



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture

NEWS RELEASE

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Alarming 32 percent drop in food production unless urgent action is taken, warns Parliamentary group

Recent research has warned that the UK government's targets for house building, nature restoration, renewable energy, tree planting, and infrastructure could result in the loss of up to a quarter of currently farmed land over the next 25 years — much of it high-quality arable land.

The [study](#), led by former NFU chief economist Dr Derrick Wilkinson as part of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture's (APPGSTA) 30:50:50 programme, cautions that at current productivity growth rates, and without urgent reforms to farming and land-use policies to enhance yields, domestic food production could decline by 32% by 2050, or 39% per capita.

The All-Party Group is urging the government to embed its proposed 30:50:50 mission - increasing agricultural output by 30% by 2050 while reducing farming's environmental footprint by 50% - as a consistent, cross-departmental reference point across all food, farming and land use policies, as outlined in its new report [Feeding Britain sustainably to 2050 - the 30:50:50 mission](#).

The Group is also calling for the strategic importance of food security to be elevated alongside environmental goals of biodiversity and net zero, with a statutory target of 75% self-sufficiency by 2050.

Launching the report today (3 November 2025) at the Agri-Science Summit in Westminster with more than 100 cross-party politicians, scientists and industry stakeholders attending, **APPGSTA chair George Freeman MP will warn that UK agriculture is at a tipping point.**

“Despite favourable growing conditions, world-class agri-science, and a highly professional farming sector, UK agricultural productivity growth has stalled. Across successive governments, fragmented support policies, inconsistent regulation and a failure to translate scientific advances into practice have constrained progress. Defra's own research indicates that current farm policies will reduce or displace domestic food production. Without radical policy reform,

the UK risks further erosion of its food self-sufficiency and growing reliance on imports at a time when geopolitical instability and climate extremes threaten global food supply chains,” he said. “There is a huge global appetite to invest in UK agri-tech to help feed nine billion – let us ensure that we have the policies in place to support this.”

“In July this year, the government’s Food Strategy rightly set out the goal of creating a healthier, more affordable, sustainable and resilient food system. But those ambitions risk being undermined by competing priorities from other government departments — particularly the growing push for industrialised solar farms on agricultural land and associated infrastructure. We simply cannot afford to lose prime farmland to meet renewable energy targets,” said Mr Freeman.

“The challenges of population growth, climate change, war and global instability demand a joined-up, cross-government response — not a siloed one. The APPGSTA 30:50:50 mission directly addresses these pressures, providing a framework to boost productivity and ensure UK farming remains globally competitive while producing more food, more sustainably.”

Having originally launched the 30:50:50 vision in January 2025 during Agri-Science Week in Parliament, the APPGSTA report released today brings together stakeholder input and feedback following wide-ranging engagement with more than 100 organisations and individuals across the food and farming sector.

Three key take-aways emerged from this evidence-gathering process:

- The 30:50:50 ambition is widely endorsed as a long-term strategic framework, and as a unifying point of reference to align productivity, sustainability and innovation goals.
- There is strong agreement that our current policy framework is not fit-for-purpose to deliver against a ‘more from less’ agenda: a lack of policy focus on food production; inconsistent and over-precautionary regulation; lack of clear baselines and data coherence; weak translation from research to practice; and insufficient investment in skills, infrastructure, and digital capability.
- There is also broad consensus that science, technology, and innovation must be central to a re-framing of the farm policy, regulatory and R&D agenda for UK agriculture, with a new national farm data initiative at its core.

International context

The APPGSTA report points to other nations already realigning their agricultural policies to combine increased food production with sustainability goals. The 30:50:50 vision mirrors the United States’ high-level USDA Agricultural Innovation Agenda, which aims to increase farm output by 40% by 2050, while halving US agriculture’s environmental footprint. The EU’s Vision for Agriculture and Food, published earlier this year, also marks a decisive shift towards innovation-led productivity growth, recognising the

production-limiting risks to EU food security of its Green Deal ‘Farm to Fork’ agenda. Similarly, the recent FAO-OECD Outlook 2025–34 report forecasts a 14% rise in global food production combined with a 7% emissions reduction over the next decade, driven by uptake of new technologies to reduce emissions and enhance productivity.

Against this background, the APPGSTA report indicates that UK agriculture urgently needs clarity from the government about its future vision, as well as transparency about what ‘*food security is national security*’ means in practice.

Does it mean producing more of our own food?

Or does it mean easing access to more food imports?

The report suggests that the government’s response on this issue will affect the investment decisions not only of UK farmers, but also of the research-based companies and organisations whose technologies, innovations and advice will be needed to drive sustainable gains in domestic agricultural productivity.

The 30:50:50 framework

The All-Party Group’s 30:50:50 mission sets out a four-pillar strategy to align productivity and sustainability through:

1. **Farm Policy:** Refocusing land use and support frameworks around measurable productivity and sustainability outcomes.
2. **Regulation:** Creating proportionate, enabling rules for innovation and technology adoption.
3. **Research & Innovation:** Strengthening applied research and bridging the gap between discovery science and on-farm practice.
4. **Data:** Building a trusted, interoperable infrastructure for farm-level data collection, benchmarking and performance improvement.

Policy recommendations

The APPGSTA report calls on government to:

- Elevate the importance of food security alongside environmental goals by **embedding the 30:50:50 mission, and its associated target for 75% domestic food self-sufficiency by 2050**, as a consistent, cross-departmental reference point across all food, farming and land use policies.
- Commit to publishing a **30:50:50 roadmap** with clear reporting intervals.
- Develop a new **National Farm Data Initiative (NFDI)** to benchmark and monitor progress against the 30:50:50 objectives, with a remit to co-ordinate the collection and integration of farm data; to harmonise data collection and reporting methodologies; and to deliver interoperability between data platforms.

- Stimulate the development and uptake of **real-time data capture and AI-enabled decision support systems** to unlock the performance and efficiency benefits of data collection and analysis, driving productivity improvements at individual farm and national level, embedding good data governance, and transforming data-sharing from a perceived threat into a demonstrable benefit.
- Adopt a more **outcomes-based approach to the delivery of farm support policies to incentivise measurable progress against 30:50:50 objectives**, moving away from the current model based on simply rewarding uptake of particular practices.
- Ensure future land use and farm support policies **protect our most productive farmland for high-yield, efficient food production**.
- Conduct an urgent **root and branch review of the core, applied and translational research landscape for crop science** in the UK to support improved transfer of discovery science into farm-level applications, learning from countries such as the Netherlands and New Zealand which have undertaken similar reviews with resulting benefits for innovation and agricultural productivity.
- Alongside the National Farm Data Initiative, establish a new **national Knowledge Exchange capability**, learning from and building on the ADAS Yield Enhancement Network, to provide a detail-oriented approach to sustainable yield improvement and with an ambition to close a widening yield gap in our major food crops.
- Drive farm-level adoption of productivity-enhancing technologies and innovations through **more effective and efficient tax and grant schemes**.
- **Unlock the full potential of genetics and biotechnology** by prioritising genetic innovation in crops and livestock as the main driver of productivity and sustainability gains in agriculture, for example through early implementation of the animal provisions of the Precision Breeding Act, safeguarding full implementation of the Act for plants and animals in UK-EU realignment talks, and ensuring effective intellectual property protection.
- Commission an urgent **review of current regulation of farming innovations**, led by the new Regulatory Innovation Office, using a science-based and risk-benefit approach to identify opportunities to accelerate the route to market for inputs and technologies with potential to reduce emissions and improve productivity in UK agriculture.
- Ensure a prospective **UK-EU realignment deal allows for improvements in trade without compromising the UK's regulatory autonomy** in key areas of agricultural innovation.

- **Establish a public communications campaign** to raise awareness of the link between sustainable intensification, food security, environmental improvement and wider societal benefit.

Thanking all who contributed to the 30:50:50 programme, Mr Freeman said:

“We are enormously grateful to the many organisations and individuals who have helped shape our thinking around the 30:50:50 mission. It is evident that the clarity and ambition of the 30:50:50 goals resonate strongly across industry and research communities, but that current domestic policies are not yet aligned to deliver this ‘more from less’ agenda.”

“We also heard that the tools, technologies and knowledge already exist to help British farmers produce more with less impact. What is needed now is the political will and policy alignment to make it happen. This is about putting food security, sustainability and science at the heart of UK agriculture’s long-term future.”

ENDS

Download the report – [Feeding Britain sustainably to 2050 – the 30:50:50 mission](#).