

SCOTLAND'S FARMING FUTURE



NFU Scotland's
General Election
Manifesto 2024

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Covering over 74 percent of Scotland, active farming and crofting is key to helping meet climate and biodiversity needs. In addition to producing food of the highest quality, agriculture underpins rural communities across Scotland and is at the heart of flourishing environments.

High-quality agricultural production is vital to the wider food and drink industry – a sector that's worth over £16 billion to the Scottish economy, employs over 130,000 people, and supports Scotland's national reputation on the world stage.

We are a remarkable industry committed to high-quality agricultural production, helping to tackle climate change and enhance nature. The next parliamentary term will be pivotal for Scotland's farmers and crofters, and we are calling on the next UK Government to provide what is needed to ensure that necessary economic, environmental and social outcomes are delivered.

This NFU Scotland Manifesto 2024 sets out specific commitments that Scottish agriculture requires to meet its full potential. A successful and prosperous Scottish agricultural industry is key to a successful and prosperous Scotland and UK.



Deliver increased, ring-fenced and multi-annual funding

Food security and agricultural production are significant political issues. Future delivery of support budgets play a significant role in the viability and confidence of the Scottish agricultural sector. Government investment in the sector is essential for many farm businesses in Scotland. With that investment, we can deliver impressive socio-economic and

environmental returns across the country, particularly in rural communities, not least by supporting thousands of jobs and supply chain businesses.

The funding provided by the next UK Government will be critical to Scottish agriculture's ability to help meet UK-wide objectives relating to climate mitigation and adaptation, nature enhancement and food production.



NFU Scotland asks the next UK Government to:

- Commit to an increased, ring-fenced and multi-annual agriculture and rural development budget for the UK from 2025-2029.
- Increase the current UK Government's funding commitment by at least an additional £1 billion, to at least £4.7 billion, given the costs to deliver the required public interest and public good outcomes.
- Review the allocation of total funding across the UK to better reflect that Scotland punches above its weight in delivering for food, climate and biodiversity.



Better access to skilled workers

The availability of sufficient skilled seasonal workers is essential for the agricultural and food processing sectors. The soft fruit, vegetable and potato sectors require seasonal workers from outside the UK at critical times. Over recent years, the lack of certainty in accessing labour and the difficulty to recruit and employ workers, has resulted in crop loss, a drop in production and disruption of supply to the domestic and export markets. These sectors require certainty over labour availability to give them confidence to continue to invest and maintain production. It is also vital that there are skilled and able workers throughout the supply chain – upstream and downstream – including sufficient veterinary and food processing capacity.

Improve producer margins to increase food security

Increased and sustained producer returns across all agricultural sectors are required. Fairer supply chains, increased processing capacity, greater collaboration and better promotion would enhance the UK's food security and would bolster domestic production of high-quality food. This would also safeguard the interests of UK consumers.

The UK's high environmental and animal health and welfare production standards must be recognised and protected. Equally, there must be fairness throughout the supply chain.

NFU Scotland asks the next UK Government to:

- Use the powers in the Agriculture Act 2020 to empower producers' and growers' negotiating positions.
- Review labelling regulations to provide greater transparency for consumers where more than 50 percent of ingredients are sourced from outside the UK.
- Extend the role of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and the Code of Practice to cover the full supply chain.
- Introduce a duty on retailers to produce an annual report on local sourcing.

NFU Scotland asks the next UK Government to:

- Introduce a minimum five-year rolling seasonal workers scheme with a suitable length visa and no cap on worker numbers.
- Commit to developing and delivering migration policy that works for the rural economy, food security and worker welfare.





Protect domestic food production in future trade deals

Agricultural interests and access to our food and drink sector must not be used as cheap bargaining chips to secure more lucrative market access for other sectors in any future free trade negotiations. Our high-quality produce has a global reputation and support to continue to grow our exports is required.

We have consistently highlighted the lack of meaningful safeguards to protect domestic food security, in addition to the cumulative impacts of trade deals. Beyond the overdue Border Target Operating Model (BTOM), we also need an effective UK Border Force to minimise food fraud and the risks that brings to consumers and biosecurity.

Food security must be a priority of the future government. Committing to sustainable domestic agricultural production rather than a reliance on importing food that results in exporting emissions, together with environmental and animal health and welfare responsibilities, is essential.

Increase fiscal incentives

For many in Scotland who aspire to get on the farming ladder, or develop, diversify and grow their business, changes to reserved fiscal matters relating to land and capital are needed. It is critical that the next UK Government reviews a range of relevant taxation issues to enable establishment, investment, and growth opportunities for agricultural businesses across the UK.

NFU Scotland asks the next UK Government to:

- Increase the use of tax and fiscal incentives to encourage the longer term letting of land to agricultural businesses.
- Increase capital allowances to incentivise investment in working capital and equipment, as well as longer-term investment in buildings and structures.
- Introduce investment and fiscal measures to accelerate farming's renewable energy and carbon-free fertilisers contribution, particularly green hydrogen potential.

NFU Scotland asks the next UK Government to:

- Class agriculture as a sensitive sector in the context of any new trade deals.
- Publish an annual Free Trade Agreements assessment to quantify the cumulative impacts of trade deals.
- Introduce a formal process to develop and establish core production standards for all agri-food imports.
- Increase resources for import controls to help protect food biosecurity.
- Commit support to grow agri-food exports and promote our high-quality produce around the world.





A third of the UK's

Utilisable Agricultural Area (UAA)

is in Scotland, equating to over

5 million hectares
and is home to
over half of the UK's
less favoured areas.

SCOTLAND HOLDS

60%

of the UK's peatlands &

34%

of designated sites.

AROUND

90%

of the barley, and around
two thirds of all grain used
to produce Scotch Whisky
is sourced in Scotland.

Managed permanent & rough grazing in
Scotland holds approximately

172 million
TONNES OF CARBON.



OVER

£145 million

is the value of fruit output
in **SCOTLAND ANNUALLY.**

**SCOTLAND
PRODUCES**



12%

of
UK's
eggs
around

13.7
million
PER YEAR



The **Scottish food & drink sector**
GENERATES A TURNOVER OF OVER

£16 billion

AND EMPLOYS OVER

130,000
people.

1.51 billion
LITRES OF MILK
are produced in Scotland annually.

Scottish **POTATO** production
HAS A FARMGATE VALUE OF
£928 million.

Scotland's **AGRITOURISM**
SECTOR IS VALUED AT
£60.3 million.

Cereals production in Scotland is worth

£334 million

& supplies the **Scotch Whisky industry**
which turns over

£7.1 billion
PER YEAR.



More than
430,000
tonnes of
vegetables
are produced in
Scotland annually.

The **RED MEAT**
SECTOR IS WORTH OVER
£2.8
billion per year
to the Scottish economy.

Annually, **Scottish**
farmers manage
the equivalent of
36,000
rugby pitches
as Ecological
Focus Areas (EFAs)



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