



Sources	Nature Food		
Date	June 2020		
Potential scale of impact	Certainty of outcome	Impact horizon	
★★★☆☆	★☆☆☆☆	H1	H2 H3

Insufficient capacity in domestic food production, just-in-time supply chains and Brexit-related labour market challenges have weakened the UK's food system. Building redundancy and diversity in the food system is essential for resilience in the COVID-19 recovery.

The paper offers four critical conclusions:

- It is clear we need a new strategic plan to reorientate the UK food system to grow more food sustainably in the UK. This will require new thinking and investment in British horticulture, a crop diversification strategy, and assessment of the potential of new approaches such as indoor vertical farming.
- COVID-19 has also exposed the UK's vulnerability in terms of labour shortages, hence there needs to be an investment in skills and training for farming combined with investment in digital automation.
- The UK also needs to be a leader of international collaboration across the G7 and G20 more than ever to limit the negative consequences of protectionism.
- A much stronger evidence base around risk and resilience in our food system must be built across government, involving partnership at the policy-science-industry interface. This cannot simply be left to the market.

The paper takes a systemic approach, highlighting that understanding of supply chain vulnerability — exposure to serious disturbance arising from within or external to the food supply chain — and supply chain resilience is very limited.

It also argues that the term 'supply chain' - which suggests of a linear chain where one organisation feeds resources or materials into another is unhelpful and that it is more accurate to consider 'networks of multiple and bidirectional interdependencies between organisations'.

