farming to make its fair share of the agreed 57% cuts by 2030.[212]

Biodiversity loss across the world is extremely high. Indeed, it is now widely accepted that we are living within the world's sixth mass extinction event.[213] Over half of the land surface, home to almost three-quarters of the human population, is now beyond the 'safe limit' for biodiversity proposed in the 'planetary boundaries' theory.[214] In the UK, 56% of species have declined over the last 50 years,[xxxviii] and 15% are at risk of disappearing completely.[215] In addition, 200,000 miles of hedgerow were lost between 1947 and 1990;[216] more than half of all orchards in the UK were removed between 1980 and 2005;[217] and over 44 million breeding birds were lost in the last 50 years.[218] Agricultural intensification has been identified as the most important driver of biodiversity change in the UK.[219]

Credit: Blaencamel Farm, Lampeter © Soil Association, Future Growers Scheme

Protecting wildlife cannot rely simply on pockets of protected habitat in nature reserves. The surrounding land, much of which is often farmland, must also be hospitable to nature. Increasing on-farm and in-field biodiversity does not need to mean a yield reduction. The sustainability of productive crops and pastures can be improved by increasing biodiversity in-field and in adjacent areas. Multi-variety cropping and mixed species intercropping can also improve productivity and pest and disease control.[220] Use of certain pesticides has been blamed for specific species declines, for example the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments have been widely blamed for harm caused to both wild and honey bee populations as well as affecting soil biodiversity.[221]

More than half of all fertile soils are degraded. Soil degradation is now as big a threat globally as climate change and is estimated to cost up to $10.6 trillion per year.[222] A 2012 Defra report estimated the annual costs of soil degradation in England and Wales to be between £0.9 and £1.4 billion.[223]

Agriculture has been shown to be the main cause of air pollution. Considered a major public health concern,[224] this air pollution comes from particulate matter related to the ammonia in fertilisers and animal waste from across Europe, Russia, eastern USA and East Asia.[225] Globally, agriculture is the second largest cause of air pollution-related deaths. Last year, a cross-party committee of MPs described air pollution in the UK as a 'public health emergency'.[226]

For every two tonnes of food we eat, one tonne is wasted.[227] A combination of preventing food waste from being generated, redistributing food where there is a surplus, and diverting surplus that isn't suitable for human consumption to animal feed could result in a 23% reduction in total food waste.[228]

Farming and food production can improve soil, water and air quality, as well as increasing biodiversity. An integrated and agroecological approach to farming which recognises the importance of the food sovereignty framework and rejects high input, energy intensive systems of farming that damage the environment, needs policies that support farmers, farm workers, and food processors to **restore and enhance** the environment rather than exploiting or simply conserving it.

xxxviii From a total of almost 4,000 terrestrial and freshwater species tracked.

Policy proposals

6.1 Protect natural resources

6.1.1 **Maintain environmental protection laws at least at the EU level post-Brexit**. These currently offer the best available legal means to protect the overexploitation and degradation of natural resources, including the Nitrates Directive, EU Water Framework Directive, Air Quality Framework Directive, Habitats Directive, and Landfill Directive.[xxxix] [229]

6.1.2 **Implement incentives to reward farmers and food producers for enhancing and enriching the natural resource base and on-farm agricultural biodiversity**. Equally, remove incentives that erode natural resources and biodiversity.

6.1.3 **Ban GM farming and field trials in England**. More than half of the 28 EU countries, including Germany and France, have banned farmers from growing GM crops. A ban is already in place in Northern Ireland[230] and Scotland.[231]

6.1.4 **Ban neonicotinoid pesticides.** Given the substantial evidence that neonicotinoids can be harmful to bees,[232] and that the European Commission will likely issue a ban on neonicotinoids in 2017,[233] England should take the initiative and ban this damaging group of pesticides. Policies should also be generated to ban and phase-out other highly hazardous pesticides.[234]

6.1.5 **Enforce clearer food labelling legislation.** This should include more specific details such as country of origin of all ingredients, inclusion of ingredients from production using GM organisms, chemicals used in production, and hormone and antibiotic use in animal production. From the consumer end, legislation – either through government or self-regulating organisations – could contribute to resource protection by using labelling and certification to enforce high production standards.

6.1.6 **Reduce England's overseas environmental footprint by reducing reliance on food imports.** Farmers should be supported to produce food that can be farmed in England with a lower ecological impact, thereby reducing food imports and England's overseas ecological footprint.

6.2 Improve water resource management

6.2.1 **Increase coverage of the revised Nitrate Vulnerable Zones,** which currently cover only 58% of land in England and should be increased further as an important means of reducing nutrient load in water system.

6.2.2 **Provide grants to support farmers to improve the water storage capacity of their land.** This could be achieved by improving field drainage and soil management through changing cropping patterns and land use practices, as well as reforesting degraded and marginal land. One study showed that reforesting only 5% of land reduced flood peaks by almost 30%.[235]

xxxix This would be in line with the findings of the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee's report *The Future of the Natural Environment after the EU Referendum* which stated that *'The Government must, before triggering Article 50, commit to legislating for a new Environmental Protection Act, ensuring that the UK has an equivalent or better level of environmental protection as in the EU.'*[229]

6.3 Protect and improve soils

6.3.1 **Develop legislation to enforce soil protection standards for all farmers**. Currently, farms receiving subsidies through the Basic Payment Scheme are inspected by the Rural Payments Agency to ensure cross compliance of soil standards.[236] Standards include: providing minimum soil cover; minimising soil erosion from cropping practice and livestock management; and maintaining levels of organic matter in soil. All farms, regardless of the subsidy they receive, should comply with these minimum standards of soil protection. In addition, an escalating series of penalties must be imposed on land managers for persistent cases of erosion.

6.3.2 **Develop incentives to reward farmers for improving soils by increasing soil organic matter** (or maintaining levels if they are already high). This could include payments for increasing soil organic matter or requirements on farm tenancies to maintain or improve soil fertility over the course of the tenancy.

6.3.3 **Implement a soil organic matter monitoring and reporting system**. This would be a farmer-led system of voluntary reporting on soil organic matter with data feeding into a national database, to run alongside legislation to enforce soil protection and incentives rewarding farmers who improve their soil organic matter.

6.4 Reduce agriculture-related GHG emissions and pollution

6.4.1 **Develop a comprehensive plan, and mandatory regulations, to reduce agriculture-related emissions**. Agriculture contributes almost 10% to the UK's total GHG emissions, and current government policy is guided by a 'voluntary approach' to reduce emissions in agriculture. The urgency of the matter necessitates stronger government intervention with either mandatory regulation or strong incentives for farmers to change their practices in line with commitments made in the Climate Change Act 2008.

6.4.2 **Model and pilot new mechanisms to lower agriculture-related nitrogen emissions by using fiscal measures**. An example would be a tax on synthetic nitrogen fertiliser.

6.5 Support carbon farming and agroforestry

6.5.1 **Farmers should be incentivised to adopt farming techniques that increase carbon sequestration and reduce GHG emissions**. Agroecological farming, agroforestry,[237] no-till cultivation, using plant cover crops and perennials, improving crop rotation cycles, and the use of permaculture design techniques have the potential to increase the amount of carbon sequestered by soils and contribute significantly to climate change mitigation. The emphasis of policies should be towards encouraging experimentation and innovation.

6.5.2 **Incentives should be designed to encourage new or ecological farmers to take over degraded land and soils which have been damaged by industrial farming**. This would help to increase soil carbon levels and reduce carbon loss into the atmosphere.[xl]

6.5.3 **Develop a national agroforestry strategy**. This could include:[238] a target of having agroforestry on 50% of all farms by 2030; capital grants and maintenance payments; and incentives for longer-term farm tenancies.[xli]

6.6 Protect and restore wilderness and biodiversity

6.6.1 **Carry out a feasibility study on rewilding areas of farmland.** This should be conducted on land that is currently either unproductive or currently managed by techniques causing severe natural resource degradation.

6.6.2 **Redirect financial support to agricultural research that enhances biodiversity.** This should be applied to 'wild areas' as well as on-farm and in-field. The protection and expansion of 'wild areas' is important but cannot substitute for the loss of diversity within the food production system. It is the level of biodiversity within a field (above and below ground, as well as in water) that underpins ecological production (see *Chapter 7: Knowledge*).

6.6.3 **Stimulate the production and availability of diverse locally-adapted seeds and livestock breeds** which can be exchanged between farmers and which will support their dynamic management of agricultural biodiversity. This is particularly important given the potential negative impacts of intellectual property rights, patents and 'plant variety protection laws' on the availability and diversity of plant varieties and animal breeds, and therefore on small-scale ecological production (see policy recommendation 7.4.6).

6.6.4 **Maintain and build on the best species-targeted agri-environment schemes.** These should be tailored to halt biodiversity declines through on-farm management and by paying farmers directly for achieving benefits to wildlife.

6.6.5 **Use the precautionary principle to decide which technologies and chemicals can be used in agriculture**. This includes assessing the effect that new technologies such as synthetic biology and 'gene drive' technology may have on wildlife, agricultural biodiversity, human health and traditional livelihoods.[240]

xl In Brazil, farmers are paid cash incentives to keep land forested. In California, a cap-and-trade programme requires polluting industries to offset their emissions by paying farmers who have adopted 'carbon farming' techniques. The system is far from perfect – many of the smaller-scale low-input farmers are not eligible for credits at the moment – but it is a model worth exploring.

xli The French government has developed a national strategy for agroforestry until 2020 which includes tax incentives, data collection and monitoring, advice and training, and knowledge sharing.[239]

6.6.6 **Instigate a 'polluter pays' principle**. Pollution from farms that causes loss of biodiversity (or harm to people), and therefore needs cleaning up, should be paid for by the people or the company responsible.

6.6.7 **Ensure a rigorous implementation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety**. This international agreement to protect diversity was ratified by the EU in 2002 and could be threatened by Brexit.

6.7 Reduce waste and transition towards circular economies

6.7.1 **Ban supermarket food waste**. This could initially echo legislation in France which prevents large supermarkets throwing away edible food.

6.7.2 **Allow food waste to be fed safely to pigs and chickens**. This would reduce farmers' dependence on grain/soya imports and make farming more economically viable. Evidence shows that the land use of EU pork could be reduced by one fifth (1.8 million hectares (4.4 million acres) of agricultural land) by changing EU legislation and using existing technologies to use food waste as animal feed for pigs.[xlii]

6.7.3 **Support the wider adoption of the Courtauld Commitment 2025 to reduce waste by at least one-fifth per person in ten years.**[241] This ambitious, collaborative agreement commits businesses to cut the waste and GHG emissions associated with food and drink. The government could lead by example and adopt this commitment across government departments and the public sector as a whole.

6.7.4 **Introduce mandatory food waste reduction targets in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 12.3 - to reduce food waste by 33% by 2025 and 50% by 2030, from farm to fork.** The government should step up its involvement and financial backing to make this possible. This will move us beyond a voluntary approach.

6.7.5 **Back the introduction of EU-wide binding targets to reduce EU food waste by 50% by 2030, from farm-to-fork** (part of the Circular Economy Package's amendments to the Waste Directive). The UK still has a place in the EU trialogue negotiations in 2017, to decide on the final targets.

6.7.6 **Develop and support campaigns to raise awareness about the need to reduce food waste**. Waste levels need to be reduced at all points along the food chain, by both individuals and corporations. This would reduce pressure to increase food yields, thereby improving food security.

6.7.7 **Enforce a reduction in the use of packaging by supermarkets** by setting annual targets and penalising non-compliance.

6.7.8 **Ban the production of non-compostable plastic cups, cutlery and plates.** This could echo legislation recently passed in France.[242]

6.7.7 **Reduce materials and nutrient waste by reuse and recycling of products.** By working at a local authority and city-region level, policies should emphasise food waste, by-product and nutrient recycling using a cross-sectoral approach.

xlii Campaigns such as The Pig Idea are attempting to lift the EU ban on feeding food waste to pigs. Local infrastructure funds may be required to implement safe processing of feed (see *Chapter 9: Finance*).

7

KNOWLEDGE

Education, innovation and research

`Our education system lets our children down in terms of life skills, growing food and eating healthily unless specifically opted for post-secondary school. We need cooking classes in all schools so that all children leave school knowing how to cook at least the basics and understand about nutrition. Growing food, cooking food, sharing food preparation and eating together are not valued or given time in the "go faster" treadmill of our education system.'

SARA DUNSEATH
Parkside School
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`It is critical to understand that a whole range of policies and not only those in the food sector impact how, why, where and what we eat in the UK. To neglect these other policy sectors is to do a disservice to the process of having a nationwide grassroots campaign.'

MAMA D
Community Centred Learning
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

`Lots of brilliant local initiatives and new techniques are being adopted (e.g. holistic management grazing, agroforestry). More than 500 local food projects were funded by the Big Lottery Local Food programme and led to lots of innovation. At the moment, UK government, EU regulation and research tend to favour large-scale agriculture rather than small-scale farming approaches and innovation; this means that GM / biotech / high tech precision farming is funded, rather than agroecology'

ANDY GOLDRING
Permaculture Association UK
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: Capital Growth, London's Food Growing Network © James Jenkins

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which – through developing education, training and research programmes with children, food workers, farmers, citizens and scientists – people's values and perceptions have shifted to support a more democratic and diverse food system. This system provides for the intellectual and cultural needs of everyone, as well as their nutrition.

In this future, people have learned to value food from a young age and are surrounded by, and involved in, good examples of food production and consumption.

Education in schools, colleges, universities and communities has been reinvigorated and includes learning about food, farming, land use, ecology and agricultural history, and the colonial history of the UK and how it has impacted food systems across the world.

People from all walks of life have practical growing and cooking skills, as well as the ability to participate in decisions to improve the food system. Everyone in the food system is supported to contribute their knowledge and experience to create a sustainable food and farming system.

Comprehensive vocational training is in place for everyone in the food system. There is a well-funded agricultural advice and training service, which places an emphasis on agroecology and community food systems. Farmer organisations are supported to develop agroecological knowledge and innovate in co-operation with researchers and educators.

Citizens are involved in decisions about public research priorities and funding, and knowledge is not only in the hands of scientists and powerful private interests, but accessible to all. Research institutes are transparent about their funding and research objectives.

The case for change

Farming today is severely undervalued, both in terms of the status and wages of farmers and food workers, and the importance society gives to farming as an activity. This undervaluing of farming coincides with a loss of the knowledge and skills required for a sustainable food system: fewer and fewer farmers are working increasingly larger tracts of land using industrial farming methods; the average age of a farmer is almost retirement age; agricultural extension services[xliii] and agricultural colleges are closing; and farming has become increasingly mechanised and industrialised. It is clear that decades of valuable farming knowledge and skills are being lost.

The way that agriculture is funded has changed, with research and development (R&D) increasingly being driven by commercial interests rather than public funding. Even the government acknowledges that public investment in applied agricultural research has declined since the 1980s and has affected the UK's competitiveness when compared to other European countries.[243] The decline in agricultural R&D has had significant impacts on research infrastructure, as well as the advances in knowledge and practice that emerge from universities and research institutions.

Agricultural extension services in England and Wales, which were active until the 1980s, were either privatised or closed in the 1990s.[245] The Royal Agricultural Society of England, together with 15 English Agricultural Societies, does deliver some extension work through the Innovation for Agriculture Initiative,[246] but this falls far short of a public extension system.

The main focus of current food and farming research is on knowledge that increases productivity in industrial agriculture. As in the USA,[xliv] there is inadequate funding for agroecology. Additionally, as little as 1% of government spending on agricultural research and innovation goes to practical projects led by farmers.[247] Funding for agricultural research is heavily biased towards research related to conventional agricultural systems (usually geared towards yield increases and improving input efficiency regardless of the environmental or social impacts of the innovations). The government place too much emphasis on scientists and the private sector developing seeds and other agricultural inputs which do not apply to agroecological systems. For example, the use of GM technologies is unpopular; research into further GM techniques will therefore not help to produce the types of food most people would prefer to eat.[248]

We can best develop agroecological knowledge through collaboration between scientists and farmers, and by nurturing farmer- and community-led innovation. Currently, there are considerable barriers – economic, technical, legal and cultural – which limit access to the existing knowledge base. It is therefore essential that we move towards an 'open knowledge' model that promotes open access to research, data and technical and education information. This move would help to accelerate agricultural improvement and innovation.

There is still a lack of food and agriculture education in the school system and a lack of support for vocational training for farmers, with students rarely encouraged to pursue a career in agriculture or horticulture. According to Defra, only 18% of agricultural managers have received full agricultural training; 21% received basic training and the rest have 'practical experience only'.[249] There has also been a growth in students studying agriculture at UK universities,[250] but there is very little education specifically related to organic or agroecological farming. A new approach to education, applied research, knowledge exchange and advice is needed.

Training children, chefs, caterers and the general public to cook and choose food that supports a sustainable food system is necessary to build food literacy. The Children's Food Trust *State of the Nation* report showed that '*giving children more opportunities to learn to cook*' was considered by parents the most likely intervention to help children eat more healthily in the future.[251] Eating healthily means buying healthier food, and ultimately provides more support for the farmers that produce it.

Education campaigns, teaching about food and farming in schools, and the creation of more traineeship and apprenticeship opportunities for young adults are all needed to raise the profile of farming and food production. It is through increasing people's understanding of the importance of buying, cooking and eating healthy and sustainably produced food that we can generate awareness about the urgency of shifting to sustainable and agroecological farming systems.

xliii Agricultural extension is the process of working with farmers to enable them to apply agricultural research and knowledge to improve their agricultural practices.
xliv A recent study in the US found that around half of the 824 USDA-backed research studies funded in 2014, equivalent to $294 million, didn't include any components related to sustainable agriculture at all. Only 4% of funding went to research projects which included agroecological farming practices as well as support for socioeconomic sustainability, 3% went to studies that included complex rotations, 1% to rotational or regenerative grazing, another 1% to integrated crop-livestock systems research and less than 1% to agroforestry related projects.[244]

Credit: Riverford Wash Farm, Devon © Soil Association, Future Growers Scheme

Policy proposals

7.1 Expand and improve food education programmes

7.1.1 Fully integrate healthy food and sustainable farming into the national curriculum. This could include linking all schools to at least one working farm, as well as pairing school kitchens with local farms.

7.1.2 Support community food growing projects. These play an important role in enabling people to learn, develop and share knowledge and skills. They should be supported by local food strategies and local authorities through local food plans (see policy recommendations 3.8.2 and 9.4.1).

7.1.3 Improve sustainable food and nutrition education in local communities. Local authorities should support local communities, community health services, and health charities to provide accessible food and nutrition education with an emphasis on sustainable eating.

7.1.4 Support city-level efforts to promote sustainable eating. This could be achieved through public health campaigns developed with the input of Food Policy Councils and civil society panels of experts.

7.1.5 Support the establishment of a guild or professional body associated with farming. This would help to raise the profile of farming and therefore the perceived status of farming and farmers in the general public. The guild must be set up to ensure that it does not need funding or sponsorship from the corporate agriculture sector.

7.2 Develop community education programmes

7.2.1 **Build community knowledge and skills.** Regional, metropolitan and local authorities should facilitate the development of community education programmes to build knowledge and skills about the food system, food cultures, nutrition, and practical growing and cooking skills. These programmes should be designed and delivered by members of the local community

7.2.2 **Provide more resources to marginalised community groups to develop community-based education and learning programmes.** This includes, for example, disabled people or those on low incomes, who are often excluded from educational and decision-making processes.

7.2.3 **Support the development of Community Education Food Hubs.** Regional, metropolitan and local authorities must ensure that every community has a Community Education Food Hub focusing on supporting and nurturing a community-led approach to food education, such as culturally appropriate cookery courses and food growing courses. The hubs should be community-led and locally adapted. Authorities must provide access to funding, land, buildings and training support.

7.3 Improve vocational training

7.3.1 **Increase funding for apprenticeships in horticulture and food production**. With the fall in the number of young adults training to work in farming and food production, it is essential that policies are designed to attract people to these sectors and to revalue vocational education and training.

7.3.2 **Encourage paid internships, training camps and courses on farms**. Farms and land-based businesses should be supported to include training within their business models.

7.3.3 **Increase the number of training colleges offering training in crop production, horticulture and agroecological production approaches.** Given the urgent need to increase domestic production of horticultural products, training colleges offering vocational agroecological courses need to increase, together with an integrated effort to attract young people to the sector.

7.3.4 **Support an active recruitment programme to encourage young people into agriculture and horticulture.** Examples include a programme of careers fairs, talks by farmers and growers at schools and colleges, and career-orientated farm visits.

7.4 Develop innovative education, research and agricultural extension services

7.4.1 **Support farmer-led innovation.** This could be achieved through the development of co-operatively run test farms or field labs, as well as producer-led experimental agriculture projects. Knowledge from these projects could be disseminated through farmer-to-farmer exchanges. This could include *'a dedicated farmer innovation fund with a budget of at least 10% of the UK's public agricultural research and development budget'*.[252]

7.4.2 **Establish a publicly funded agricultural extension service.** This system would offer support and guidance to farmers of all sizes about managing land in an environmentally beneficial and productive way, focusing on agroecological farming practices. This advice service should be backed up by a rural development scheme.

7.4.3 **Provide increased funding for public agriculture and food research**. Farmers and citizens must have oversight over funding and research priorities. Today, this would include increasing participation and transparency for research funding. Research should be based on a holistic, transdisciplinary agroecological approach, breaking down the barriers between disciplines and combining the knowledge of scientists, farmers and other actors in the food system.

7.4.4 **Transform research institutions in higher education to support agroecological innovation.** This would create enabling conditions for scientists to follow research approaches, operational procedures and career pathways that support and encourage transdisciplinary and participatory research to support agroecological innovation.

7.4.5 **Develop capacity amongst educators to use open learning, community-based and popular education methods.** These methods would be used in a community setting, to enhance higher education, and in primary and secondary school food education within the national curriculum.

7.4.6 **Prioritise research that supports the development of agroecological practices and technologies.** For example, more research should be directed towards participatory seed breeding programmes (see policy recommendation 6.6.3).

7.4.7 **Monitor and regulate the role of UK technologies in foreign aid and development programmes.** This is to ensure that technologies are applied in a way that respects and builds on the knowledge and participation of relevant communities and organisations who are directly affected in the Global South.

7.5 Develop 'open knowledge' systems

7.5.1 **Ensure knowledge generated for and disseminated amongst farmers, food producers and citizens is 'open'** – that is, free to use, re-use and redistribute without restriction. Ensure that knowledge and innovations are not captured through patents and private intellectual property rights, and instead remain accessible to all as part of the knowledge commons.

8

TRADE

Reorganising food trade and localising markets

'Healthy food should be produced in a sustainable way by a supply chain comprised of fair trading relationships conducted in good faith and from which all parties have the freedom to walk away. Given the profitability of selling food, the power of the largest manufacturing and retail companies, and the extent to which a lot of agricultural labour is located overseas, it seems unlikely that such a vision will be achievable without radical changes in the sector and the law.'

TOM WILLS
Traidcraft Exchange
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'As a wholesaler, we despair at the amount of food we import and the lack of co-ordinated help to identify resilient supply chains at a local level and to join the dots between what is grown here and where it is sold.'

SCOTT ERWIN
Greencity Wholefoods
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'In Hackney, where we're based, you can buy organic food from a dozen retailers within half a mile. Dagenham, where we have our second farm, just 10 miles away, is a food desert, with no fresh food available at all in the half mile between the tube station and the farm.'

JULIE BROWN
Growing Communities
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'We need to make the food distribution chain shorter and the links in that chain more closely connected. By doing so, growers and farmers will retain more of the financial value of their food. The stakeholders in the chain will more easily build collaborative, supportive, trusting and mutually beneficial relationships, so that the chain works effectively in the long-term for everyone involved. It will enable people to eat food that is grown/reared/produced near to where they live, building strong local food economies that are more resilient to environmental and political changes.'

LYNNE DAVIS
Open Food Network
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'Supermarkets are driving down the prices paid to farmers and distorting understanding of the real costs of producing food. We need better ways of ensuring fair prices for farmers so that they are not so much at the mercy of supermarkets. We cannot continue to expect rock bottom prices for food. If we expect unprocessed food to be cheap, this will mean selecting imports from countries with lower rates of pay rather than locally produced food.'

BEV SEDLEY
Cambridge Sustainable Food
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: Capital Growth, London's Food Growing Network © Ida Fabrizio

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which there are a diverse range of places where food can be purchased, including farmers' markets, community supported agriculture schemes, online distribution networks, and independent and community retail outlets. These markets provide nutritious, delicious and affordable food for everyone, support decent livelihoods for all workers and ensure that people earn a fair reward for their labour and products.

In this future, the power of supermarkets has been significantly curtailed. Short supply chains and local markets are acknowledged as public services, and accordingly protected by law. Public procurement contracts have been reoriented to prioritise sourcing food from agroecological farmers and food producers.

International trade is still part of the global food system, but food is no longer just another commodity that can be speculated on in the global market. Instead, food markets and trade have been reoriented in England[253] and internationally[254] to support domestic markets where possible, which are recognised as a priority for food security.

Policy instruments, including tariffs where necessary, have been introduced to prevent imports with lower food standards from undermining local production, or England's exports undermining local production and food sovereignty in other countries.

Producers across the globe are farming and processing products in an environmentally and socially sustainable way and are able to earn a fair reward for their labour and from good food production.

Our markets now enrich local economies, protect farmers and farming landscapes and everybody is able to eat fresh, healthy, seasonal produce affordably, all year round.

The case for change

Over the past few decades there been a major consolidation of production, manufacturing and retail enterprises across the food supply chain. A rich diversity of independent shops, small farms and craft producers have faded out of existence. Today, the UK grocery market is worth £180 billion, and is highly concentrated, with eight supermarkets holding a 93% market share of food retailing.[255] 58% of food is bought from supermarkets or hypermarkets, 21% from convenience stores, 16% from discounters or online, and 6% from other retailers. In food manufacturing, 6% of enterprises are responsible for 76% of turnover.[256] In the past 60 years 100,000 specialist food stores have closed across the UK.[257]

This concentration of the market has resulted in disproportionate power lying in the hands of specific industry buyers. Supermarkets, for example, have been found to breach contracts with suppliers, leaving them powerless.[258] The promotion of loss-leading products, such as milk, have in turn distorted public understanding of the true costs of food production. The era of 'cheap food', and the driving down of shop prices by a supermarket monopoly consistently sees food producers' livelihoods and businesses becoming precarious, with dairy farmers and milk producers already being forced to sell milk under the cost of production. In the past five years, the number of food production companies going into insolvency has trebled, with 162 closing in 2015.[259] Large buyers with the resources to acquire more detailed sectoral knowledge have been able to use this knowledge to dictate prices and concentrate market dominance.

The UK government has provided little protection for small businesses in the food supply chain, despite the sector creating 13.5% of national employment. Under CAP, subsidies are based on the size of landholding and require compliance with environmental practices. This model of subsidies has buffered UK agriculture from the free market, but market pressures have resulted in a trend toward farming that minimises labour per unit area.

In 2016, on average over all farms, agricultural businesses ran at a loss.[260] Subsidies received through the Basic Payment Scheme (CAP pillar 1) and agri-environment and diversification schemes accounted for over 50% of all farm income, and often served to recover losses incurred from agricultural production itself.[261] The subsidy has effectively protected farmers from consistently falling farm gate prices, with producers currently receiving only 9% – less than 10p per pound – of the value of their produce sold.[262]

The rising concentration of the food supply chain has negatively affected consumers as well. This increase in food superstores has been found as a contributing factor toward the rise in 'food deserts'. Even the growing number of local food distribution networks are almost exclusively found in affluent areas of the country.[264] There is an irony here, as spending in local food outlets generates 10 times the local economic wealth[xlv] and three times the number of people in employment [265] for each £1 of turnover compared with spending in supermarkets. However, while local food distribution networks are growing, they are not keeping pace with the expansion of supermarkets. ALDI has announced its plan to build 400 more stores (to add to their existing 600) across the UK in the next five years, whilst LIDL plans to open 280 new stores in London alone.[266]

The UK is a net importer of food products, totalling £39.6bn in 2014.[267] We import nearly twice as many food products from the other EU countries than we export, however our exports are significant. In 2014, we exported £12.8bn worth of products.[268]

As a net food importing nation, the UK government must develop progressive trade policies that support the realisation of food sovereignty in countries around the world. In countries where farmers produce food for an export market, too much of the farming system has been orientated to produce and supply cash crops like coffee and sugar and non-traditional export crops such as high value horticulture, guided by years of International Monetary Fund (IMF) structural adjustment policies.

When participating in international trade negotiations the UK has a responsibility to minimise the exploitation of people's livelihoods, lands, economies and communities around the world and repair our colonial legacy by respecting and supporting the food sovereignty of other nations. This is particularly pertinent during post-Brexit trade negotiations.

xlv From £10 spent in a supermarket, only £2.54 goes back into the local economy. In contrast, spending £10 in a local food outlet is worth £25 to the local economy through reinvestment.[263]

Section B | **8 Trade**

As the UK negotiates its departure from the EU, new trading partnerships and agreements will be formed with countries around the world. In addition to renegotiating the role of agriculture in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), any post-Brexit bilateral or plurilateral trade deals (including a potential UK-US deal) must ensure that the role of agriculture is protected. Food is currently traded as a commodity in speculative financial markets and this must be curbed. With hundreds of millions of people malnourished in a world with enough food to feed everybody, agriculture must not be used as a bargaining chip in global trade deals. As agricultural trade rules are negotiated, the special nature of agriculture needs to be taken into full consideration.

Credit: Unicorn Grocery, a workers' co-operative supplying an exclusively plant-based range of affordable wholefoods and organic produce, Manchester © Unicorn Grocery

Policy proposals

8.1 Ensure food stays affordable

8.1.1 Extend the Groceries Code Adjucator's role to monitor prices to ensure a fair proportion of retail price goes to producers, to prevent unfair purchasing practices and to introduce greater public transparency and accountability in food supply chains.

8.2 Prioritise short supply chains in local and domestic policies

8.2.1 Extend the remit of the Grocery Code Adjudicator to enforce fair trading practices across the whole supermarket supply chain, including indirect suppliers and producers.

8.2.2 Develop a Local Production and Distribution Strategy that enables the co-ordination of currently disparate and often isolated producers, processors and distributors. This would support direct sales and short supply chains to enable local distribution, create local employment and stimulate local economies

8.2.3 Facilitate co-ordination of local production and distribution through training, advisory services, and finance. Producer, marketing, processing and distribution collectives must be supported to network and collaborate to achieve economies of scale.

8.2.4 Supermarket developments must be subjected to rigorous assessment including community consultations, social and economic impact assessment and adherence to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on retail diversity and town individuality, support for markets and protection of fertile land.[269]

8.3 Enable decentralisation of processing and manufacturing

8.3.1 Local abattoirs and humane slaughter facilities must be prioritised and reintroduced around the country. Fewer abattoirs means further distances and longer travel times for farmers to bring their animals to slaughter. Local facilities would create more local employment, smaller distances for livestock to travel and increase the capacity of short supply chains.

8.3.2 Food hygiene regulation standards must be made appropriate to the scale and type of processing. Promote rigorous protection of food safety through effective risk assessment leading to control systems that are appropriate for different scales, contexts and modes of production and marketing, while providing information and capacity building to meet these requirements.[270]

8.3.3 The government and local authorities should create a fund available for producers and processors to invest in and improve processing and storage equipment and facilities. This would enhance availability, quality, nutritional value and food safety throughout the seasons and the 'hungry gap'.[271] [xlvi]

xlvi This is the period in spring when there is little or no fresh produce available on farms as it is too cold for most crops too grow.

8.4 Prioritise sourcing of local and agroecological produce in public procurement contracts (see policy recommendation 3.4.1)

8.4.1 Governmental, non-governmental and public bodies should provide strong leadership on sustainable food procurement by setting challenging long-term targets for food procurement, including for schools and hospitals, and enforcing these targets.[xlvii]

8.4.2 Establish policy and institutional arrangements, including innovative partnerships, that empower food producers and providers to have an effective and equitable role in the design and implementation of contractual arrangements.[272]

8.5 Reorient international food trade policy to protect domestic food economies, both in England and internationally

8.5.1 Develop financial regulation that safeguards consumers and producers against speculation-driven volatility in food prices. There must be stringent regulation of the agricultural futures commodity markets to ensure that price stability domestically and internationally is not undermined.

8.5.2 Utilise available trade policy instruments, including tariffs and quotas, to protect producers from cheap imports that undercut food produced locally and seasonally. Sensitive agricultural products should be identified, with consideration to (among other factors) health and nutrition. The full flexibility of trade policy mechanisms, including tariffs and quotas, should then be used to support public policy aims, particularly regarding: food security; health; nutrition; environment; climate; rural development; employment; and local economic development.

8.5.3 Ensure that trade agreements do not undermine labour, environmental, climate, health, safety or animal welfare standards here and overseas. Trade and investment deals should not be allowed to undermine farmers and food workers' rights, standards in animal welfare, food safety, environmental protection, or climate commitments.

8.5.4. Renegotiate the role of agriculture in the WTO and any post-Brexit bilateral and plurilateral trade deals to ensure that the role of agriculture is protected. As agricultural trade rules are negotiated, the special nature of agriculture needs to be taken into full consideration.

xlvii The Food for Life partnership scheme run by the Soil Association provides a good starting point, and could be adapted and rolled out to fit all public procurement policies.

9

FINANCE

Funding a better food system

'There need to be sustainable long-term sources of funding to allow strategic developments to take place – short-term funding opportunities thwart strategic development and can cause mission drift.'

PROFESSOR NIGEL CURRY
University of Lincoln
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'We need subsidies and taxes aimed at incentivising small- to medium-scale ecological food production, and taxes on highly processed and "industrial" food.'

RU LITHERLAND
OrganicLea (A People's Food Policy consultation)

'Lack of local funding is a barrier for urban community food growing schemes – many national funding schemes only want to fund new projects, so keeping something funded that is established and works well is difficult.'

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT
Ecolocal
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'Subsidies for large-scale farming aren't working. Encouragement and financial support should be given to smaller-scale businesses.'

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

'A new system of taxes and subsidies to better support environmentally sustainable food production and make it more widespread and affordable is needed. This could include, for example, taxing the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides and earmarking the money raised to support alternative practices. Small-scale farmers (who are often more productive per hectare and employ more people than large-scale industrial farms) should be provided with more financial support and access to funding and technology through government grants.'

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT
(A People's Food Policy consultation)

Credit: The Kindling Trust, Manchester © The Kindling Trust

Our vision

Our vision is of a future in which the UK government has prioritised investment in a fair, sustainable and healthy food system – which is recognised as an investment in our collective health and prosperity. Our food system now enables people to access ample, healthy and nutritious food; protects and regenerates our land, rivers and seas; and pays people fairly for the work they do.

In this future, the farming subsidy system uses public money to support the farms that are producing good food while also protecting and improving the natural resources that farming depends on.

Funding is available for new farmers, to train and support them to develop their skills and enable them to access capital for innovation and infrastructure. Funding is also available for agroecological farmer-led research and larger-scale research projects aimed at solving the environmental and resource challenges faced by farmers, fisherfolk and land workers.

The tax system has been reformed. Local food networks are rewarded, food producers can afford to offer apprenticeships, and landowners are incentivised to make unproductive land available for food growing or other beneficial uses.

Externalities like pollution, climate change and obesity are a thing of the past, and no longer cost taxpayers billions of pounds each year. A series of fiscal measures – including a carbon tax – are helping to accelerate the changes needed to bring about a better food and farming system for everyone.

Public funding is now used to reduce chemical inputs, support domestic agroecological food production, reduce diet-related health problems, eliminate food insecurity, build soil and provide the basis for a genuinely sustainable economy.

The case for change

There are a wide range of policy levers (carrots and sticks) that governments use to influence and support certain farming, natural resource, and landscape management practices. The most cost-effective and powerful levers are taxes and government regulation. Other levers include information campaigns, labelling systems, voluntary agreements, and transparency and information disclosures. These can all be part of a mix used to restrict damaging practices and encourage practices that support environmental and human health.

Farming in this country is heavily dependent on funding, whether through subsidies or grants. These subsidies help to pay for outcomes that the market will not or cannot pay for. But while this approach benefits many, it is also a double-edged sword. Without it, only some of the largest businesses would survive, at the expense of biodiversity, and small-scale and family farming. With it, the largest landowners and businesses benefit the most anyway, and environmental and social protections are enforced at the lowest possible level to allow big businesses to expand their operations and increase profits wherever they can.

The EU's CAP is the main provider of farming subsidies in England and the UK as a whole. The CAP also provides funding for agri-environment schemes and rural development grants that aim to protect the natural environment by promoting good practice.

Currently the subsidies distributed through the CAP are a 'land subsidy' as farmers and landowners are paid by the hectare: the more land you own, the larger the subsidy you receive. The main concerns with CAP are:

1. Payments are unrelated to the productivity of the farm, so landowners can claim subsidies independently of how much food they are producing (although there are good reasons for separating subsidy from food production volumes, i.e. the problems of 'food dumping' and overproduction). The direct payments have become essential to support farming sectors which are not able to survive on the basis of market prices.
2. The extreme bias in funding mostly supports unsustainable industrial food and bioenergy production and research, and disproportionately benefits large landowners. Meanwhile farms of less than five hectares (12 acres) receive no support.
3. The area-based payment system, which gives the same unit of payment per hectare to a large farm and a small farm, actually over-rewards large farms which have lower costs per unit of land than small farms.
4. The low level of environmental management expected for the payments takes the place of effective government regulation to reduce or prevent damaging farming practices.
5. There is hardly any significant support for new entrants, or for small food and farming businesses.

The government has stated that payments will continue unchanged until at least 2020. It is likely that whatever system replaces the current one will continue to disproportionately benefit large landowners. While many of the environmental protection measures that come with subsidies are effective and important, it is clear that the system as a whole needs to be radically reformed.

Credit: Food education program farm visit © School Food Matters

It is important that we defend the need for food and farming to be supported by government funding. One of the threats to food safety and public health is austerity. Cuts to local authority and other government budgets mean all those charged with enforcement are struggling with capacity and loss of knowledge issues.

The government has an active role to play in ensuring that everyone has healthy affordable food, just as the government puts funding towards healthcare, housing and education. It therefore needs to ensure that taxes and subsidies are used to support how we eat and how we use land. The funding available for food production and farming should be increased, but the way the subsidy is distributed needs to radically change. Money needs to be made available to support young farmers and new entrants as well as more established farmers, improve regional and rural infrastructure, and increase agroecological and farming research. Careful reform of the tax and subsidy system will ensure everyone's right to food and a healthy environment.

We know that we want a food system that enables people to access ample, healthy and nutritious food; that protects and regenerates our land, rivers and seas; and that pays people fairly for the work they do. This will cost money, possibly more than we spend at the moment. We argue that if it is spent wisely, an extra investment in a fair, sustainable and healthy food system, will be exactly that – an investment – in our future health and prosperity.

A People's Food Policy is bold and ambitious. Some policy proposals outlined in this document have already been suggested by other groups and some have detailed costings associated. However, *A People's Food Policy* does not include a detailed breakdown of financial options, or likely costs and savings; a full financial assessment, especially in the light of unknown changes post-Brexit, was beyond the scope of this project. We see this as part of the next stage of the work.

Policy proposals

9.1 Create a new system for supporting England's farmers

9.1.1 **Maintain current levels of funding for farming.** In 2015, payments from the EU's CAP totalled around £3 billion and contributed between 50-60% of farm income. Given that food prices are low, and that these subsidies make up such a significant portion of farmers' income, removing these subsidies would have a potentially devastating effect on the food and farming industry.

9.1.2 **Reform the system for distribution of subsidies.** This could be done by either removing area-based subsidy payments or capping/tapering them to level the playing field between smaller farmers and large landowners. This would also help to control the effect that the area-based payment system has on increasing land prices. Examples of alternatives to the current system include the universal payment approach,[xlviii] and the Land Workers' Alliance 'Whole Farm Management Scheme'.[273] [xlix]

9.1.3 **Continue payments for targeted farming enterprises,** allowing the government to give additional support to sectors which are struggling or need to expand, so that the UK can be more self-reliant in food. Currently the dairy industry is an example of a sector that is struggling because farmers are paid below the cost of production and not protected from cheap imports. Payments could be made on the basis of workers per holding rather than on the amount of land, which would also create jobs. It is crucial that subsidies don't just go to the farming or food sector that 'shouts the loudest' and that measures are put in place to limit the influence of the lobbying industry. Sectors requiring support should be identified through consultation with a wide range of actors within the farming and food business sector, including small and medium-sized businesses.

9.2 Support farming that delivers public goods

9.2.1 **Make subsidy payments conditional on delivering 'public goods'.**[l] This would result in more attention being paid to how food is produced and natural resources are managed. Farmers, and the owners of agricultural holdings, should be paid not simply to manage, but rather to improve landscapes and natural resources. They should also be encouraged to improve the sustainability of the farming methods used to produce food – for example by converting monoculture farms into mixed farms. Public goods include: access to healthy affordable food for all people; clean water and air; flood reduction and prevention; carbon sequestration; increases in biodiversity; support for pollinators; and public access to nature.

9.2.2 **Remove grants for commercial large-scale biofuel and biomass.** Both of these take up valuable land needed for food and fodder production, can exacerbate soil erosion, and inflate the price of land.

xlviii A recent report by the New Economics Foundation, commissioned by Global Justice Now, suggested giving each active farmer with at least one hectare (2.47 acres) of land a universal payment of £5,000.[274] This would assist in the transition to a public goods model for subsidies. Given that farmers with less than five hectares (12 acres) currently receive no financial support from the government through CAP, it is essential that a fairer system recognises the important contribution small farms play in the economy and environment and rewards them accordingly.[275]

xlix The Land Workers' Alliance has proposed simplifying the subsidy system so that all payments go through a single 'Whole Farm Management Scheme' (and area-based payments are scrapped) to include: (1) environmental options; (2) support for new holdings; (3) other capital grants; (4) contributions towards organic certification; (5) forestry planting and management; (6) special grants for innovative farm structures; and (7) grants for taking trainees and training.[276]

l There is a distinction between the contracting model, where landowners competitively tender for the right to deliver a good and are given payment if they win the tender, and the more traditional subsidy model, where anyone that can prove they have delivered the public good is entitled to a fixed payment. We favour the latter model based on the subsidy system, as it encourages more people to make the effort to provide public goods.

9.2.3 **Increase support for the transition to organic, mixed and regenerative farming systems**. This would be an investment for transition, rather than a long-term subsidy, since agri-environment schemes or similar would provide support to farmers providing environmental benefits or public good through their farming practices in the longer-term.

9.3 Improve financial support for regional infrastructure[277]

9.3.1 **Provide grants and financial support for medium-scale and regional infrastructure projects**. This would enable local and regional supply chains to become stronger and more competitive, as well as supporting small-scale businesses and the emergence of new businesses. This is something that is really lacking at the moment in the UK, especially compared to other European countries, and is a key barrier to more localised food production.

9.4 Fund community farms and new farmers

9.4.1 **Provide funding through local authorities to support the development of community food growing projects.** This could be done through the development of education and training programmes that are accessible to people in areas of deprivation, and by making more public land available for community growing projects (see policy recommendations 3.8.2 and 7.1.2).

9.4.2 **Provide financial incentives and government funding to support farming apprenticeships and training.**[278] This could be coupled with a widespread advertising campaign to promote the benefits of a career on the land.

9.4.3 **Provide funding to support 'starter farms'.** This would allow newly trained farmers and growers to develop their skills before starting independent businesses.

9.4.4 **Facilitate access to start-up capital through support schemes, grants and low interest loans.** These are needed to rent or buy land and begin a sustainable farming or food business.

9.4.5 **Increase availability of financing to reduce the cost of certification.** Costs of organic and other environmental certification schemes can be too high for new farmers and small businesses. Subsidies should be made available to farmers to cover the cost of certification. This could be funded through diverting funds received through a 'polluter pays' mechanism, whereby industrial and chemical farming practices are also required to pay for a labelling system.

9.5 Tax carbon, junk food and meat

9.5.1 **Carry out a feasibility study into the impact of a carbon tax on GHG emissions generated by fossil fuels**. This would be with a view to eventually implementing a carbon tax, and using the money raised to subsidise renewable energy production in general and community energy initiatives in particular. This would have a considerable impact on agriculture-related emissions, which currently make up almost 10% of total UK GHG emissions. The tax could be designed along the lines of British Columbia's carbon tax (introduced in 2008).[279]

9.5.2 **Implement a junk food tax.** As with the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, money raised should be ring-fenced and used to fund access to healthy and sustainable food. This could be along the lines of Mexico's tax on high-calorie snacks, adding to the Soft Drinks Industry Levy which the government confirmed would be implemented in the Spring Budget 2017.[280]

9.5.3 **Implement a meat tax**, or VAT on meat. The tax would be offset for more sustainable meat producers through increased revenue from targeted agri-environment schemes. Additionally, a meat tax (linked to VAT) would have the potential to raise considerable revenue which could be spent on a scheme to support more sustainable meat production. An alternative could be to charge VAT on industrially produced meat only, with smaller and/or more sustainable production units exempt.[li]

9.6 Reform the tax system

9.6.1 **Establish a Review Group to develop proposals for a 'Location Charge'**[lii] (see policy recommendation 4.6.4).

9.6.2 **Introduce tax breaks for landholders who offer fallow urban land for temporary food growing**. This would incentivise landowners to turn unused land to productive use and create more educational and ecological spaces in our cities.

9.6.3 **Local authorities should support local food networks by offering reduced business rates and affordable market access to local enterprises.** This would encourage the growth of local food businesses and increase access and availability to local food for everyone.

9.6.4 **Employment in agriculture should be encouraged through tax efficient apprentice and employment schemes**. An example of this would be to reduce employer National Insurance contributions in the agricultural sector.

9.6.5 **Improve inheritance tax laws on land owned by active farmers.** Active farmers who pass their land onto family members who are also actively farming the land should be exempt from inheritance tax (see policy recommendation 4.6.2).

li Both methods of taxation have their own potential complications including the issue of identifying 'sustainable meat' and 'industrially produced meat' and the regressive nature of VAT in general, and food taxes in particular. Given the increased evidence of the climate mitigation and health benefit potential of meat (and dairy) taxes,[281] there is clearly scope for further research and government support to explore policy options.
lii Some forms of this are known as Land Value Tax (see footnote xxvi).

9.7 Fund agroecology research

9.7.1 **Shift public research budgets towards identifying and developing solutions to agro-ecological challenges**. This could include supporting producers who take a lead on innovative and experimental agriculture projects with subsidies and grants, as well as providing greater support for farmer-led research such as the Innovative Farmers programme.[282]

9.7.2 **Increase public investment in agricultural research funding.** Funding currently made available through academic channels such as the Natural Environment Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council needs to be increased and more of it channelled towards agroecological research.

9.8 Reform UK foreign aid to support food sovereignty, agroecology and the right to food in recipient countries

9.8.1 **Financing for international aid programmes related to agriculture should focus on supporting agroecology and must not undermine food sovereignty in other countries.** Sustainable farming must be the basis for agricultural development policy and practice. Business development for UK industry should not be pursued as a part of international aid programmes.

9.9 Implement fair prices and the true cost of food

9.9.1 **Redirect subsidies and public funds to support sustainable food production methods**. This would ultimately help make good food more affordable and accessible to more people, in particular those in low income households.

9.9.2 **Address the rising proportion of income spent on non-food costs**. This could be achieved by, for example, implementing rent controls and capping rising energy prices.

9.9.3 **The Groceries Code Adjudicator should be given substantially more powers to ensure the affordability of food and that farmers gain a fair price for their work and produce** (see policy recommendation 8.1.1).

SECTION C
POLICY PRIORITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

This report contains over fifty policy proposals across nine chapters. These policy proposals were developed in collaboration with numerous grassroots groups, unions, community organisers, campaigners and NGOs, together with extensive research into innovative food policy making across Europe and internationally.

In order for *A People's Food Policy* to be effective we need to develop an actionable plan with objectives and targets which identifies: 1. which policy proposals need urgent implementation; and 2. which policies must be implemented in order to facilitate the roll-out of other proposals.

The next phase of the project involves mapping out how these policies should be implemented and on what timescale. Over the next few years, we seek to work together as civil society, grassroots organisations, unions and NGOs with policy makers and researchers. Now is the time to bring together all our skills, resources, training, experiential knowledge and lived experiences in order to map out how the policy proposals and recommendations we have put together can be implemented at local and national levels in England.

Infographic: Our key proposals from the nine policy chapters in Section B, demonstrating how the implementation of all policies must be carried out in an integrated way in order to achieve our vision.

SECTION D BUILDING A RESILIENT FOOD MOVEMENT

WORKING TOWARDS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND JUSTICE IN OUR FOOD SYSTEM

Throughout England, we have a vibrant and diverse food movement. For years it has been growing, as people develop skills and experience, individual campaigns are fought, connections are made and friendships are kindled. Now is the moment for us to strengthen our relationships, clarify our differences, seize the moment and together build a strong movement for justice in our food system.

Our food system is in a state of crisis, and change is coming, in one form or another. Our task now, our challenge, is to work together in every way we can to make sure that this change moves us towards a future that is just and equitable.

Achieving our vision and building the alternatives we need will require strong, visible and co-ordinated alliance building to maximise our power. We are only going to achieve this by increasing our co-operation and our ability to work together for focused, concrete outcomes. We all need to be involved, from all walks of life, all along the way. Where diverse groups all push together, at the same time, we are more powerful and this is a call for us to unite and to believe in our own agency.

Traditional party politics are failing to provide the democratic accountability we need. As we have noted numerous times in this document, this fragmentary approach is part of the problem; one part cannot see what another is doing, and everyone tries to push the costs onto other sectors, departments and organisations. The crisis in our food system has been documented for decades, and it's getting continuously worse. Despite the momentous efforts from civil society, communities, grassroots organisations, unions and NGOs, until we are all able to move forwards together, we will be going around in circles while our food system continues to break down around us.

Policies may be put in place by Westminster politicians or by local authorities, but progressive change starts in our communities, on our streets, around our kitchen tables, in our gardens, and on our farms. Now is the pivotal moment for us to come together, build creative and viable alternatives and grow the movement. We act, and we ask others to join us!

We have called this document *A People's Food Policy* because we recognise that many more people need to become involved before it is truly 'The *People's Food Policy'*. We need to change the way food policy-making happens in this country so that the people most affected and most marginalised by the current food system are involved in shaping and changing it. To move forward we need to come together to create clearly articulated common positions that we all support and organise around. We need both grassroots action and food policy-making that puts the needs of people at its heart; and we need a unified food policy that is consistent across government departments.

We believe food sovereignty is a framework through which we can achieve the change we need. Emerging from the voices and lived experiences of farmers and food workers all around the world, and supported by civil society, unions, grassroots organisations and NGOs on every continent, no other governance framework provides such a powerful alternative.

Brexit brings with it an historic opportunity to create radical change for the better, and it is our responsibility to seize it. The time has come for us all to join together and to create a food system which is the beating heart of our cultures, our histories, our earth, our communities and our future generations.

TAKING ACTION: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

By creating this document, we've done the job we set out to do. However, we are still at an early stage. The publication of *A People's Food Policy* marks the start of a wider process of strategising and taking action, which we need your help to ignite. There are many options for how we can use the positions and proposals laid out in this document, some of which we set out below.

1. Start talking, debating and planning

Help us to ensure that *A People's Food Policy* continues to be a living, evolving set of ideas and proposals. The positions and proposals laid out in this document are there to be used and elaborated on. How can you use *A People's Food Policy* to provoke discussion in your family, amongst your friends, in your local community or in your workplace? Would you be willing to speak about *A People's Food Policy* at an event or simply with friends around the kitchen table?

2. Crowd source ideas

We had limited time, capacity and funding to create this work, but we hope it is an example of what self-organised members of civil society and grassroots organisations can do when we get together. We recognise that for this work to truly articulate the vast range of our collective experiences, we need more capacity to engage in dialogue with each other more widely. To make sure this is truly a *people's* food policy, talk to us, talk to each other. What have we left out? What needs to change?

3. 'Cut and paste' policies

We have published a text-based version that is available to download on our website, so that you can cut and paste policies and further explore, elaborate and develop them in your own campaign documents.

4. Build alliances

One of the key intentions in our work is to highlight how our food system could be different if we can move beyond siloed and fragmented policy-making approaches. In this vein, it is imperative that *A People's Food Policy* does not operate in isolation. *A People's Food Policy* is based on the contributions of over 150 organisations, unions and community groups ideas and many organisations have already endorsed *A People's Food Policy*. But we must keep this momentum going, work in collaboration with other policy-changing initiatives in the food movement, and enter into discussion with those who haven't supported this work to find out where the differences in our positions and ideas are and reconcile them.

5. Supporting next steps

Our work putting together this document and co-ordinating this project was made possible through generous funding and donations. We now need to secure financial support to disseminate the document, gather together and build a movement around it.
In countries such as Brazil, Canada and Scotland comprehensive food policies have been developed by civil society organisations, and are now being developed in collaboration with governments. This has been achieved through political support and access to funds, resources and time.

With funding, we would be able to do the following:

(a) Create a wiki website: we would like to develop the policy into a Wiki-website on a creative commons license, containing links to existing good policies here and around the world, and case studies of good practice.

(b) Print and distribute *A People's Food Policy*: we would like to print and distribute as many hard copies of *A People's Food Policy* as possible. At the moment, we are only able to do a small print run. With funding we would have the resources to ensure this work is widely available.

(c) Organise a People's Food Policy Summit: there is nothing like meeting face to face to develop ideas and strategies, and if funding was available we would organise a People's Food Summit in the Winter of 2017/18 to build the movement and plan our campaign. This would provide a forum at which we could identify and explore issues of contention.

Already a strong movement for justice in our food system is emerging, a movement in which we are all connected, and a movement that has the potential to become very powerful. Let us now join together so that we can turn our vision for a better food system into a reality.

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