



A vegan manifesto for a **SUSTAINABLE PLANT- BASED TRANSITION**

The Vegan Society urges all policymakers and political parties: Support a managed and just transition to a more sustainable, plant-based food system so that we can meet climate targets and for the good of all people, our planet and animals.

One of the most effective ways to reduce carbon emissions and free up land for nature is to transition away from the inefficient, cruel and unsustainable process of using animals as food. Animal agriculture is the biggest land user in the UK. 48% of arable land is used for animal agriculture – either for pasture or in growing food for animals.¹ Globally, animal agriculture uses a huge amount of land (83%) for creating 18% of calories and 37% of protein for global human consumption.²

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on climate change and land describes plant-based diets as a major opportunity for mitigating and adapting to climate change and includes a policy recommendation to reduce meat consumption.³ Both the UK's Climate Change Committee and the independent National Food Strategy recommend varying reductions (between

20-40%) in meat and dairy consumption to mitigate climate change. By comparison, plant-based proteins produce, on average, 70 times less greenhouse gas emissions than an equivalent amount of beef, and use more than 150 times less land.⁴ Eating less meat and dairy and consuming more fruit, vegetables and alternative proteins will both improve public health and increase food security.

Some countries are already taking advantage of the opportunity presented by plant-based

diets. Denmark has published a national 'Action Plan for Plant-based Foods'⁵ to begin the transition and South Korea has also released plans to boost its growing plant-based food industry.⁶

As a centre of technological innovation with large vegan, vegetarian and flexitarian populations, the United Kingdom is well placed to lead the world in the growth of the plant-based food and drink sector. The UK market for meat



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¹ <https://animal.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/Eating-Away-at-Climate-Change-with-Negative-Emissions%E2%80%93E2%80%93Harwatt-Hayek.pdf>

² <https://animal.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/Eating-Away-at-Climate-Change-with-Negative-Emissions%E2%80%93E2%80%93Harwatt-Hayek.pdf>

³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02409-7>

⁴ <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/ghg-per-protein-poor>

⁵ <https://fvm.dk/nyheder/nyhed/nyhed/foedevareministeren-har-netop-lancereret-verdens-foerste-handlingsplan-for-plantebaserede-foedevare>

⁶ <http://koreabizwire.com/south-korea-unveils-ambitious-plan-to-cultivate-thriving-plant-based-food-industry/262752>
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substitutes is worth over one billion euros, making it the largest in Europe,⁷ with 40% of consumers calling for plant-based options.⁸ Promoting a transition to plant-based proteins would make us healthier, improve our food security and could have huge benefits to society through increased quality of life and reduced spending on diseases. Our research found that every one million people who switch to a vegan diet would generate an estimated £121 million of health care cost savings.⁹

Therefore, The Vegan Society proposes a package of measures to promote a managed transition to a sustainable plant-based food system:

Prioritise promoting plant-based foods and a sustainable food system transition

- Recognise the need to promote plant-based diets and food as crucial to meet net zero targets.
- Set an ambition for the UK to capitalise on the economic growth of the plant-based sector and strive to be a world leader. This will require a sector specific plan for supporting the plant-based industry in the UK, similar to that released by the Danish Government.
- Set a target to reduce meat and dairy consumption by 70% by 2030, as proposed by Greenpeace, which will catalyse other actions around promoting plant-based alternatives and kickstart a sustainable transition to 100% reduction by 2050.
- Prioritise health and sustainability in procurement, using the procurement process as a lever.
- Support animal farmers to have a just transition to plant-based crop production or other more sustainable forms of land management, and recognise the rights of all animals to live and be treated with compassion and respect.

⁷ <https://www.statista.com/topics/7297/veganism-in-the-united-kingdom/>

⁸ <https://vegconomist.com/market-and-trends/uk-vegan-food-market-grows/>

⁹ <https://www.news-medical.net/news/20240108/Study-10025-adoption-of-plant-based-diets-could-save-the-NHS-c2a367-billion-a-year.aspx>

Support farmers for a just transition to more sustainable food systems

- Create a realistic land use plan to support the growth in demand for plant-based crops, grow more fruit, veg and legumes in the UK and manage a reduction in livestock numbers.
- Provide financial resources and practical support to help all farmers to play a role in this transition, moving to more sustainable practices such as rewilding, or plant-based crop production.

Capitalise on the health benefits offered by plant-based diets

- Public health campaigns must actively promote well-planned plant-based diets as a healthy and sustainable option.
- Include plant-based diets in strategies for prevention of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity.
- Align our Eatwell Guide with environmental guidelines as Germany has done, and ensure the refreshed Guide gives plant-based, vegan-relevant advice.
- Include training in the benefits of whole food plant-based and vegan diets for all health care professionals.

Capitalise on the economic opportunity presented by plant-based foods

- The UK could be a world leader in the emerging alternative proteins sector, with the right mix of investment and regulations to level the playing field.

- Developing and manufacturing plant-based foods and alternative proteins in the UK means high productivity jobs in research, manufacturing and production, as well as farming jobs.

- UKRI focused support and funding should drive innovative growth in the UK plant-based market, improving taste, flavour and nutrition.

- Level the playing field for plant-based alternatives through reviewing restrictions around terminology and encouraging price parity in retail and out-of-home sectors, for example by equalising margins.

Encourage the private sector to promote more plant-based foods

- Ensure the novel foods application processes are efficient and facilitate innovation in plant-based production techniques.

- Create a statutory duty for all food companies with more than 250 employees – including retailers, restaurant and quick service companies, contract caterers, wholesalers, manufacturers and online ordering platforms – to publish an annual report on metrics including sales of protein by type, sales of fruit and vegetables.

- The Food Standards Agency should develop a harmonised and consistent mandatory food labelling system to describe the environmental impacts of food products.

Utilise the power of public procurement

- Guarantee at least one nutritious vegan option on every public sector menu as standard.

- Redesign the Government Buying Standards for Food (GBSF), to ensure that taxpayer money is spent on food that is both healthy and sustainable.

Ensure vegans are fully included

- Make it easy for people to choose a vegan lifestyle, by supporting vegans and promoting veganism as a positive choice for the benefit of people, animals and the planet.

- Veganism is a protected philosophical belief, so diversity and inclusion training as well as the school curriculum, should include references to veganism, with educators and health professionals fully trained in vegan inclusion and vegan beliefs collected by the national census.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- The Vegan Society urges all policymakers and political parties to urgently support a managed and just transition to a more sustainable, plant-based food system, using these policies as a starting point.

- Talk to colleagues developing policy about the

support and policy measures the plant-based sector needs and share this manifesto with them.

- Promote and publicise the benefits of plant-based diets as an effective approach to achieving health and sustainability goals.

MORE INFORMATION

**Vegan Society
and Office of Health
Economics research
on the impact of plant-
based diets on health care
resource use**



**Vegan Society briefing
on plant-based diets and
climate change**



**The Vegan Society,
Donald Watson House,
21 Hylton Street,
Birmingham, B18 6HJ**

+44 (0)121 523 1730
policy@vegansociety.com
vegansociety.com

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