



Key Asks for... Scotland



"In Scotland, we're very lucky to have a government that has a clear vision for agriculture and food - Scotland just needs to figure out how to deliver on that vision"

Kirsty Tait, NFFN Sustainable Farming Lead for Scotland

MR DOOMTS/ADOBE STOCK

Around 80% of Scotland is under agricultural production. More than half of this land is dedicated to upland sheep farming and mixed sheep and cattle farming.¹²⁹ In 2022 the Scottish Government set out their Vision for Agriculture to deliver high quality food production, climate mitigation and adaptation and nature restoration. We support this vision, and ask that the Scottish Government continue to work towards implementing and delivering on its goals. To make this future vision a reality, we ask the Scottish government to undertake the following actions:

Lead with strong, pro-nature agriculture, crofting and food policy. Scotland is in the process of developing a number of different strategies, bills and frameworks - including a new Agriculture Bill, Biodiversity Strategy, Land Reform Bill, Natural Environment Bill and sector specific Just Transition Plans. While we support all of these efforts, we believe the current approach

is siloed. We need a more joined up approach to food, agricultural, and nature strategies in Scotland. We ask the Scottish Government to harness the Good Food Nation Act to connect these strategies and bills to deliver a holistic vision for the future of food.

Support a just transition to payments that support nature friendly land management.

The Scottish Government is in the process of phasing out the existing BPS scheme. We ask that the Government maintain its commitment to phase out area-based subsidies in the upcoming Agriculture Bill. Targeted outcomes for biodiversity gain and low emissions production will be essential to creating a nature friendly food system. Area based payments will not achieve nature restoration or climate targets as part of a just transition.

Develop land use strategies that acknowledge that nature and farming can work in harmony. Scotland has a strong Land Use Strategy and

has made significant progress in land reform and embedding land rights and responsibilities. The latest Land Use Strategy acknowledges that we need to balance the demands we make of our land alongside a commitment to ensure that Scotland continues to produce high quality sustainable food. This is an approach we support. Now, we call on the Government to take this further and galvanise initiatives to implement this strategy, using Regional Land Use Partnerships.

Ensure that trade policy sets high environmental standards for imported goods.

The Food Security Task Force recently published their plan to ensure Scottish food security in the face of the war in Ukraine.¹³⁰ While we support the development of a food security plan and the creation of a food security unit within Government, we believe to be truly effective, they must recognise the role that nature friendly farming systems play in promoting resilience and real food security.

Fund farmer & crofter peer to peer learning - We call upon the Scottish Government to commit to increased multi-year Investment in advisory services and knowledge transfer/peer to peer learning for farmers and crofters, to accelerate a transition to agroecological farming and land use. This can be built on current agroecology and agroforestry projects funded through the Knowledge Innovation and Transfer Fund.¹³¹

Support research into nature friendly farming approaches. We welcome the roll-out of The National Test Programme and the commitment to 'design, test, improve and standardise the tools, support and process necessary to reward farmers, crofters and land managers for the climate and biodiversity outcomes they deliver.' The Scottish government needs to increase funding to support this work to create a universal approach to measuring and monitoring on-farm outcomes.

Facilitate collaboration to drive sustainable dietary change. Scotland needs to support a transition to more sustainable meat production, and facilitate collaboration between retailers, farmers and consumers to achieve this goal. The emphasis and ask cannot only be on farmers to transition their livestock systems - the government needs to support this transition by identifying when meat is produced in a nature friendly way through robust standards, accreditation and transparent labelling.

Lead by example in procurement: Scotland's Good Food Nation Act places duties on Government, local authorities and health boards to create good food nation plans. These plans will set out clear outcomes, indicators and policies across a range of areas relating to food including the environment, health and the economy. Preference in these national and local plans and procurement should be given to local food produced by farmers and crofters with established nature and climate friendly practices and excellent environmental land management.