

## Executive Summary – Reducing Dependence, Increasing Food Security: The Role of Plant-Rich Diets

**“The UK cannot currently produce enough food to feed its population based on current diets.”**  
*Global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security report, UK Government 2026*

Food security requires meeting the nutritional requirements of the nation while protecting the environment, rather than simply meeting current demand. Increased consumption of plant-based foods is essential to meet the UK’s health and sustainability goals, and supports food security.

### How does animal agriculture undermine our food security?

1. **Inefficient food production:** Although all UK croppable land has the potential to grow food for human consumption, 56% is currently used for animal feed, despite clear evidence that “livestock offers a much less efficient calorie conversion than crops for direct human consumption” ([Defra 2024](#)). It is estimated that converting land currently used for animal feed could feed an additional 16.5 million people in the UK ([CIWF, 2025](#)).
2. **Missed opportunities:** Current levels of animal-based food production also limit the domestic land available for other valuable purposes, such as carbon sequestration.
3. **Increased dependence on imports:** To meet current demand for animal-based foods, the UK is reliant on imports of both animal-based foods and critical inputs (mainly feed and fertiliser) for domestic production. Imports are subject to substantial volatility and price and supply risks.
4. **The climate change threat:** Climate impacts threaten the supply of both imports of animal-based foods and feed, and domestic production. With yields becoming more unpredictable, the use of arable land to grow animal feed exposes farmers and consumers to unnecessary risk.

### How do plant-rich foods enhance our self-sufficiency?

1. **Greater efficiency and lower risk:** Growing plant foods directly for human consumption requires far less land and fewer inputs than animal-based foods, reducing dependence on imported food and commodities.
2. **Plant foods can feed the nation:** Existing UK grain production is already sufficient to meet our domestic need for calories, if crops were used for food instead of feed. Protein needs can be met through conversion of suitable protein crops from feed to food, scaling up domestic plant protein production and the use of new varieties and techniques.

### Policy solutions

The Vegan Society endorses the joint position paper [Reaping the Benefits of Plant-Rich Diets: The Ten Point Plan](#), which sets out pragmatic, achievable policy proposals to increase the production and consumption of more plant-based foods in the UK.

Full briefing, including references, available [here](#).

Contact: [policy@vegansociety.com](mailto:policy@vegansociety.com)