The A Team Foundation was established upon an ideology that the simple act of eating well is instrumental to every human’s development and the future of our planet. From this beginning, a holistic understanding of our complex food system has emerged, which is continually informed and shaped by our work and those that we support. A healthful diet and how this is produced is the central pillar that upholds humanity’s security and wellbeing.

The Foundation financially supports food and land projects that are ecologically, economically and socially conscious through philanthropy and social investment. We contribute to the wider movement that envisions a future where real food is produced by agroecology and access to it is equal.

Agroecology is an umbrella term that refers to the use of biological principles to increase farm productivity, whilst conserving natural resources and taking into account the wider social and economic context affecting farmers and rural communities. Agroecology supports farming practices that instil ecological integrity by preserving biodiversity, soil health and high standards of animal welfare. Agroecology emphasises ‘low input farming’ that replicate the processes of nature - which includes reducing the use of fertilisers, pesticides, antibiotics and feed. Attention is also paid to the wider socio-economic context by ensuring that food producers and consumers are at the heart of agriculture policies; and supporting the creation of skilled farming jobs, entry into the sector for new farmers, and ensuring the continued economic viability of farms.
KEY MESSAGES IN RESPONSE TO HEALTH AND HARMONY; THE FUTURE FOR FOOD, FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN A GREEN BREXIT:

• Agroecology is the answer. We advise Defra to make the UK a world leading example of the enlightened agricultural practice. When aligned with local supply chains, the rights for worker’s and technological innovation, it is the panacea for our paradigm shift.

• The A Team Foundation requests official recognition that food is not a commodity but a basic human right.

• Apply the four easy-to-implement schemes as proposed by the Land Worker’s Alliance (See Box).

• Reinvigorate the Horticulture Sector to make easy gains on healthy and accessible food, healthy food-behaviour change, community integration, strengthening local livelihoods and development of our nutritionally complete food security.

• Diverse, culturally appropriate and nutritionally complete food, should take precedence over establishing export markets for commodities.

• Create short supply chains through supporting horticulture farms in urban and peri-urban locations. This would provide a multitude of benefits for urban society, such as education, engagement, health, urban-biodiversity and community cohesion.

• Implement simplified Environmental Land Management Schemes for agroforestry, orchards, and particularly; Community Supported Agriculture.

• To talk about ‘Public Goods’ and resilience, is at its most fundamental is to talk about seed and agrobiodiversity. This is a vital area that is not acknowledged through Health and Harmony.

• We strongly request a reverse of the decisions by BEIS and DEFRA not to extend the role of the Groceries Code Adjudicator to cover more of the food supply chain beyond direct supermarket suppliers.

• Food labelling must be reformed to a mandatory and uniformed system that champions our high food standards, the nutritional quality, the Public Goods they create, and the method of production.

• Public health is a Public Good, and one that should be delivered by farming and food policy. Although inherently interconnected, there isn’t a focus on how agricultural policy will change the course of diet related illness in the UK and ease the burden on the NHS.

• All Public Procurement should run through a food assurance scheme, we propose the Soil Association’s ‘Food for Life’

THE FOUR SCHEMES OF THE LAND WORKER’S ALLIANCE FOR POST-BREXIT AGRICULTURE:

1) A Sustainable Farming Transition Scheme
2) A Local Food Fund
3) A New Entrants Scheme
4) Horticulture Livelihoods Payments
THE CASE FOR CHANGE

Agrarian culture is the keystone to civil society. Stability, endurance, and prosperity are provided for when healthy natural systems supply the foundation of human existence; nutrition.

Yet, the balance has changed, we are in flux of a new, agricultural revolution. To adapt a quote by Audrey Hepburn; “To farm, is to believe in tomorrow”. The agricultural bill is evidence that there is no longer a status quo, the time to create a brave new world is upon us. One built on humanitarian, and ecological ideals. The A Team are grateful for Defra’s foresight to acknowledge this change and work with its momentum.

The shift in values is already visible within the economy and through public dialogue. People are making themselves heard through their purchasing power for high welfare, low input, sustainable farming produce. As that market share continues to grow, so will the need to keep up with demand.

This revolution is not a violent one, it has the power of the undercurrent. Choices are decided subjectively through ‘over the dinner table’ conversations, personal budgeting, idle walks in the countryside, and importantly; through social media. People wish to know the provenance of their food. After all, as the old truthful adage goes; ‘you are what you eat’.

On the surface, it appears that the challenge is polarised. On one hand, ‘How do we protect our natural resources?’ and on the other, ‘How do we collectively expand as a species’? But that is merely an appearance, at their core, they are holistic; the regulatory services that a healthy environment provides has dividends for production and health.

The physicist Max Planck once said, “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change”. There are multiple perspectives in how we approach life and how the world may appear. We welcome the news that Government are looking into holistic farming methods. Systems that are proven to be able to feed a growing population while being kind to our ecological needs.

The A Team Foundation advises with a full heart; agroecology. Three patterns are destined to emerge from this time of great change; working in harmony with the simple rhythms of nature, the development of technologies (natural and digital) to efficiently use our resources, and a wholesome connection of community and livelihoods - a localised food economy. Agroecology is the method to achieve this state of wellbeing.

Informed by the amalgamation of cutting edge agri-

-science and ancient wisdom, Agroecology is a solution-based approach in-line with the Earth’s natural patterns. Solutions that we develop now are the bedrock, on which, our future generations will thrive.

It is required of the Government to build the structure of a supportive policy environment that enables the individual citizen to become a champion of change and empowers the farmer as a pillar of society, one that upholds our collective health.

Organisations such as the Ecological Land Cooperative, the Real Farming Trust and the Land Worker’s Alliance have proven that with nothing more than sheer grit, belief, comradery and a vision of a better world, they can change how things are done. The A Team have great faith in organisations such as these, for they bring out the goodness in humankind.

If we cast our minds back to ten years ago, soil health wasn’t even in common consciousness. Now, with enthused energy, we are all collectively working to avoid the scenes from the dirty-thirties; the dustbowl of southern US.

This togetherness against a common cause has born innovation out of necessity. We are giants standing on each other’s shoulders, manifesting quantum leaps in our collective understanding of the very essence of our soil, our ecosystems and our existence on Earth.

We are now in the age of post-modern food. Climate change is to have evolutionary consequences on our systems. To mitigate it, our natural resource use must be efficient, and agroecology is the breakthrough. Both environmental and human health (termed in our response; One Health) is at a precipice. Affronted by many challenges, it is as vital as ever that we work together.

The UK faces multiple factors; high labour and land costs, a powerful, consolidated retail sector, strong public scrutiny and multiple demands on the countryside. In light of this, we can never be the cheapest of land based products - nor would we comply with it - therefore we must be the best.

In this response, we give you our view of wellbeing for all.

The A Team Foundation thank you for the opportunity to respond to your consultation on Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit (as of now, referred to as H&H).
This year, the A Team Foundation attended the UN for FAO’s second symposium on Agroecology. Their message was loud and clear: only small farms and agroecology can feed the world.

The narrative that mainstream agriculture is the only way is a myth. It is a simple lie that has been repeated so often that society believes it to be true. In order to accomplish the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals, this paradigm, with its futility exposed – is destined to change.

Farmers are awakened to the simple facts that the environmental/regulatory benefits of whole farm systems allow production to thrive. Agroecology empowers the farmer, enhances biodiversity, deepens resilience, contributes to One Health, and is a vital pillar to our human right to food.

Agroecology offers a unique approach to meeting the needs of future generations while ensuring that no one is left behind.

What the Government has proposed makes great claims to protect our Natural Capital, promote Public Goods, and empower the individual farmer. Agroecology is the most appropriate tool in our box of solutions to achieve the biggest impact for each. And yet, a sincere and legal commitment to its adoption is found wanting.
W

ithin H&H, there is wholesome discourse on environmental biodiversity, for that we applaud. However, what is sorely lacking is an evaluation of, and solutions to, the existing declining state of agrobiodiversity, specifically; seed sovereignty.

Without seed, there is no life. It is simply that vital.

The concentration of the seed market by only a very small number of corporations is having a heavy and negative impact on seed prices, nutritional quality, farmer’s path dependencies (being locked upon a trajectory because of previous actions - Sutherland, 2012), and vitally; genetic diversity (and therefore resilience). Industrial hybrids designed solely for yield come at the vital expense of features such as the farmer’s ability to intercrop, ecological conservation, nutritional and cooking qualities, and other characteristics useful for farmers, consumers and societal ‘public goods’.

In addition, the processes of business consolidation have created a syndicate where one business’s seeds respond only to their own agro chemical products.

The replacement of farmers’ seeds with a few uniform industrial varieties leads to the rapid erosion of global seed diversity and the consequences of compromised resilience and security. Following the 1960s Green Revolution, the cultivars of rice available to Filipino farmers dropped from some 4,000 varieties to just 3 to 5 “improved” varieties. The same pattern was noticed through other Asian countries as well as Mexico, ultimately resulting in the loss of traditional varieties and seed saving practices, a dependence culture on external input providers, and farmer indebtedness.

Society as a whole is nutritionally dependent on a monopoly.

As you know, the value of resilient and diverse systems goes far beyond any economic measure. Diverse and robust local seed systems are central to sustainable food systems that are renewable, resilient, equitable, diverse, healthy, and interconnected. Variety is required to satisfy the needs of large scale farming in high-potential areas but also the agricultural smallholders – by far the majority of the global farmers – a livelihood to contribute to our food supply.

The private seed sector is unable to supply the solutions to our aforementioned, interconnected troubles. Their logic, economies of scale and decreasing innovation by monopolies is inherently in conflict with our future planetary challenges.

Agroecological farmers, require agroecological seed – so it must be treated differently than that of its industrial counterpart. We advise you to look at the work by the Gaia Foundation, The Seed Co-op, and the Organic Research Centre to combat these issues. We propose to you the following solutions:

• Farmer-managed systems are crucial for preserving agrobiodiversity, nutritionally complete food security, and resilience against climate and economic shocks. They provide a rich diversity of seeds, including varieties adapted to specific environmental conditions or with other characteristics useful to agroecological farmers. We advise you to champion the use of farmer managed seed banks and seed trading of non-patented agroecological seed.

• Current seed laws and policies are undermining farmer managed and community based seed systems, and that effective and coordinated advocacy and investment in support of agricultural biodiversity and community based seed systems is required now more than ever.

• The exemption to the current Seed Marketing Regulations for “small packets packages” which would allow the legal sale of seed varieties to home gardeners and small-scale production.

• Permit an Open Source Seed Licence so that agroecological seed is considered a commons. The laws on securing intellectual property rights on seeds have been strongly developed, whereas seeds as commons receive almost no legal protection. With the OSS Licence a way has been found to redress this imbalance.

Also, we would like to raise your awareness to another critical seed issue: a new EU regulation. The EU Organic Regulation is expected to be adopted in April 2018.

Applicable throughout the EU (without the need to be transposed into national legislation) from January 2021, the Regulation will support production and innovation around organic seeds by offering a more permissive certification system for farmers and farmers’ groups/ cooperatives.

If we assume ‘exit day’ (taking into account a ‘status quo’ transition period) lies on or before 31st December, the current wording of the EU Withdrawal Bill suggests that this Regulation will not apply to UK Law. We advise that this would be an error as the benefits from which will greatly support agroecology and the growing Organic market.
WHOLE FARM SYSTEMS; LAND SHARING AND LAND SPARING

The Government wisely promote the benefits of good environmental custodianship. However, there is a perception of duality, an either-or between environment and farming (land sparing).

What we fear is that quality land will be taken out of production and turned into wildflower meadows (as an example) due to the ease of receiving payments over the toils of production.

Yes, there is an urgent need for wildflower meadows, but we must give emphasis that this has potential to push our food supply beyond our national boundaries and simultaneously diminish our own diverse, nutritionally complete and culturally appropriate food security. In turn, this will decrease the land available for new entrants, and increase its already exponential monetary value.

With all faith, we propose a mixed approach that also incorporates ‘Land Sharing’. Whole Farm Systems welcome nature into the process where the Public Goods of a diverse ecosystem and healthy nutrition mutually arise.

Whole farm systems are innately aligned to achieve the outcomes that Defra have set. They already have the metrics in place to measure them. Knowledge and Case Studies already exist (advocated examples can be found at the Organic Research Centre and Agricology at Daylesford). An enlightened and unified system without negligent farming practices contributes to the greater good; the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts.

Please, let wildflower meadows and rewilding come, but consider it site specific.

THE REINVESTIGATION OF HORTICULTURE

The A Team Foundation are proud supporters of the wider movement’s cause to improve our food systems. There are many wonderful organisations already showcasing the benefits and successes of agroecology. We align our voice with them as we say that there needs to be a lot more to be done to support Horticulture.

As a necessary sector for our food supply, there is a mandate for its renewal. Please take the burden of being economically disadvantaged off the backs of small scale growers, and allow them the opportunity to thrive. In doing so, the benefits will be felt throughout.

Public Health England, recommends that the UK population are to eat “seven a day” helpings of fruit and vegetables. This requires that UK growers need to produce at least £2.4 million tonnes more of fruit and vegetables. The NHS is under great strain caused by bad diets, biodiversity is in decline and people are disconnected from the land - fresh, healthy and locally produced food is the panacea to many of our challenges.

It is a very simple fix, here we provide you with actions that would create solutions:

- Create a policy environment that is supportive for small scale farmers.
- Provide assistance in the development of incubator farms, apprenticeships, farmer-to-farmer knowledge transfers (see the work by Kindling Trust and Organic Lea)
- Design a “Mixed Farm Scheme” that supports the creation of horticultural units on larger farms.
- Allow for subsidies/grants/interest free loans for infrastructure and equipment costs.
- Access to markets is key, to create short supply chains horticulture farms require support from urban and peri-urban locations. This would provide a multitude of benefits for urban society.
The A Team Foundation are very much in favour of H&H’s proposal that assist farmers through innovation, knowledge exchange and CPD, particularly in the investment that farmers will need to transition to a new system that delivers the environmental and welfare benefits.

We believe that Farmer’s themselves are entrepreneurs by nature. They are adaptive, experimental and know farming better than anyone. They are to be the heart of agricultural research and innovation. Farmer-led innovation should be funded – we would advise modelling it upon the Innovators Farmers Network. Organic and non-organic farmers share the experience of finding solutions to mutual challenges within a field lab setting. Innovative agriculture projects should be led by farmers themselves as they are best placed to know what is needed.

Also, we propose that there should be a scheme that provides education, business support, mentorship and financial support for farmers transitioning to an agroecological system to meet the environmental and business benefits set out in H&H. The Organic Research Centre (and partners) have already released a report on farmer’s experiences of transitioning which is an insightful piece of literature for the many positives of making the change.

Agroecology itself addresses the root causes of our problems through holistic and long-term solutions based on the co-creation of knowledge. Farmers, stakeholders, institutions and researchers share and innovate using local, traditional, indigenous and practical knowledge with multi-disciplinary science. This has multi-level benefits for the UK’s knowledge creation and extension sectors.

Our Suggestions:

- At least 10% of the Agricultural Research Budget should be spent on broad scale holistic management techniques to promote agroecological practice and organic farming.
- Farmer-led innovation modelled upon the Innovators Farmers Network
- A Sustainable Farming Transition scheme that assists conventional farmers transitioning into agroecological systems.
- An environment for Farmer-to-Farmer knowledge exchange.
- Additional research into whole farm systems, agroforestry, organic, pasture and sustainable horticulture.
- Encourage benchmarking.

The future of agriculture is not input-intensive but knowledge-intensive. We need the integrated approach that Agroecology can offer.

FAO Director-General, José Graziano da Silva
There is a profound shift in the values of Millennials to leave the world in a better state than they found it. Trends are showing that educated/ex-urban/first-time farmers are making the most on customer demand for local and sustainable foods. In doing so, this has already had profound ramifications on the entire food system.

After Brexit, succession is the next big agricultural crisis. With the average age of the farmer at 65, what is to happen to those farms?

There is an absolute urgent necessity to link these two facts together.

The youth are far more likely than the general farming population to grow organically, limit pesticide and fertiliser use, diversify their crops or animals, and be deeply involved in their local food systems via community supported agriculture (CSA) programs and farmers markets. This young generation is the agricultural revolution, it has the ability to serve a global paradigm shift, if they are able to get on the land.

If today’s young farmers can continue to grow their operations, they are able to bolster the total number of dwindling small-medium sized farms — and in the process, prevent the land from falling into the hands of large-scale industrial operations or residential developers. Thus, adding to the national ecological resilience. Young farmers tend to start small and sell direct to local markets which boosts local economies. An additional issue, however, is a need to support them as they shift gears and scale up. This need is currently filled by co-operatives and groups working together to best increase their chances. From which, rural communities are integrated socially and there is a lot more active local engagement.

We suggest that you incorporate agroecology as the main production system. The growing demand for sustainable food systems combined with the inherent challenge to regenerate the land for the greater good, adding value to consumerism and fighting inequality, is an active form of youth-magnetism. The benefits of which, provides the dignity, transformation and contentment that the youth are seeking for.

However, the numbers entering farming are nowhere near the level of those exiting. UK food supply, built on the foundations of agroecology is dependent on increasing numbers of new entrant farmers. A calculation carried out by The Land magazine estimated the UK needs 157,000 more farmers and farm workers in order to maximise domestic production from agroecological and mixed farms. This is achievable, through the right policies, education processes and public relations.

Here are our suggestions on how to attract new entrants:

- We would like to see a New Entrants capital grant scheme introduced modelled on the Scottish Young Farmers and New Entrants Schemes. They are achieving great success using the provisions of capital investment for a variety of installations and improvements.
- We would particularly like to see support for new entrants from non-farming backgrounds as well as succession planning schemes.
- Support the role of incubator farms.
- Ensure eligibility for on-going support (agri-environmental, rural development, capital grants and loans ring fenced to support new entrants and SMEs) includes all active farmers, including during the precarious period of transition to a new system. To keep administrative costs to a minimum, payments for farms under a certain threshold could be awarded as multi-year contracts.
- Commission a review of issues that affect farm viability and new entrants particularly including land prices, new models for tenancy, security of tenure, planning issues and loss of county farm estates.
- Provide grants or low/no interest loans - easily available and well-advertised - targeted to smaller farm business sizes to deliver specific tools to maintain or boost important sectors and approaches including: sustainable horticulture (especially urban and peri-urban to provide perishable goods nearest to markets); mixed farming; new entrants; agroforestry; succession associated with new farm ownership (i.e. not for farm amalgamation); sustainable orchard planting; on-farm education initiatives; mixed farming; and existing farms creating significant step changes towards direct marketing, higher animal welfare, increased sustainability and delivery of public goods.
- Schemes must be simple, low level, multi-annual and accessible to small businesses with limited administration capacity.
- Student loan forgiveness
- Existing tenancy law presents barriers to new entrants, productivity and investment. There is a need to protect the network of county farms and ensure long term tenancies of at least...
We echo the voices of numerous others as we say that developing local food systems is the only enlightened way forward and meeting national demands for diverse, culturally appropriate and nutritionally complete food, should take precedence over establishing export markets of commodities.

Our reliance on imported food and the export markets have negatively influenced our food sovereignty. Having locally sourced produce reduces our carbon footprint, keeps food fresher for longer and it is directly accessible to the local community and therefore, aligning agricultural policy with health strategies - a 'Public Good'. Producers are able to gain a higher share of the retail value, and importantly, the money earned and spent is kept in the local economies. In turn, this makes farming practices more profitable, increasing one’s dignity and living standards – without putting the extra cost on the consumer. Locally sourced food encourages more diverse, sustainable mixed farms with multiple products, which enable more on-farm recycling, lower inputs, reduction of food waste, and other environmental benefits. Doing so, will reduce our reliance on other countries that currently should be available to feed their own populations, but which is currently used for growing export crops to satisfy UK markets.

Keeping fiscal circulations, developed through enlightened practices, within the local economy is vitaly important for rural communities. Agroecological systems do this inherently.

Aligned with the entire food sovereignty movement, the A Team Foundation strongly believe that the Government should dedicate a significant financial commitment to support farmers towards rural development by rewarding small and agro ecological farms that are actively producing food and providing for their community.

We suggest:

- A Local Food Fund that expands on the LEADER Funding and the Big Lottery’s Local Food Fund.

- Design a Scheme that supports the creation of horticultural units on larger farms and urban/peri-urban areas with access to local markets.

- Horticulture Payments (£5,000 per FTE worker up to 4 employees)

We recommend the formation of a new farmworker collective bargaining body (replacing the old AWB) for England and a reversal of the cuts in enforcement agencies which protect workers from abuse. When the Government removed the Agriculture Wages Board (AWB) in England in 2013 they removed a fair and effective means by which farmers and land managers could agree annual wages, with grades and additional issues such as overtime, housing and sick pay. Wales and Scotland still have agriculture sector wage boards. The removal of the burden of negotiation allowed farmers more time to do other work and resulted in less conflict. Farmers now have to individually enter into negotiation with employees whom they have to work beside day to day. The uneven employment relationship is worsened by isolation. In the consultation to abolish the AWB, 63% of the responses did not support the abolition and this included farmers, landowners and many experts and including those working in rural communities. The A Team Foundation strongly echoes the voices of our peers by suggesting that we need a new body for sector bargaining, with arbitration, for agriculture workers in England.

- Better measurement and far more resources to enforce labour standards to eliminate slavery and end worker abuse in the UK food system. A further consideration should be the numbers working overseas to provide food for the UK. Exposés on slavery in the food system are becoming increasingly frequent so we should ensure - via stronger modern slavery rules on action and reporting by companies - to ensure we are not using or importing food produced involving abused/slave labour. In addition, we need to promote fair trade particularly in public food procurement.
Meeting national demands for diverse, culturally appropriate and nutritionally complete food, should take precedence over establishing export markets of commodities.

The A Team Foundation echo the work of the APPG for Agroecology, the Land Worker’s Alliance, Sustain and the wider movement at large, as we agree with their sincere concern of potential brazen international free trade deals. Although trade deals themselves are not necessarily a bad thing, it is imperative that all future trade deals come with environmental and animal welfare safeguards that prevent the flow of poor quality products and unsustainable practices undercutting the hard earned, high quality, British products.

Within the supply chain it is already clear that there are abusive practices occurring. To collect evidence of this is difficult, this is due to a culture of secrecy amongst farmers and suppliers who risk their listing if they speak out. Many other organisations within our food movement have pointed to the Groceries Code Adjudicator to have greater authority and cover more of the supply chain beyond direct supermarket suppliers.

We are aware that the Secretary of State has made claims that he will be addressing labelling as a conduit of agricultural policy reform. We must ensure that improved labelling is introduced in order to showcase the high standards that we aspire to. Transparency is crucial so that the public is aware of what they are purchasing and eating. If meat is to be labelled as ‘Pasture Fed’, at least 85% of the livestock’s diet must only be pasture. At present the system is being abused by some claiming their meat is pasture fed, when it is actually fed with only 10% pasture. This is a perversion of the consumer’s rights.

Labelling should reflect the Public Goods that this Agriculture Bill is to champion. Specific information on production and slaughter method should be mandatory, and labelling must be uniform to avoid confusion.

We are greatly concerned with the Government’s attitude to target the precautionary principle as a means to welcome in “advancements” such as GMO and agrichemicals. Without the Lisbon Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (which refers to the precautionary principle in Article 191), Brexit means that the country will lose the precautionary principle as a principle of UK law and, despite environmental and health uncertainties, the current legal basis for judicious decision-making may be greatly compromised.

We suggest:

- A ban on the imports of food produced to lower environmental, social and animal welfare standards than those of UK producers, including genetically modified crops, (rBGH) hormone infected beef, chlorinated chicken and food produced with exploited labour
- A commitment to the Precautionary Principle in all policy decisions relating to food and farm products.
- An integrated tariff regime to enforce the maximum permissible tariff rates under current WTO rules relating to agricultural goods and services.
- Official recognition that food is not a commodity but a basic human right. A commitment to exempt the sector from future free trade agreements
- Food labelling must be reformed to a mandatory and uniformed system that champions our high food standards, the Public Goods they create, and the method of production.
- We strongly request a reverse of the decisions by BEIS and DEFRA not to extend the role of the Groceries Code Adjudicator to cover more of the food supply chain beyond direct supermarket suppliers.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TRANSPARENCY IN THE FOOD CHAIN
Humanity is very good at thinking in silos. Like a child, breaking things apart to look at the pieces, has been the method of our learning. However, the time has come to evolve our collective understanding with the knowledge of how it all works together. Life doesn’t run independently; everything is interdependent and interconnected.

There is no such thing as public health or environmental health; there is simply health. Our journey has a shared direction. It is for the wellbeing of all as we are all one – One Health.
Wellbeing in the environment contributes to well-being in people. Clean air, water, and soil create clean ingredients, nutrition and diets. If we are clean and healthy, we are best able to serve our roles in society. If society is healthy, then dividends return to our planet. It really is that simple and the apex between environment to human, is food and farming.

The title Health and Harmony, leads us to think that there is a strategy proposed for human health based on food consumption and production – a very noble idea. However, after reading the document, health is somehow, and amazingly, unmentioned.

One health is the term for the holistic Public Good that Defra are already advocating.

Research has shown that UK adults should be eating 53% less of foods high in fat and sugar - and 54% more fruit and vegetables, with a huge 85% more beans and pulses. Farmers should be rewarded for providing food that is healthy, sustainable and nutritious for the public, and the new subsidy system should be used as a tool to realign the food that the British public consumes.

Fruit and vegetables constitute 40% of the food we eat, but in 2015/16 horticulture received on average £5,300 (15% of the farm’s income) from CAP, compared to £17,100 (153%) for farmers grazing livestock on lowland, and £27,400 (153%) for mixed lowland grazing. If subsidies were merely aligned with the rate of consumption this would entail a huge shift to healthier foods and diets.

As shown in the chart above (from the Land Worker’s Alliance), the current CAP skewers the production of foods against dietary recommendations. We advise to reconcile the discrepancies in order to achieve One Health.

There is also an important point to be made about the more direct health impacts of certain foods and farming practices. Routine use of antibiotics in cattle has contributed to worrying levels of antibiotic resistance worldwide. Furthermore, there is evidence that shows organically grown food is more nutritious than foods grown through intensive or high-input methods, as well as the use of nitrates in agriculture being linked to certain types of cancer. We agree with the entire food movement that a resolution for these must be put forward in the forthcoming Agriculture Bill.

We advise;

• In order to deliver one health, the government should harness the power of public procurement to stimulate demand for higher quality, fresh British produce, including organic, and particularly vegetables, pulses and fruits – supporting British farmers to produce more and British citizens to eat more healthily.

• New farm policy should prioritise horticulture, and the planting of orchard and nut crops, by introducing financial incentives and grants to support farmers to move into or start horticultural production, particularly those employing ecological production methods such as organic, and those selling as directly as possible to the public.

• Measures should be applied to increase the diversity of diets, reduce the consumption of ultra-processed foods, and ensure that fresh whole foods are as accessible and attractive as less healthy choices. The benefits of this will be repaid many times over in the reduction of spend on non-communicable diseases like diabetes and obesity. Part of this requires a ‘less but better quality’ approach to meat and dairy consumption, as championed by the Eating Better coalition.

• We also echo the words of the APPG for Agroecology, for the extension of the ‘healthy start scheme’ in which vouchers are provided for those on low income to buy fruit and vegetables. In this way, the Agriculture Bill provides an opportunity to better align our agriculture policy with the Sustainable Development Goals – the second of which is Zero Hunger – by enabling easy and affordable access to healthy food for all.