



AGRICULTURE, AQUACULTURE & FISHERIES

Animal welfare, farming practices and the impact of agriculture on our global climate, are of utmost importance to the Partnership. We remain as committed as ever to leading in this sphere, improving and encouraging sustainable and ethical farming methods, and farming with nature wherever possible. We believe our farming partnerships will be key to our future success.

Soil erosion, biodiversity loss, fresh water use, food waste and increased greenhouse gas emissions are just a few of the consequences of food production which continue to threaten our natural environment and the resources we depend on. Many have become aware of the environmental and social impact of food production and consumption over the past decade but more so during the pandemic. This has highlighted how fragile our food system is and the need for it to be transformed in order to feed an estimated population of 9.7 billion by 2050⁷ without destroying the planet. From field to fork we're committed to ensuring that our farms consider their environmental impact every step of the way, laying the foundations for more sustainable and regenerative agricultural techniques.

It's been a challenging year for our aquaculture and agriculture supply chains. We've worked hard to support our suppliers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, continuing to pay fair prices for produce, promoting produce from our most vulnerable suppliers, and preventing food waste.

We've continued to make good progress in key areas including fresh produce, animal welfare, transparency in our fishing supply chains, and advocating the importance of maintaining British food standards in the face of Brexit trade negotiations.

IN 2020/21 WE FOCUSED ON:

Supporting vulnerable agricultural suppliers and supporting communities through the pandemic.

Developing and launching the Good Life app to measure the emotional wellbeing of farm animals.

Increasing transparency in our wild-caught fish supply chains.

Launching our new Agricultural Plan.

⁷ IPCC, Climate Change and Land, Chapter 5: Food Security, 2021, <https://www.ipcc.ch/srcl/>

SUPPORTING OUR SUPPLIERS THROUGH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- We continued our commitment to support British farming wherever possible. All of Waitrose's own-brand fresh and frozen beef, chicken, pork, eggs and milk is British sourced and we provided support for sales of UK produce with promotions across key categories.
- Waitrose's expert buying teams worked with our most vulnerable suppliers, ensuring they were included in key decision-making processes and continued to have a platform to sell their products. This included taking more horticulture products than ever before to provide a much needed lifeline to British nurseries' suppliers and prevent wastage. We also worked hard to keep our meat and fish counters open, knowing that for many small producers this was the only major outlet for their products.
- Waitrose worked closely with [ITV](#) and [Defra](#) to support the [Pick for Britain](#) campaign. The campaign shone a light on the invaluable work carried out by farmers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and encouraged the public to sign up to bridge the labour shortfall of the 70,000 seasonal workers needed in 2020 for Britain's harvest of fresh produce.
- Waitrose continued to support farming bodies and charities in the UK. Members of the Waitrose team were actively engaged through volunteering or via several working groups including key organisations such as the [National Farmers Union \(NFU\)](#). Waitrose provided strategic and financial support to farming charities including [The Farming Community Network](#) and [Addington Fund](#).

PROGRESS IN OUR FRESH PRODUCE SUPPLY CHAINS

- All Waitrose UK fresh fruit and vegetables continue to be grown to the [LEAF Marque Standard](#). This assurance system demonstrates our fruit and vegetables have been grown more sustainably with care for the environment.
- Working with [WRAP](#), the circular economy and resource efficiency experts, as part of its [Food Waste Reduction Roadmap](#), Waitrose was one of the early retailers to implement a Whole Chain Food Waste Reduction Plan within one of our own supply chains. The aim is to map wastage throughout the supply chains to gain a better understanding of where waste occurs and target these areas. Our first focus was mapping wastage throughout the apple supply chain of one of our strategic suppliers, [Worldwide Fruit Ltd](#). As a result, in 2020 alone, three tonnes of apples from our direct supplier, which were not viable for storage, were redistributed directly from the field to our charity partner [FareShare](#). We intend to run similar Whole Chain Food Waste Reduction Plans in other Waitrose supply chains this year.
- Waitrose joined the Nutrient Upcycling Alliance (NUA) – a project developed by [Veolia](#) and [Yara](#) with support from the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation](#) – to create circular organic fertilisers and soil improvement products from organic waste streams. An initial pilot test in London and the surrounding areas will trial the production of green fertiliser from household and commercial food waste.

MAINTAINING AND INCREASING BIODIVERSITY

At Waitrose, we want to ensure our food is produced in a way that preserves and even enhances key natural resources as we are conscious that maintaining and increasing biodiversity is essential.

- Farmers and growers are encouraged to set aside space to increase biodiversity. On Waitrose UK fresh fruit and vegetable farms, an average of 12% of the land is given over to conservation habitats, a category that includes native hedges and wildflower meadows which are important environments for pollinators.
- All UK dairy farms supplying Waitrose are encouraged to continually devote at least 10% of their dairy farm to biodiversity and habitat management. Working with independent advisors, each supplier builds a Biodiversity and Farm Conservation action plan which pinpoints the biodiversity priorities at the farm and sets out how to address them,
- We are working closely with our egg suppliers to focus on the importance of the health of laying hens' surroundings, from soil to natural flora and fauna. Trees play an important role providing shelter and shade but also in the soil structure, water management, carbon sequestration and, of course, as a habitat for countless other species. As we prepare for a revised national rural payment scheme we will use our supplier networks to create a tree management policy that delivers for our hens, for the natural world and for our farmers.





BIODIVERSITY RESEARCH WITHIN FARMING LANDSCAPES

Our Waitrose Collaborative Training Partnership (CTP), now taking in its final cohort of eight PhD students, started as a collaborative project to bring together retail, suppliers, and academic institutions to help solve some of the key sustainability challenges facing our supply chains. Through the partnership, the students have focused on sustainability challenges facing the fresh produce sector. These include:

- A research project focused on creating bespoke field margins for delivering multiple benefits to fresh produce. The aim is to understand and help improve functional biodiversity within farm landscapes, both supporting production and achieving conservation goals.
- Research into whether it is possible to reduce single use plastics in food production, with a particular focus on the agricultural sector. This project will document the use of plastic in the sector to determine where it can be reduced or replaced with more sustainable materials.

- Research into the dispersal ecology and population persistence of an endangered butterfly in a fragmented semi-natural habitat within an agricultural landscape. The aim of this project is to understand drivers of population decline and the influence of habitat fragmentation on one of Britain's most threatened butterflies: the pearl-bordered fritillary.

Prior to the CTP, we were involved in other PhD research projects on sustainability challenges in the fresh produce sector. We supported a project, alongside the University of Worcester, looking at the potential for wildflower interventions to enhance pollinators and pests' natural enemies in commercial apple orchards. The project was undertaken jointly with one of our key supply chain partners, who can implement research findings on the farm. The research findings were published in 2020 and can be found [here](#).

UPHOLDING ANIMAL WELFARE STANDARDS



- Waitrose maintained its top tier position in the [global Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare](#), one of only four companies in the world to hold this position.
- Waitrose launched the [Good Life](#) app in February 2021, becoming the first retailer in the world to measure the emotional wellbeing of farm animals using a specialist mobile app. We hope it will help bring about further improvements to animal welfare standards across the UK.
- In autumn 2020, we highlighted the importance of maintaining British food standards in the face of Brexit trade negotiations. Britain has some of the best farmers in the world and Waitrose is especially proud of its animal welfare standards. We are committed to not compromising those hard won standards, whatever trade deals were negotiated.

PROGRESS IN OUR AQUACULTURE & FISHERY SUPPLY CHAINS

- At 90.7% Waitrose came close to meeting its target of 100% own-brand fish and shellfish to be sourced from third-party verified, responsible sources by the end of January 2021. This is a small drop versus our 2019/20 performance due to the mackerel fishery used in the supply chain of our own-brand products losing its third-party-certification in 2019. The fishery is now part of a Fishery Improvement Project and hopes to regain this certification as soon as possible.
- Although Waitrose continues to source all its own-brand fish responsibly, third-party certification of certain species takes longer and requires the collaboration of suppliers, processors and retailers. As a result, our target has been extended to 2025. Fisheries supplying Waitrose with wild-caught fish which are not already certified, must enter a Fishery Improvement Project in 2021 to demonstrate their sustainable and responsible sourcing practices and their commitment to achieve certification.
- Waitrose won the [Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\) UK Fish Counter of the Year](#) award for the third year in a row at the MSC awards. We've introduced MSC certified albacore tuna and Poole clams and cockles. This is a supermarket first for clams and cockles and provides more variety in what we offer to meet our customers' demand for more certified produce.
- We extended our Responsible Efficient Production (REP) programme to our farmed prawn supply chains and our Mediterranean sea bass and sea bream supply chains. The programme assesses farming husbandry and works with our farming partners to identify and implement opportunities for continuous improvement.
- Waitrose joined the [Ocean Disclosure Project](#), which is aimed at increasing the transparency of the sourcing of all wild-caught fish by providing an environmental assessment for each source. The platform provides visibility of each participating retailer, or business's, sourcing practices as well as verifying any claims.
- The [Responsible Fishing Scheme](#) is a vessel-based standard ensuring responsibly sourced seafood can be fully traced across the supply chain and ensuring operational best practice for crew wellbeing and safety. In 2020 this was updated to become the [Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard \(RFVS\)](#). It is now a worldwide standard and we are working with our suppliers to encourage adoption.
- As of January 2021, all Waitrose farmed salmon and trout suppliers are now RSPCA assured. This is as a result of collaborative working between Waitrose, our direct suppliers Aquascot and Youngs and their supply chains.
- Waitrose was part of a joint industry effort to influence the Maldivian government to announce their commitment to enter a Fishery Improvement Project. Waitrose, through the [Global Tuna Alliance](#), has also advocated for the [Indian Ocean Tuna Commission \(IOTC\)](#) member states to adopt an effective rebuilding plan for yellowfin tuna.

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Waitrose awarded MSC UK Fish Counter of The Year for the third year running

12%

The average land on Waitrose own-brand UK fresh fruit and vegetable farms given over to conservation habitats













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LOOKING FORWARD

In 2020 we worked hard to develop and launch the new ten-year Waitrose Agricultural Plan. Encompassing both agriculture and aquaculture, this new strategy does not stop at farming and fishing sustainably. A key ambition is to introduce regenerative farming techniques as widely as possible and we launched our new ambitious target to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions from our UK farms by 2035.

WAITROSE AGRICULTURE PLAN

					
Pay our farmers and fishers a fair price to protect them from volatility, doing all we can to help prepare them for a world without subsidies.	Champion and campaign on key issues facing our farmers and fishers.	Give more than we take from the communities we source from, delivering industry-leading worker welfare.	Make greenhouse gas emissions from our UK farms net zero by 2035.	Eliminate avoidable on-farm food waste and single use plastics.	Source our animal feed responsibly, in ways that conserve forests and fisheries.
					
Ensure that everything we source from the sea is responsibly fished or farmed.	Ensure our animals have good lives and humane and dignified deaths.	Embrace radical transparency and shine a light on our supply chains.	Harness the network of our farmers and fishers to share knowledge and develop industry leading best practice.	Support farmers to farm with nature, by enhancing biodiversity and playing our part in regenerating the natural resources we all rely on.	Lead by example on our own farm, the Leckford Estate, innovating, learning and sharing new ways of farming.

TARGET	2020/21 PERFORMANCE	2019/20 PERFORMANCE
100% of our own-brand fish and shellfish will come from third-party verified responsible sources by the end of January 2021 ⁸	90.7%	92.7%
Extended target set in October 2020		
100% of our own-brand fish and shellfish will come from third-party verified responsible sources by the end of January 2025 ⁹	90.7%	N/A
New target set in October 2020		
Greenhouse gas emissions from our UK farms to be net zero by 2035 ¹⁰	We will begin to report our progress from spring 2022.	N/A

⁸ Data point reported to the 2020 calendar year.

⁹ This target replaces and is an extension of the previous target '100% of our own-brand fish and shellfish will come from third-party verified responsible sources by the end of January 2021'.

¹⁰ This target will be achieved collectively by UK farms providing protein and fresh ingredients in Waitrose own-brand products.