

FUTURE FOOD MOVEMENT NETWORK BRIEFING FARMER-LED INSIGHTS

THE FARMER-LED WORKING GROUP ISN'T JUST A CONVERSATION.

It's a live feedback loop, that helps Future Food Movement members sense the system, build trust and make smarter decisions across the value chain. These 60-minute forums bring farmers and business leaders together to share insight and co-create solutions for stronger, more resilient supply chains.

MEET THE FARMERS

[Click here to read more about each farmer](#)



THE FARMERS' VERDICT

A System Out of Sync - Key Problems:

1. Extreme Risk with No Safety Net

Farmers are shouldering huge financial risk, without long-term contracts, pricing stability or clarity on market direction. Investment in regenerative or sustainable practices becomes a personal gamble.

"If you went into a boardroom and pitched the business case for growing an agricultural crop, they'd laugh you out of the room." - Jack Pearce

2. Contradictory Demands, Unclear Signals

Sustainability goals shift with retailer strategy and ESG trends. Farmers report inconsistent, short-term asks with little follow-through.

"We need consistent messaging that lasts five to ten years. It's a generational game." - Lucy Noad

3. Exclusion from Strategic Conversations

Too often, farmers are handed requirements, not invited into co-design. That creates a disconnect - and distrust. "When we have conflict or mistrust in the system, it often comes down to poor communication and lack of inclusion." - Navaratnam Partheeban

4. Tick-Box ESG Over Business Resilience

Despite the climate and economic shocks they face, farmers feel they're being asked for carbon data, not supported to build resilient systems. Many are innovating fast; the system isn't keeping up.

5. Stories and Value Getting Lost

Some farmers are going direct to consumers, through vending machines, QR codes and brand-building, to reclaim margin and tell their story. Yet in the mainstream supply chain, their values often vanish into commoditised systems.

FARMERS ARE ASKING FOR

1. Shared Risk, Shared Reward

The most impactful models - like those from First Milk and Yeo Valley - recognise the need for long-term support, technical advice and outcome-based payments.



"Because we share the risk, I can move faster and do more. Without it, it would just be a personal crusade."

LUCY NOAD

2. Direction of Travel, Not One-Size-Fits-All

Farmers don't need a script. They want clear goals, but flexibility on how to deliver based on their systems, context and geography.



"Give us direction of travel, but don't dictate the route - we need help making it work on the ground."

ANNA BOWEN

3. KPIs That Drive Real Change

Farmers urge businesses to align sustainability and commercial teams- embedding shared goals into procurement metrics, not treating ESG as an add-on.



"Sustainability can't cost the earth - nor can procurement keep chasing the lowest price. We need shared KPIs to unite the business."

BEN WILLIAMS

IF WE DON'T ADDRESS RISK, TRUST, AND MISALIGNED INCENTIVES NOW,
WE'LL LOSE THE VERY FARMERS DRIVING INNOVATION AT A TIME WHEN

THE FOOD SYSTEM DEPENDS ON THEM MOST.



1

BUILD TRUST THROUGH CONSISTENCY AND CLARITY

Create five-year+ roadmaps, speak with one voice across departments, and honour what's been promised.

2

CO-DESIGN SOLUTIONS - DON'T DICTATE THEM

Collaborate early. Farmers have the practical insight needed to make sustainability workable. Tap into it.

3

RETHINK PROCUREMENT AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE

Rebuild incentives so buyers are rewarded for building resilient supply chains - not just short-term savings.

4

RECOGNISE FARMERS AS STRATEGIC PARTNERS

This isn't about support - it's about business survival. Farmers aren't passive suppliers. They're central to your net zero, nutrition and nature goals.

5

QUANTIFY WHAT IT TAKES TO DO THE RIGHT THING

Many buyers still believe sustainability just means better efficiency. It doesn't. Farmers are asking for transparency around the true cost of regenerative practice - like removing soy, cutting fertiliser, or building biodiversity. Without clarity on cost, there can be no clarity on value.

LOOKING AHEAD

WANT TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT THE "HOW" OF FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE?



Join our next Expert Event on Nature (free for members)

With Sophie Gregory, Dairy Farmer on the Farmer Advisory Board, Harriet O'Regan, Head of Customer Agriculture, Arla, Elliot Coad, Co Founder of 30x 30 [Accept the Outlook Invite for 17th July]



Book a Future Food Movement Leadership Day.

Invite your procurement, commercial, ESG and agriculture colleagues to build capability and commercial edge.



Meet us at Groundswell - Join the What's App group to connect.



Catch up on the Future Food Movement Diverse Voice Network and their latest insights on supply chain issues.



Push for Policy that Rebuilds Food Culture:

Support stronger food education, cooking skills, breakfast clubs and access to real food, where you can. True change won't come from farm audits alone, but from shared advocacy for a food system that works for people and planet.

THE FARMERS BEHIND THIS REPORT'S INSIGHTS



WILL OLIVER
Arable & Poultry



ALI CARGILL
Arable



NAVARATNAM
PARTHEEBAN OBE
Mixed



CHRIS WOODHEAD
Mixed



LUCY NOAD
Renen Dairy



CHRIS MANLEY
Sheep



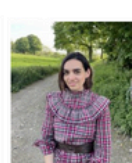
BEN WILLIAMS
Dairy



CHARLIE CURTIS
Sugar



JACK PEARCE
Root Veg



ANNA BOWEN
Dairy



BECCA HESKETH
Beef & Dairy

WITH PROCUREMENT, ESG, MARKETING &
AGRICULTURE COLLEAGUES FROM
GOLD & PLATINUM NETWORK MEMBERS

