

## **General Election 2019 – Our Call to all Parties**

The future of UK food will be decided by the general election since the next Government will have the responsibility of bringing future agriculture policy into law and setting the direction of travel for UK farming. Consequently, we are calling on all the political parties to state their commitment to UK farmers in their manifestos and to give a high priority to developing an environmentally sustainable and healthy food system.

We urge all parties to adopt our 10 key policies in their 2019 manifestos:

1. Promote sustainable farming practices that function in harmony with nature
2. Support local food systems, including maintaining a national network of local abattoirs
3. Enshrine the polluter pays principle in law to hold polluters to account for any damaging impacts
4. Adopt the precautionary principle into agricultural policy in terms of input safety
5. Commit to ending hunger and guarantee everyone's right to nutritious food
6. Institute an annual sustainability audit for all farmers who receive funding from the public purse
7. Reward farmers who work to build soil carbon, including through the greater use of grass and ruminants in rotations
8. Improve animal health and contentment and end the routine use of antibiotics in healthy animals
9. Commit to ending agriculture's negative impact on global warming
10. Increase fairness throughout the food supply chain and avoid lowering production standards and unbalanced trade tariffs

### **Why are we asking for this?**

Agriculture is one of the major causes of global warming and biodiversity loss. This applies to the UK and to countries from which we import food. The SFT believes a major shift in farm policy is needed to support sustainable food production. With the increasing incidence of severe droughts and extensive flooding in many parts of the world we need to support UK producers to ensure we have adequate food security. But we also need to ensure that in future all food is produced in harmony with nature, rather than at its expense. While the food system is a significant contributor to climate change, this also means it has major mitigation potential. Diverse, locally appropriate mixed farming can greatly reduce food miles and counter the damage from decades of continuous arable cropping

over-reliant on chemical inputs. Soil degradation in particular can not only be halted but reversed through a return to mixed farming systems which include pasture and nitrogen-fixing forage legumes grazed by ruminant animals.

We also need to align what people eat with the productive capacity of UK farming under sustainable management. This will mean increasing the production of home grown fruit and vegetables to reduce our dependence on air freight and on countries with severe water shortages and degraded soils. It will also mean reducing our consumption of intensively produced meat from animals fed large amounts of grain and imported protein.

### **Who are we?**

The Sustainable Food Trust (SFT) is a small UK based charity, established in 2011, that works in the UK and internationally to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food systems. We were founded in response to the worsening human and environmental crises that are associated with the vast majority of today's food and farming systems. Our vision is for food and farming systems which nourish the health of the planet and its people. Our mission is to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food and farming systems. We focus our work in three main areas:

- Leadership and Collaboration: Influencing leaders, policy makers and individuals
- Research and Policy: Enabling policy change based on sound science
- Communications: Providing information, sharing ideas and empowering citizens