

**House of Lords Committee on National Resilience**  
**National Resilience Inquiry**  
**The Vegan Society Evidence**  
**Author: Claire Ogley**

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**0 Summary**

0.1 Food security is integral to national security, as in the National Security Assessment (HM Govt 2026), and the UK Good Food Cycle framework (DEFRA 2025; para 1.1).

0.2 “The UK relies on imports for a proportion of both food and fertiliser and cannot currently produce enough food to feed its population based on current diets.” (HM Govt 2026).

0.3 Food Security means, always meeting the nutritional and cultural food needs of everyone in the UK, whilst protecting our shared environment (The Vegan Society 2026).

0.4 Agri-food is a complex, globally interconnected super-sector. Due to our lack of UK food security, and climate change, we face severe short and long term risks. We need World War II levels of preparation and resilience in agri-food (see para 14.1).

0.5 The on-going violence in South-West Asia highlights the system fragility: oil prices also drive fertiliser, feed and food prices, and critical agri-food supplies transit the Strait of Hormuz (NDSU 2026). We currently depend on imports for 35-40% of UK food (DEFRA 2024a), and key inputs to UK farming.

0.6 Meanwhile, farming animals at industrial scale undermines food security. All UK arable land could grow food, but over half is currently used to grow feed (DEFRA 2024a). This wastes resources compared to eating crops directly: some 50-95% of the food value is lost by feeding crops to animals (CIWF 2025).

0.7 “The UK does not have enough land to feed its population and rear livestock: a wholesale change in consumer diets would be required.” (HM Govt 2026).

0.8 Expanding our plant protein sector will significantly enhance our self-sufficiency in protein and has the potential to allow us to meet all national nutritional needs with domestically grown plant foods (The Vegan Society 2026).

0.9 Dependence on animal foods therefore needlessly exacerbates national security risks, with potentially catastrophic consequences.

0.11 Plant-rich diets offer a wealth of benefits, solutions and opportunities to the UK, including improved preparedness and resilience (Foodrise et al. 2025, The Vegan Society 2026)

0.12 Government led and supported plant-based agri-food system transitions are essential to meet our health, sustainability and resilience duties and goals.

**Q1. How far are national and international risks inter-connected, including across different sectors and across short-term and long-term risks, and what are the implications for the national approach towards preparedness and resilience?**

1.1 We now have broad consensus that food security is an integral part of national security, including in the National Security Assessment (HM Govt 2026), and as a priority goal of the UK Good Food Cycle framework (DEFRA 2025). Agri-food is a complex super-sector, which is globally interconnected due to our lack of UK food security, and climate change. Thus, our insecure agri-food system creates severe short- and long-term risks. We need World War II levels of preparedness to be reasonably resilient against social breakdown in the face of spreading food shortages and hunger (see Q14 / para 14.1).

**Q2. What national risks could have the most severe impact in a reasonable worst-case scenario, including nuclear accidents and loss of control of satellite communications?**

2.1 HM Government has, in the new “Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security: A national security assessment” reached the Key Judgement that our current agri-food system does not support national security:

2.2 “Without significant increases in UK food system and supply chain resilience, it is unlikely the UK would be able to maintain food security if ecosystem collapse drives geopolitical competition for food.

“The UK relies on imports for a proportion of both food and fertiliser and cannot currently produce enough food to feed its population based on current diets.

“Countries best placed to adapt are those that invest in ecosystem protection and restoration, and resilient and efficient food systems.” (HM Govt 2026).

2.3 Food Security means, always meeting the nutritional and cultural food needs of everyone in the UK, whilst protecting our shared environment, not simply meeting demand. (The Vegan Society 2026).

2.4 Major long-term disruption to our food supply, with serious shortages, would make many households experiencing food insecurity, and hunger well above the current 12% level (Food Foundation 2026a) a plausible worst-case risk scenario. Worsening climate events for farmers interacting with international agri-food supply chain (fuel, food, feed, fertiliser, seed, vet medications etc.) disruptions for any reason, could cause dire impacts (Le Page 2026).

2.5 The conflict in South-West Asia highlights the system fragility: oil prices also drive fertiliser, feed and food prices, and critical supplies such as urea are also transported through the Strait of Hormuz (NDSU 2026). We currently depend on imports for 35-40% of UK food (DEFRA 2024a), as well as key inputs to UK farming including critical feed nutrients and fertilisers. Animals can be directly harmed, sickened or killed by rising temperatures, rainfall and other extreme weather events magnified by climate change (Bunning & Wall 2022, World Organisation for Animal Health 2024, The Grocer 2025).

2.6 Farming animals at industrial scale undermines food security, using resources out of all proportion to the resulting food supply, compared to crops we eat directly. Farmed animals turn the food they consume (whether grazing, feed or a combination of the two) into food consumable

by humans very inefficiently. The so-called ‘feed conversion ratio’ means that at least half, and up to 95% of the food value is lost by feeding crops to animals in farming in the UK (CIWF 2025). As the National Security Assessment clearly states:

“The UK does not have enough land to feed its population and rear livestock: a wholesale change in consumer diets would be required.” (UK Govt 2026).

All UK arable land could grow food, but over half is currently used to grow feed (averaging 56% of land, and of harvested weight c. wheat: 47%, barley: 68%, oats: 37%, field peas: 60%, for feed, DEFRA 2024a).

2.7 According to the 2024 UK Food Security Report, the UK already grows enough grain to meet the nation’s calorie needs, if it was all used for human consumption (DEFRA 2024a). Greater investment in and support for the plant protein sector will significantly enhance our self-sufficiency in protein, potentially allowing domestically grown plant foods to meet all national nutritional needs (The Vegan Society 2026). Using our UK cropland for direct food production instead, could mean another 16.5 million of UK residents are fed by UK farmers (CIWF 2025).

2.8 Dependence on animal foods therefore needlessly exacerbates food security risks, with potentially catastrophic consequences. We cannot feed all the animals in farming, permit free-living animals and their environments to thrive, and feed ourselves. Government led and supported plant-based agri-food system transitions are essential to meet our health, sustainability and resilience duties and goals.

[Q3. No comment]

***Q4. What risks does the private sector face, including to cyber activity and supply chains, and how do these vary across key industries, such as finance, food, water, medicine, and transport?***

4.1 We are currently dependent upon risky private agri-food supply, focused upon meeting perceived high-value demand. This has rapidly pushed the UK toward vast expansion of industrialised farming of animals, increasing dependence on both UK and imported inputs such as feed. The result is greatly reduced resilience, security, sustainability and health in our food supply.

4.2 Numerous plausible worst-case scenarios leave us insecure, unable to feed the UK. As we rely on imported farm inputs (DEFRA 2024a), major trade disruptions such as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz (NDSU 2026) can severely harm UK agri-farm businesses. Damaging climate change extremes of heat and rainfall (e.g. 2022, 2024, 2025) are increasingly likely: 40+ deg C days are over 20 times more likely than 50 years ago, and rising (Kay et al. 2025). Thus, more major trade disruptions are likely to coincide with extreme weather. Such crises combined could exceed recent extremes, pushing UK food price inflation over 19.2% (Food Foundation 2026b) and thus, UK food insecurity over 18.4% (25.8% for households with children, Food Foundation 2022).

***Q5. How can a shared vision be developed to improve preparedness and resilience across the whole of society?***

5.1 Plant-rich diets offer a wealth of benefits, solutions and opportunities to the UK, including improved preparedness and resilience (Foodrise et al. 2025, The Vegan Society 2026). A shared vision for a resilient, plant-based UK agri-food system is increasing. However, the necessary transitions require committed Government support and leadership, consistently incorporating the benefits of plant-rich agri-food across all relevant sectors, policies and activities.

5.2 Increased production and consumption of culturally appropriate, healthy, sustainable plant-based foods will have wide-ranging direct benefits for people’s daily lives. Support for resilient agri-food will grow as people enjoy healthier living, eased household budgets, and more fulfilling employment agri-food opportunities. The plant-based agri-food system will positively impact public health, bolster food security, enhance environmental protection, encourage economic growth and free animals from industrial farming systems. See Q6 for specific policies to promote this shared vision.

***Q6. How can understanding of preparedness and resilience be improved, with action encouraged at all levels of society so that these priorities are both seen as relevant and achievable in practice?***

6.1 Food security is integral to national security, as recognised in the National Security Assessment (HM Govt 2026), and the UK Good Food Cycle framework (DEFRA 2025; para 1.1). Achieving food security requires significant transition towards plant-based agri-food systems (The Vegan Society 2026). That transition needs committed, informed action throughout society, at a scale and speed significantly greater than currently underway (Foodrise et al. 2025). Therefore, Government needs to use all relevant policies and programmes to actively communicate and support these vital transitions all levels of society for food-based national security.

6.2 Food security as a UK priority goal (Good Food Cycle, DEFRA 2025) needs to be supported by significant policy measures which support people to eat more plant-rich diets. These will foster a resilient agri-food system and food culture, and align with the best evidence on healthy, sustainable diets.

6.3 The Vegan Society has co-signed the joint policy paper, “Reaping the Benefits of Plant-Rich Diets: The Ten Point Plan” (Foodrise et al. 2025) of integrated measures to increase demand and supply of UK produced plant-based foods. These policies work in combination to improve our health, ensure just agri-food system transitions, boosts economic growth, protect our shared environment, and improve our food security.

6.4 Practical and proven policies will increase demand: the desirability, affordability and accessibility of healthy plant-based foods. This is especially important for people currently facing significant barriers to healthy eating.

6.5 Simultaneously, policies to support the production, sustainability and profitability of plant-based foods in the UK will boost UK farming. Ambitious, achievable targets are needed.

**The Ten Point Plan Policies**

6.6 Policy proposals to drive the production and consumption of healthy plant-based foods, fruit, vegetables, legumes, pulses and wholegrains:

6.7 1) **Public Procurement & Catering** Increase the proportion of plant-based foods, to normalise plant-rich diets and encourage growth in the market. Government should: Require meals meet GHG “emissions-per-portion” limits; Bring in plant-rich “by default” public sector menus; No longer require meat three times per week in School Food Standards.

6.8 2) **Plant-Based Sales Targets** Encourage food supply companies to increase their proportion of sales of plant-based foods. Government could: Require large food companies (>250 staff) to report, and set targets to raise, both the ratio of plant to animal protein, and fruit and vegetables sold.

6.9 3) **Better Support for Horticulture:** For national food security and economic growth, improve support for UK horticulture grow more vegetables, pulses, fruit and nuts. Government could: Target payments for farmers sustainably growing food crops (not feed); Support plant varieties and production research; Assist marketing, for the UK and export; Bring in rigorous fair pricing mechanisms within the supply chain.

6.10 4) **Grow Plant Protein for Food:** Support UK farmers to produce more plant protein food crops. Government could: Give grants, loans and/or subsidies for farmers growing protein food crops; Make payments to reduce environmentally harmful farming of animals; Support re-training of farmers.

6.11 5) **Widen Access to Healthy Food** Make healthy food more accessible and affordable for everyone. Government could: Provide fruit and veg in food equality schemes such as Healthy Start, and the 10 Year Health Plan; Support training in cooking plant-based foods in e.g. schools, communities & social media; Support community food gardening with education and expanding access to suitable land.

6.12 6) **Public Education on Plant-Based Food Health & Sustainability** Increase understanding of the health and environmental benefits of nutritious plant-rich diets. Government could: Run campaigns specifically about why plant-rich food is both sustainable and healthy; Include healthy and affordable recipes and meal plans based on pulses in the Eatwell Guide.

6.13 7) **Holistic Health, Sustainability & Welfare Food Labelling** Use food labelling to summarise combined health, eco-footprint and animal welfare impacts of products. Government could: Require standard combined labelling for all food products; On-pack advice on meeting fibre targets; Require clear 'method of production' on all animal-based foods.

6.14 8) **Better Plant-Based Training in Health & Food** Improve initial and continuing training for health and food professionals about healthy plant-rich foods. Health professionals such as GPs and Dietitians should all pass a module on balanced plant-based nutrition. Caterers should all pass a module on creating nutritious plant-based meals.

6.15 9) **Make Plant-Based Integral to the Eatwell Guide** Update, reform and apply the Eatwell Guide dietary guidelines with the best evidence on healthy, sustainable plant-rich diets. Add tools and guidance on adopting and maintaining plant-rich diets. Use as a reference diet to guide all public policy, including e.g. public food procurement, and advertising standards.

6.16 10) **Invest in Healthy, Sustainable Protein** Increase support for growing protein crops, and other alternative proteins. Government could: Further invest in the work of the National Alternative Proteins Innovation Centre; Ensure clear, robust, effective regulations.

[Q7. No comment]

[Q8. No comment]

[Q9. No comment]

[Q10. No comment]

*Q11. What barriers have there been to implementing improvements to preparedness and resilience, such as inaction, inappropriate structures, inadequate funding, and short-term*

## *thinking?*

11.1 Food security is national security. But the UK does not have enough land to feed the people who live here, based on our current diets. To achieve food security, we need a wholesale change in our collective food choices, ending industrial scale farming of animals, and dependence on imported animal-based foods, and feed, and significantly cut our use of agrochemical fertilisers. (Foodrise et al. 2025, The Vegan Society 2026)

11.2 Therefore, we must transition to a plant-rich agri-food system. We need a resilient supply of UK-grown, sustainable, healthy and culturally appropriate plant-rich food accessible to everyone.

11.3 A major barrier to food security has been insufficient ambition, and insufficient long-term political and financial commitment to food strategy by successive Governments. Lobbying from the biggest corporations involved in animal-based agri-food is another major barrier (Changing Markets 2024).

## ***12. What legislative measures should be considered to improve preparedness and resilience, such as a Defence Readiness Act and duties for organisations to incorporate resilience into their internal planning and business models?***

12.1 Over 100 NGOs, food businesses, and academics, including The Vegan Society, have joined the call for a 'Good Food Bill' to rebuild our agri-food system for our national security, public health, environment and economy. It would enshrine in law policies, targets and ambitions to improve public health, reduce inequalities, protect the environment and improve UK resilience, while safeguarding progress from short-term political cycles.

## ***13. What lessons concerning preparedness and resilience can the UK learn from other countries, including Nordic countries, and how can it facilitate international co-operation on these issues?***

13.1 There are excellent international learning and co-operation opportunities around plant-rich agri-food for national security. Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands have significant policies on plant-based foods. Czechia, Ireland, Luxembourg and Estonia support protein diversification (ProVeg International 2026).

13.2 **Denmark:** In 2023, the government introduced The Danish Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods, a comprehensive cross-government strategy to transition their agri-food system towards the production of sustainable, plant-based agri-food, and to promote its consumption among their citizens. The plan is backed by a permanent Plant-Based Foods Foundation fund (Plantefonden) of up to DKK 1 billion (c. £100 million) (Danish Govt. 2023, 2024, 2026)

13.3 **Canada:** National investment means Canada is a global research and development hub for pulses, to improve sustainability of farming practices, crop quality, export, and domestic processing and consumption of pulses (Pulse Canada 2026).

13.4 **Portugal:** National Plant-Based Protein Strategy proposals in climate plan to align with their Recovery and Resilience Plan (Portugal 2024). Portugal is proposing to simultaneously encourage increased production and consumption of plant protein crops, to ensure national protein crop self-sufficiency, food sovereignty and low carbon diets. They also aim to reduce food waste. In the UK, the food waste due to industrial scale farming of animals currently adds about c. 75% to overall UK food waste (UNEP 2009, CIWF 2025).

13.5 **The Netherlands:** Systemic investment in supporting farmers to transition away from farming animals in environmentally sensitive areas. The fund is currently worth over £600 million pounds until 2029 (OJEU 2024, Agriland 2025).

13.6 **South Korea:** Long-term investment in plant-based proteins as part of their National Plan, supporting plant-based protein innovation directly, and through creating a stable policy and funding environment to give confidence to industry (Vegconomist, 2022).

13.7 **EU:** Building on work in e.g. Denmark and Portugal, there are growing calls for an EU Plant-Based Action Plan to ensure that diversification into plant-based protein is a structural priority for Europe's long-term resilience (ProVeg International 2026).

13.8 The UK Government can learn from the consistent commitment to both stable policy and investment to ensure our protein supply is resilient.

[Q14. No comment]

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