

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

# WHY FOOD MATTERS



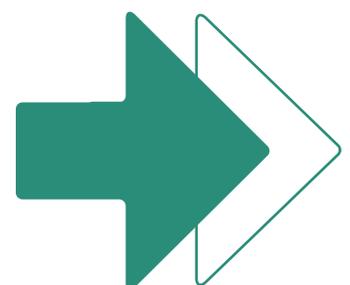
JANUARY 2023



**THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD IS MADE UP OF SEVENTEEN SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN FROM ALL OVER THE UK WHO BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE FOOD MOVEMENT VISION AND MEET MONTHLY TO DISCUSS AND ADVISE ON THE FUTURE OF FOOD AS THEY SEE IT. THEY DISCUSS ISSUES SUCH AS PACKAGING, BIODIVERSITY, NET ZERO AND GREENWASHING.**

As one of the largest emitting sectors, the food industry's opportunity to deliver on ambitious climate transition plans presents exciting careers for young people. The FFM Youth Advisory Board will bring together the future generation and the food industry to explore what young people think food businesses need to do to tackle the climate crisis, and help the food industry better manage its impact and produce climate-smart food.

Young people are worried about the future and are looking to leaders of industry to use their power for good. The Youth Advisory Board gives young people a voice on the issues affecting the food system in today's world. It allows our Business Members to hear from and connect directly with young people, providing them with ideas and insights to inspire them and challenges to make them think differently.



# WHY FOOD MATTERS

**From farming and growing to production and packaging and bringing it to our plates, the food we eat impacts the environment in many ways. To begin our YAB sessions, we discuss what we eat and why it matters.**

## MEETING SUMMARY

What is clear from the board's first meeting, is that the board possess a good understanding of the complexities of the food system, as well as an unquestionable need to include nature, wildlife, animal welfare and equity within the climate conversation.

The meeting began with a discussion around some of the statistics that were provided ahead of the session, as well as some that the board provided.

Notably, plastic was a big part of this discussion as Naomi explained that "by 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish."

Tabby suggests choosing loose fruits and vegetables to reduce unnecessary plastic, whilst Alina thinks that with 11 million tonnes of plastic entering the oceans each year, it is better to switch packaging to paper-based alternatives. She says, "Wildlife populations are down, and the plastic that enters the sea is affecting the animals, so I'd like to see less packaging being made."

However, surprisingly plastic and packaging didn't dominate the discussion. Instead, the board discussed the impact of imported food on carbon footprint, food waste and redistribution, meat reduction, clearer eco-labelling and the role food manufacturers and the government have to play in influencing change.

## QUICK FACTS

- Food production is responsible for one quarter of global emissions<sup>1</sup> and three quarters of global deforestation<sup>2</sup>.
- 821 million people go to bed hungry each night<sup>3</sup>.
- Nearly 40% of the food we make each year is lost<sup>4</sup>.
- We produce 300 million tonnes of plastic packaging annually and only 9% is recycled. 11 million tonnes enters the ocean each year<sup>5</sup>.
- Animal, reptile and bird populations are down 69% in 50 years – the biggest threat to nature is the food system<sup>6</sup>.

**"The fact that 40% of food goes to waste is just crazy to think about because that means so much unnecessary production. With 821 million people going hungry at night, we have to find better ways to distribute food that we're not going to use, to the people that need it."**

**MAX**



# INDIVIDUAL IMPACT

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What changes, if any, have you made to your diets due to climate change?  
 What ideas do you have for other individuals who may also want to make an impact?

"I think about the impact that the food I eat has on the planet and have made some small changes. I probably don't eat as much meat as I used to."

Chloe



"One of the differences that we've made, in my family, is to make sure to finish our food. If we have any leftovers after dinner, instead of throwing it away, we work out how to use them for a simple meal tomorrow."

Max



"One of the easiest things to do is to stop using single-use plastic cutlery and to switch to using material like cardboard. Many restaurants and fast food restaurants are doing this already, so it's an easy change to make."

Cindy



"You can look at where your food comes from. If it comes from the UK, then it's going to have a smaller carbon footprint."

Tabby



**"With everything that's going on at the minute, I wouldn't have much trust in the government to change things. So I think consumers should give their feedback through the choices that they make."**

CINDY

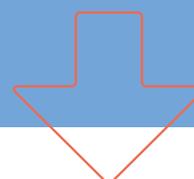


## FOOD LABELLING

The board believe that it's easier for individuals to make conscious decisions about the food they buy and eat when the packaging makes it very obvious. They also noted that it is easy not to think about a products impact on the environment when it's not made clear.

- For animal welfare, eggs are a good example of messaging that is clear and simple to understand.
- The Fair Trade Sticker is an easily recognisable logo that indicates good production methods.

Could there be a universal symbol or label that shows when a product is good for the planet?





## WHAT ARE THE MAIN FACTORS THAT FOOD BUSINESSES SHOULD FOCUS ON TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL?

The Youth Advisory Board have been surveying their peers (aged 11-15) to establish which three areas young people believe should be prioritised by food businesses. The survey was echoed with 100 senior leaders within the food industry.

Both young people and business leaders ranked food quality in their top 3 priorities. Business leaders uniformly ranked value for money and food safety in their top three, whilst young people's answers were more spread out with similar results for food safety, efficiency, innovation, accessible nutrition for all, value for money for customers, staff/employee wellbeing, business performance and positive impact on climate.

When asked what future employees expected from working in the food industry, in addition to answers including comments about 'fair pay' and 'good working conditions', with a sense of being valued and being treated as equals, respondents expected that their company would have a positive impact on society and the world.

### 64%

OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD HAVE MADE CHANGES TO THEIR DIETS IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS AS A RESULT OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

"I've been learning quite a lot of facts and information about climate change.

In an Asian family, we eat quite a lot meat. But, I have changed my diet to eat more vegetables and slightly less meat."

Alina



### 48%

OF STUDENTS SURVEYED RANKED FOOD QUALITY IN THEIR TOP 3 MOST IMPORTANT AREAS FOR FOOD BUSINESSES TO FOCUS ON.

### 1/3

OF STUDENTS THINK THAT HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT SHOULD BE ONE OF A FOOD BUSINESSES TOP THREE PRIORITIES.

### “

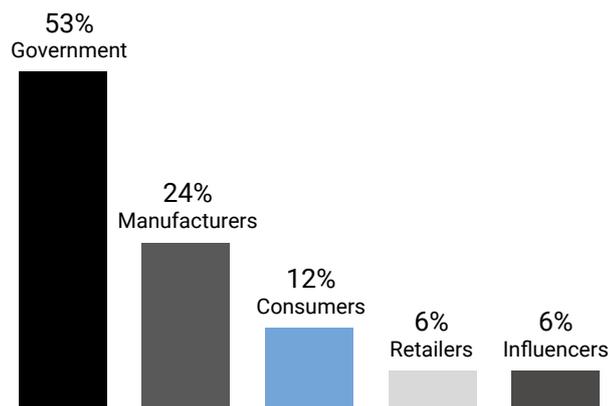
"It's hard for young people to think about what they're eating.

Especially at schools, because you've got to eat what you are given."

PHOEBE



WHO'S RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO LEAD THE CHANGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE FOOD INDUSTRY?



# LEADING THE CHARGE

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Who do you think has the biggest responsibility to lead the change when it comes to climate change?  
What changes would you like to see from the food industry to help the environment?

"If you want to see real change, people need to feel like they've made the decision themselves. Influencers and celebrities, even if they don't deserve it, have public sway and people who look up to them. They have the ability to gain public support without simply imposing new laws."



Milo

"As well as making sustainable food cheaper, the government should share information on the effects of climate change. They could try and teach people what is happening and influence them to make a change."



Naomi

"I think food manufacturers and brands should lead, because the government passes laws quite slowly."

Food manufacturers know what needs changing, and they understand which part of the production needs to change because they are so immersed in the job, and they can do it quickly."



Freddie

"Food manufacturers will operate in their own best interests and do whatever is cheapest. The government is able to make unpopular decisions to make the industry more climate friendly."

I don't think these decisions will benefit the government, but the UK is meant to be a leader on climate policy so it might benefit our reputation."



Calum

**"For change to be effective, it needs to be pushed by the government, retailers and manufacturers. Retailers can select who they buy the food from and what sorts of businesses they support, but food manufacturers will be the ones that actually make the change."**



TABBY



WATCH NOW



### THE BOARD BELIEVES THE GOVERNMENT COULD HAVE A BIG INFLUENCE, BY:

- Stopping any single use plastics used in packaging, producing and shipping the food. It would increase the cost for companies, but in the long run, it would be better for the planet.
- Introducing a heavier tax on food imported into the UK. So it would cause retailers to buy locally in the UK.
- Implementing a carbon tax on foods that are higher in carbon e.g. beef. If foods like this had a higher tax, it would encourage people to make more environmentally friendly food choices.

# WHAT'S NEXT?



## WHAT NEXT FOR FOOD BUSINESSES?

We're starting to see the Net Zero food system emerge, and hearing the youth advisory board acknowledge the interconnectedness and the scale in their generation is super exciting. From climate change to animal welfare, pollution to food poverty, young people have a greater understanding and pointier opinions than we give them credit for with all climate issues ranking almost equally in importance.

The board also believe that there is an opportunity to better communicate progress, through both mainstream and alternative channels - including celebrities and influencers.

The actions that the board are taking are within meat, plastic and food waste reduction. There is an opportunity for businesses to engage with young future consumers on how to approach these challenges. The future of food hasn't yet been set. Hearing what young people think will reinforce the opportunity to produce food that is better for both people and the planet.

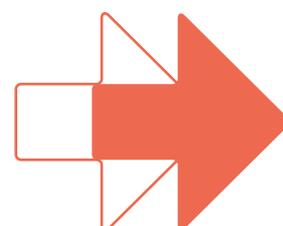
There is an expectation that food manufacturers have the ability to initiate change at greater speed, and should be prepared to work with the government and retailers on initiatives to reduce climate change and improve social impact. We all have individual responsibility generally within how we live our lives, yet businesses have the opportunity to drive change that consumers haven't really got the headspace for. And actually, if we wait for consumers, we're never going to move fast enough.

The reality is that the food system is broken and we need deep thinkers and different perspectives to fix it. The real winners in this whole space are the people who embrace the climate and nature crises, and who fundamentally transform the kind of products and solutions that they're providing, for a 1.5°C world.

**"The wildlife population has gone down 69% in 50 years, and this isn't good because it interrupts food chains, makes food harder to produce and the cost of things go up.**

**If you destroy the food chains, you inevitably get less food to the people who need it."**

**LUCAS**





# WHAT OUR BOARD WANTS TO KNOW FROM CEOS

How important is climate change to your business?

Do you care about climate change or profit more?

How aware are you of the negative impacts your company has on social and environmental issues, and what are you doing to improve them?

How are you planning to reduce your carbon footprint?

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU OR WOULD MOTIVATE YOU, TO HELP REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE?

Are you doing anything to reduce the mileage on the food you sell?

What research is being done into more sustainable ways of producing and packaging food?

Are you currently supplying surplus food to food banks, and how?



## BUSINESS MEMBER MEETING DATES

- 16:00, 14th March - Greenwashing and Transparency
- 16:00, 27th June - Healthy and Sustainable Diets
- 16:00, 14th November - Net Zero Food Systems