



Cocado x



FARM TO FORK PARTNERSHIP: OUR IMPACT IN 2024

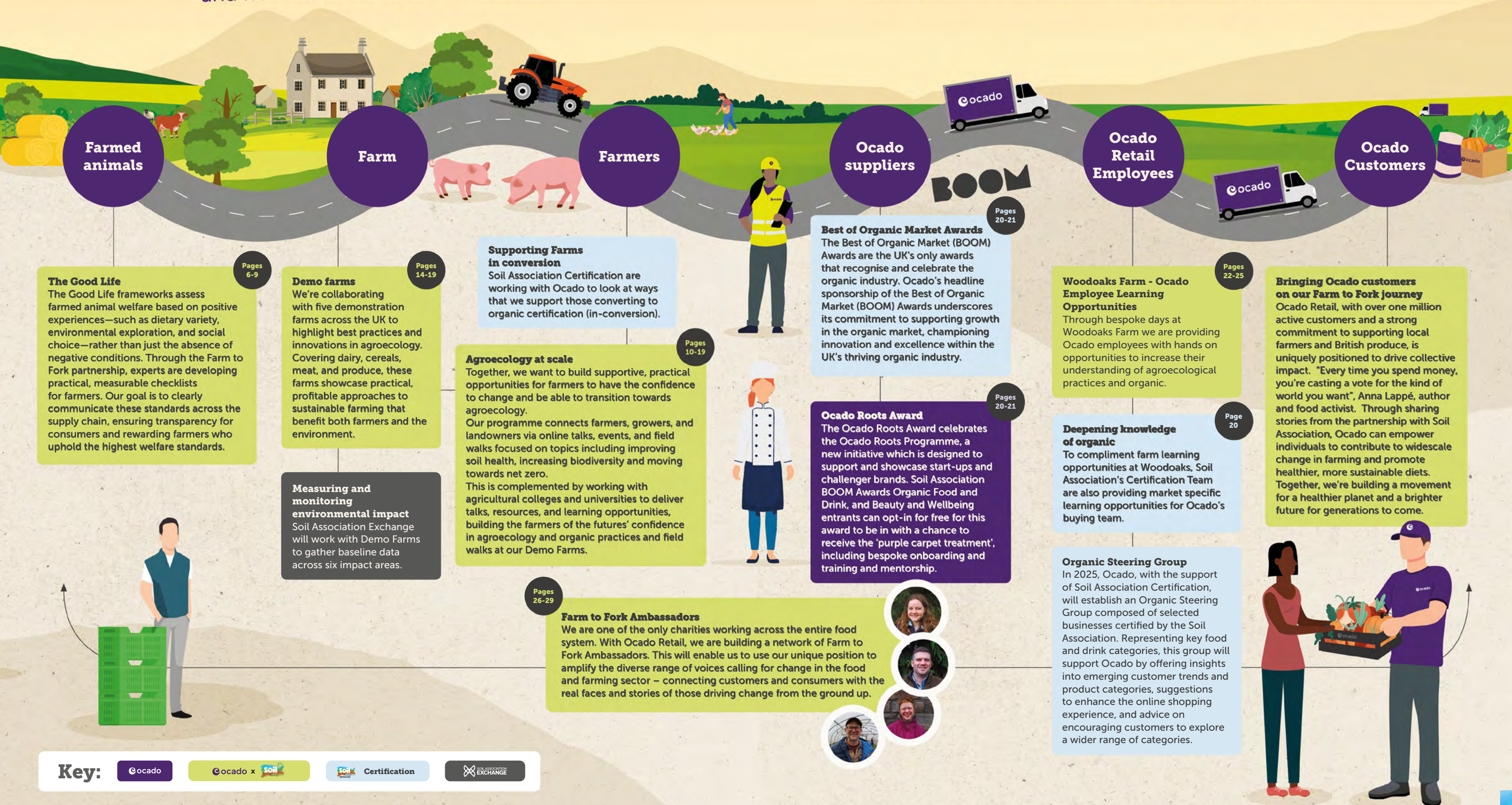
Transforming the way we eat, farm
and care for our natural world



Farm to Fork Pathway

Contributing to growth in the organic market and healthier more sustainable diets

The Soil Association has partnered with Ocado Retail, the world's largest dedicated online supermarket. As a charity, we know that we can't make the changes needed on our own. This ground-breaking partnership will drive change in the food and farming system.



The power of collaboration:

Perspectives on the Farm to Fork Partnership

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Supporting local farmers and promoting homegrown produce is something we care deeply about at Ocado.

Early in 2024, we launched a 'Best of British' aisle on site to make it easier for our customers to shop for food that's farmed and produced in the UK.

Our Farm to Fork partnership with the Soil Association reinforces our commitment and, by working with farmers who are pioneering agroecological farming practices, we're increasing the quality, freshness and sustainability of the food we're able to offer our customers:

Hannah Gibson, CEO, Ocado Retail

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The Farm to Fork Partnership with Ocado Retail is a step in the right direction with regards to uniting different parts of the food system to drive meaningful change toward sustainability. As a retailer, Ocado plays a key role in connecting farmers and consumers, shaping demand for agroecological practices that benefit both people and the planet.

Tackling the challenges of our food system requires collaboration at every level, and this partnership exemplifies the collective effort needed to build a fairer, healthier, and more resilient future for food.

Brendan Costelloe, Director of Policy, Soil Association

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Change does not happen in isolation, and we are delighted to be working with Soil Association and Ocado to provide more learning days and knowledge exchange opportunities to farmers at all stages of their journey towards organic.

Peter Cheek, Farm Manager, Godminster Demo Farm

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Woodoaks Farm, donated to the Soil Association Land Trust in 2020, is just 25 minutes from Ocado Retail's HQ. Ocado's volunteers have been vital in supporting our ambitious vision, contributing to agroecological farming and hands-on projects like hedgerow mulching and woodland management.

Rose Lewis, Senior Program Manager, Woodoaks Farm

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The Ocado and Soil Association partnership is important for the farming community, as it provides vital access to practical information on agroecological practices that can drive meaningful change. By fostering peer-to-peer learning networks and hosting initiatives like farm walks, it empowers farmers to share knowledge and collaborate in adopting more sustainable methods.

Sarah McCrudden Senior Retail Group Manager, Müller

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The Sustainable Farm Networks initiative is about bringing together networks of Demonstration farms to share experiences, findings and best practice. Having the Ocado Agroecology at Scale Demonstration Farm network among its members is fantastic.

Lucy Bates, Project Manager, Sustainable Farm Networks

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Nature is under threat in the UK and, with 70% of land under farming, we believe farmers need support to shift away from the most damaging practices of intensive farming to restore biodiversity and mitigate the worst risks of climate change.

Ocado Retail has always championed small producers and we are excited to be working together with such a young and innovative company which shares our commitment to nature friendly food and farming. Its support will act as a catalyst for change, allowing us to deliver a programme that champions and supports fixing our broken food and farming system.

Helen Browning OBE CEO, The Soil Association

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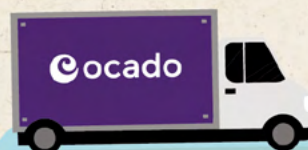
A Good Life for all Farmed Animals

Improved animal welfare:

Animal welfare standards as defined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (government advisors) fall within three categories: 'A life not worth living', 'a life worth living', and a 'good life'. Most welfare standards concentrate on the bottom two tiers, seeking to simply remove negative experiences for animals (such as tail biting or banning confinements that are too small).

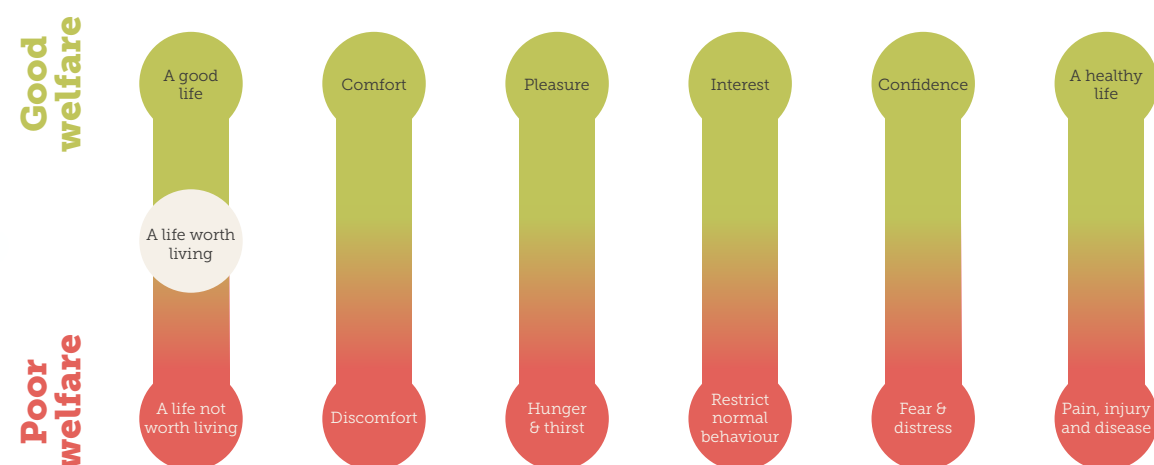
But the Soil Association and Ocado Retail are going one step further. We want to not only remove negative experiences, but additionally bring in positive ones. We want farmed animals to live in environments that lets them showcase natural animal behaviours, and be animals. We want them to have a relaxed, fulfilling, and happy life.

We want all farmed animals to have a good life, not just a life worth living.



Ocado customers consistently vote animal welfare as their leading concern. **73%** of customer survey respondents identified animal welfare as their top sustainability issue in May 2024.

“A good life, not just a life worth living”



Good life opportunities aim to provide animals with what they want (value) above and beyond what they need to stay fit and healthy

Graph taken from the Farm Animal Welfare's Council 2009 report

www.soilassociation.org

With Ocado Retail's support and in collaboration with (livestock) farmers, we want to bring accountability to animal welfare claims in the marketplace and drive practical progress on farms - showcasing how giving farm animals a good life (not just a life worth living) is **practical, profitable and sustainable.**

The development of positive welfare frameworks represents a significant advancement. These tools empower farmers to objectively assess their animals' living conditions and identify opportunities to enhance their well-being.

Whether it's ensuring animals stay with companions, providing a comfortable and stimulating environment, or offering diverse and enriching diets, these factors are just as vital to animals as they are to us. These frameworks mark a major step forward in creating better lives for farm animals—and we're excited to see their impact!

“We want all farm animals to have a good life: chances to feel the sun on their backs and follow their urges to care, graze, root and play”

Helen Browning OBE,
CEO, Soil Association



itv NEWS



Introducing the Good Life project lead:

Soil Association's Kate Still (pictured speaking on ITV news) has dedicated her career to animal welfare, in particular welfare assessment. She has worked on the development of animal welfare assessment protocols with RSPCA, University of Bristol and partner organisations. Alongside this, Kate currently sits on national and international forums looking at standards of animal welfare.



Our Impact in 2024

The Good Life Year 1

Dairy Cows and Laying Hens

Year 1 of the project has focused on updating existing drafted positive welfare frameworks with all the new scientific research, legislation and codes of best practice for Dairy Cows and Laying Hens. We have then compared these to existing farm assurance and retailer scheme standards to see how they match up.

Through this work we are developing, piloting and will set the bar for top tier animal welfare, providing a fresh marketing language for farmers who already meet this bar to share their stories and market their produce and encourage other parts of the industry to recognise the benefits of following suit.

Some of these trials will be at farms that supply directly into Ocado. Working with a major retailer provides great opportunities.



Once the frameworks have been created, tried and tested on farm and changes made accordingly we will continue to work with Ocado and the wider welfare movement to look at industry adoption.

Farmed Animal	Develop the Positive Welfare Framework: harmonising and updating with new scientific research	Compare how species specific farm assurance standards measure up against framework	Framework 'translated' into accessible, easy to use formatting to allow roll out to farmers	Framework piloted on up to 50 farms per species (including farmers self-assessing)	Any necessary Framework changes made following piloting
Dairy Cows	X	X	Ongoing	Started – ongoing	Into year 2
Laying Hens	X	X	Ongoing	Started – ongoing	Into year 2
Beef Cattle	Year 2				
Sheep	Year 2				
Meat chickens (broilers)	Year 3				
Pigs	Year 3				

For our first year of partnership, Soil Association's team have focused on the frameworks for dairy cows and laying hens.

Laying Hens

As an example from our research this year, the Good Life Framework for laying hens outlines that nest boxes with different nesting materials inside should be provided.

Nesting is an intrinsically rewarding motivated behaviour and therefore associated with a range of positive feelings (Mellor 2015). Providing suitable nesting sites in sufficient quantity (agreed on by experts) will ensure that birds can express their natural nesting behaviour.

“

We're delighted to work with the Soil Association to bring the latest scientific evidence on the preferences and motivations of farmed animals to the positive welfare frameworks. Through trialling with farmers we aim to have a scientifically robust, practical tool that promotes good lives for all farmed animals.”

Professor Siobhan Mullan, University of Dublin (advisor on the programme) and **Dr Lizzie Rowe** (researcher on the programme)



Dairy Cows

The Good Life framework highlights the need for cows to have opportunities to explore, learn, express natural behaviours and exercise choice in an enriched environment throughout their lives. For example, having access to two or more positive activities for exploring (e.g. hay balls, tree stumps, brushes or padded posts) which are changed regularly.

“

For years, attributing emotions to animals was met with skepticism. However, this perspective is shifting as an increasing body of evidence reveals that animals experience positive mental states. This initiative will explore opportunities farmers can offer livestock, such as access to pasture with the provision of shade and shelter, that adds enrichment and interest which ultimately promotes well-being and autonomy.”

Dr Alison Bond, Soil Association Good Life Researcher



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Agroecology at Scale

How are we accelerating the adoption of sustainable farming practices?

Farmers today face mounting challenges amid a tough environmental and economic landscape. Unreliable seasons, depleted, damaged soils and increasing input costs means a different way of farming is needed for many.

Agroecological farming (incorporating regenerative practices such as cover cropping and agroforestry) offers a way to boost farm resilience to changing weather, whilst protecting and improving soil health, increasing biodiversity and moving towards net zero ambitions.

But transitioning can be difficult, and every farm, and farmer, is at a different point in this journey.

As a continuation of the work undertaken via the FABulous Farmers programme, which was part funded by Ocado Retail, we are building a network of UK farmers to support this movement.

Agroecology at Scale is a program that supports this ongoing movement and adoption of changes in farming practices by:

- Establishing Demo Farms to share different stages of adoption - bringing farmers together in peer-to-peer learning.
- Providing learning opportunities for all farmers, including the farmers of the future

- Working with Farming Advisors to extend the reach of adoption of agroecological practices

Through Agroecology at Scale, we are supporting all farmers in their journey towards a nature friendly, climate resilient, productive, and connected farming system.

In Year 2 of the Farm to Fork partnership, the Soil Association's expertise will play a key role in shaping Ocado's new Farmer Academy—an online platform designed to provide suppliers with valuable insights into agroecological practices. As a retailer Ocado are positioned to influence the supply chain and with this in mind they are leveraging this initiative to encourage suppliers—and the farmers they work with—to adopt more sustainable farming methods, driving positive change across the food system.

Agroecology is an approach that applies both ecological (the relationship between plants, animals, humans and the environment) and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable food and farming systems.

Amplifying our Impact

To drive the growth of the agroecological movement, we are collaborating with leading organizations to connect with more farmers and expand our influence.



LANDEX
Landex is a membership organisation of 39 land based colleges and universities across the UK, with a farming footprint of 15,000 hectares and 7000 residential beds.



Agricultural Universities Council
The Agricultural Universities Council (AUC-UK) is a collaboration of the UK universities with agricultural schools or departments.



NBSOIL Academy
The NBSOIL Academy is a blended training programme prototype targeting both existing and aspiring soil advisors.



Sustainable Farm Network
SFN connects diverse demonstration farm networks across the UK to share experiences, findings and best practice.

Demo farms continued journey with Soil Association Exchange

“As part of our partnership with Ocado, we are proud that each of the Demo Farms will participate in the Soil Association Exchange programme. These farms will receive detailed environmental baselines, bespoke advice, and funding guidance from our team, allowing us to demonstrate the tangible benefits of holistic environmental measurement to a wider farming community.

Last year at Godminster, we joined the Agroecology at Scale event to showcase our field survey techniques and how data-driven insights can support farmers in making sustainable transitions. With 1,000 farms now using the Soil Association Exchange platform, we're thrilled to collaborate on these events, inviting our farmers to learn from each other and scale agroecological practices across the UK.”



Joseph Gridley
CEO, Soil Association Exchange CEO



5 Demo Farms have been established. These farms demonstrate best practice in agroecological farming across all sectors (top fruit, arable, beef and sheep, mixed, and dairy).

142 farmers attended demo farms events, representing **64 different farms**



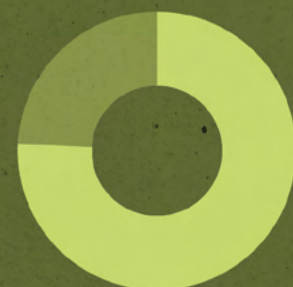
Breakdown of Demo Farm launch event attendees by occupation



43 Farming Advisors increased their knowledge of agroecology at our farm events

NB: each farming advisor typically works with 5 Farms – creating further opportunities for knowledge exchange.

8 members of the Soil Association's Farming and Land Use Team have worked to grow their respective area of expertise's knowledge sharing networks.



76% of farmers attending demo farm events were non-organic



1 invite to attend the House of Lords!

*of 96 who responded to the survey.

Farm Types of Farmers Attending Demo Farm Events



2,731

individuals were reached via online materials and publications, providing opportunities to increase their knowledge of agroecology and access to events.



442 followers engaged with Soil Association's promotions of the Demo Farm events along with some **5,000 farming newsletter subscribers**

45

students attended lectures on organic arable and regenerative practices - training the farmers of the future.



Press coverage via farming news (e.g. FarmingUK) received **240,729 impressions** from readers.

289,035

farmers, advisors and other key stakeholders in the food system were reached with information on the Demo Farm Launch events via online materials, newsletters, Soil Association Exchange's network of farmers etc.

Demonstration Farms



We've launched five demonstration farms across the UK, representing different sectors and led by farmers who have successfully undergone an agroecological transition. These farms serve as hubs for learning and inspiration, hosting events where they share their experiences and insights with farmers embarking on their own agroecological journeys.

Somerset

Godminster Farm

Nestled in the picturesque town of Bruton, Somerset, Godminster Organic Dairy spans 1,200 acres of owned and rented land. Under the stewardship of farm manager Peter Cheek since 1998, the farm has flourished into a beacon of sustainable agriculture, producing organic milk, its own brand of Godminster cheddar cheese, and winter oats for milling.

A Commitment to Organic Farming

When current owner Richard Hollingbery acquired the farm, he envisioned a shift to a fully organic system, driven by environmental responsibility and sustainability.

Innovative Farming Practices

Godminster has embraced several innovative approaches, including introducing hardy, adaptable cattle breeds, minimizing soil disturbance to improve soil health, and planting herbal pastures to enhance biodiversity and provide cows with a nutritious diet. The farm has also planted miles of hedgerows and woodlands, creating vital habitats for wildlife.

Challenges and Learning

Transitioning to organic farming posed challenges, particularly in weed management. Determined to stay true to organic principles, Peter engaged with fellow farmers to find sustainable solutions.

Soil Health, Biodiversity & Animal Welfare

Minimal soil disturbance and diverse planting have improved soil structure, water retention, and carbon storage. The cows graze rotationally for most of the year, reducing reliance on external feed and promoting their well-being.

A Model for Sustainable Farming

Through innovation, learning, and a steadfast commitment to sustainability, Godminster Organic Dairy exemplifies how responsible farming can benefit both agriculture and nature.

"Thanks to you all at The Soil Association and the team at Godminster, an interesting walk. I particularly enjoyed the discussion around soils, crop rotation and herbal ley seed mixes and management."

Farming Advisor attendee of Godminster Demo Farm Launch Event

Godminster Farm supplies organic oats to Ocado Retail via White's Oats. Ocado Retail also stock Godminsters cheeses!



Tregooden Farm

Located near Bodmin in Cornwall, Tregooden, a mixed arable and beef farm, spans 300 acres and is managed by Catherine and Malcolm Barrett. Over the past four years, they've transformed the farm into a model of sustainable agriculture, focusing on enhancing the environment and adopting eco-friendly practices.

Creating New Habitats

The Barretts have set aside over 43 acres to develop diverse habitats, including ponds, in-field trees, wildlife corridors, and thicker hedgerows. Initially, Malcolm viewed this as a loss of productive land, but he now recognizes the benefits: "Yes, it will take a few years for the trees to grow, but they will eventually provide shade for cattle in hot periods."

Improving Soil Health

To enhance soil quality, the Barretts plant cover crops like westerwold rye grass alongside their main crops. This approach reduces soil erosion and enriches the soil. After harvesting, these cover crops serve as grazing areas for their cattle during winter. Malcolm notes, "The soil is so much more friable now. Even with cattle on it all winter, we don't have to 'beat the living daylights out of it' to break it down for the next crop."

Next to Soil health in a bubble: Friable soil means soil that is crumbly, loose, and easy to break apart. Farmers and gardeners aim for friable soil because it makes planting easier and helps crops grow healthier.

Adopting Minimal Tillage

The farm has invested in equipment that allows planting without extensive soil disturbance. This method reduces fuel consumption and maintains soil structure. Although it required an initial investment, the benefits have been substantial, leading to healthier soils and reduced reliance on chemical inputs.

Integrating Livestock and Crops

Tregooden Farm combines crop cultivation with cattle grazing. They plant a mix of cover crops designed for grazing, which also boost soil nutrients. Managing grazing patterns to suit their schedules, they allow cattle to graze in larger areas for a few days before moving them, promoting grass regrowth and fitting their lifestyle.

A Holistic Approach

The Barretts' journey emphasizes reducing costs and experimenting with methods that benefit the entire farm ecosystem. By focusing on soil health and biodiversity, they've created a more sustainable and resilient farming system. Malcolm reflects, "We take small calculated risks. Some have failed and others have worked, but you learn from it all."

Through their dedication, Tregooden Farm exemplifies how thoughtful land management can lead to a harmonious balance between agriculture and nature.



Boxford Fruit Farm

Boxford Farm supplies apples and cherries to Ocado Retail via Orchard World

Situated on the picturesque Suffolk-Essex border, Boxford Fruit Farms spans 235 hectares and is managed by farm director Robert England. The farm cultivates a variety of fruits, including apples, cherries, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and asparagus. Beyond traditional fruit production, Boxford has embraced innovative practices to enhance sustainability and efficiency.

Sustainable Farming Practices

While operating as a conventional fruit grower, Boxford is committed to minimizing its environmental footprint. The farm employs Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a strategy that reduces the need for chemical sprays by closely monitoring pest populations and introducing beneficial insects. This approach not only supports environmental health but also offers economic advantages. Robert notes, "We were spending about £25,000 a year on buying in spider mite control; we're now only spending about £15,000."

Energy Production and Waste Reduction

A standout feature of Boxford Fruit Farms is its 1.25MW anaerobic digestion unit. This system processes food waste from the farm and an associated juice factory to generate electricity. The energy produced not only powers the farm but also supplies co-located business partners. The residual heat from this process is utilized in several innovative ways:

- Fertilizer Production: The farm dries the by-products from the digestion process to create organic fertilizer, enriching the soil for future crops.

- Woodchip and Log Drying: Woodchips and logs are dried using the excess heat and then used to fuel biomass boilers, providing a renewable heating source for greenhouses.
- Staff Accommodation Heating: The farm has installed heating systems in staff living quarters, ensuring comfortable living conditions year-round.
- Beneficial Insect Cultivation: Heat is used to maintain optimal conditions in tunnels where predatory mites are bred. These mites play a crucial role in natural pest control for the farm's soft fruit crops.

Diversification and Efficiency

By harnessing the energy and heat produced on-site, Boxford has diversified its operations, leading to new revenue streams and increased efficiency. This closed-loop system exemplifies how farms can integrate various processes to achieve sustainability goals.

Robert England's leadership at Boxford Fruit Farms showcases a harmonious blend of traditional farming and modern sustainability practices. Through careful resource management and innovative thinking, the farm serves as a model for how agriculture can evolve to meet environmental and economic challenges.



Field Hall Farm

Field Hall Farm is near Uttoxeter in Staffordshire, Field Hall Farm covers 1,160 acres and is run by Rob Atkin. The farm produces food while also caring for nature, focusing on healthy soil, clean water, and biodiversity. By using smart and sustainable methods, Rob is finding ways to work with the environment rather than against it.

Keeping the Soil Healthy

Instead of deeply plowing the land every year (reducing tillage), Rob uses a gentler approach that disturbs the soil as little as possible (shallow cultivations). This helps improve soil structure, reduce erosion, and keep nutrients in the ground. However, this method also brings challenges, like managing weeds, which Rob tackles with diverse crop rotations and cover cropping that naturally keep the soil in balance.

Using Nature to Support Farming

Rob grows different crops in rotation (breaking pest and weed cycles), meaning he changes what he plants each year to keep the land healthy. He also plants extra cover crops—plants that aren't harvested but instead improve the soil, hold in moisture, and prevent erosion. These crops also provide food for the farm's cattle and visiting sheep, helping to make use of every part of the farm's land.

Protecting Clean Water

One of the biggest priorities at Field Hall Farm is reducing runoff and nutrient leaching, ensuring that rivers and streams stay clean. Rob has introduced 6 metre field margins, hedgerows, and small earth barriers to slow down water movement

across the fields. This helps prevent soil and nutrients from washing into nearby waterways (minimizing sediment and nitrate loss), keeping water sources clean for both wildlife and local communities.

Creating Homes for Wildlife

Beyond growing food, Rob is committed to making his farm a home for nature. He's planted wildflower strips, hedgerows, and trees (agroforestry), which give shelter to birds, bees, and other beneficial wildlife, ultimately supporting natural predators of pests. These natural areas not only support biodiversity but also create a healthier farm ecosystem.

A Learning Journey

Rob sees sustainable farming as a process of learning and experimenting. He believes that small changes can make a big difference and encourages others to try new ideas at their own pace. "If something doesn't work right away, that's okay. Wait, adjust, and try again when you can," he says.

By combining food production with nature-friendly practices, Field Hall Farm shows how farms can play a crucial role in tackling climate change, protecting wildlife, and producing food in a way that benefits both people and the planet.



Broome Park Farm

George Burrell manages Broome Park Farm which spans 620 hectares in the Northumberland countryside. Over the years, George has moved away from traditional farming methods to embrace a more efficient and sustainable approach that benefits both the land and the business.

Farming Smarter, Not Harder

George believes that farming should be both productive and environmentally responsible. By making smarter use of resources (reducing inputs) and focusing on efficiency, the farm has cut unnecessary costs while improving soil health and biodiversity. "We started looking at ways of doing things that were more time-efficient for the team and gave better value for every pound spent," George explains.

Improving Grazing for Better Land and Livestock

A key change at Broome Park Farm has been rethinking how livestock graze. Instead of letting animals roam freely, George has introduced a planned grazing system (mob grazing and rotational grazing). This means that fields get the right amount of rest between grazing periods, which allows the grass to regrow stronger, hold more carbon, and improve soil structure. "Instead of random rest, our grazing is now well-planned, and we spend a lot of time on it," George says. This system also helps maintain healthier livestock while reducing the need for costly feed and fertilizers.



Boosting Soil Health and Biodiversity

By avoiding overgrazing and leaving more organic matter in the soil, Broome Park Farm is seeing improvements in soil fertility and water retention. Healthier soils mean better crops and grass growth, reducing the need for artificial fertilizers (building soil organic matter naturally). The farm has also made space for wildlife-friendly areas, helping boost local biodiversity and support natural ecosystems.

A Resilient Future for Farming

George's approach is about long-term resilience—creating a farm that is economically strong, environmentally sound, and adaptable to climate challenges. By working smarter rather than harder, Broome Park Farm is proving that sustainable farming doesn't have to mean lower productivity—it can actually make farms more profitable and resilient in the long run.

Through innovation and a willingness to adapt, George is leading the way in modern, sustainable farming, showing how balancing food production with environmental care can create a thriving farm for the future.

Growing the Organic Market

The industry needs to be doing more to grow the organic market

Partnering with the Soil Association is invaluable for Ocado as we work to grow the organic market and support the future of sustainable food production. Organic farming plays a crucial role in protecting the planet, and as a retailer that over-trades in organic, we recognize the importance of securing a robust and growing pool of organic suppliers.

This partnership not only helps future-proof our business but also aligns with our commitment to delivering high-quality, sustainable choices to our customers. By working together, we can create a stronger, more resilient food system that benefits people, farmers, and the environment alike.

Simon Hinks, Product Director, Ocado Retail



The BOOM Awards have always been about championing innovation and excellence in the organic sector, and with Ocado Retail as our headline sponsor, we're thrilled to see such valuable support being offered to new entrants in the organic market. Through the Ocado Roots program, selected winners will gain access to a range of benefits, resources, and a platform to grow their businesses, accelerating their success and contributing to the overall growth and diversity of the organic industry. Together, we're nurturing the next generation of organic pioneers.

Dominic Robinson, CEO, Soil Association Certification

The Soil Association Organic Steering Group is working closely with Soil Association Certification to support Ocado in expanding their organic range and gaining valuable market insights through several strategic initiatives. These initiatives include providing up-to-date market trends and insights to Ocado's commercial and buying teams, ensuring they are well-equipped with the latest information.



Business Award entries

Non-Food Product Award entries

Food & Drink Product Award entries

Best of Organic Market Awards

The Best of Organic Market (BOOM) Awards are the UK's only awards that recognise and celebrate the organic industry.

The awards honour the brands, businesses and people behind the UK's organic food, farming, fashion and beauty sectors. The BOOMs champion innovation and celebrate those who create exceptional organic products.

This year Ocado are the headline sponsor and alongside sponsoring the Awards will be supporting a 'dragon's den' style opportunity for entrants to get listed on Ocado, along with an Ocado ROOTS Award, linking to their new ROOTS program.

Ocado- Pitch Your Product

As headline BOOM sponsor, and the UK retailer with the most organic products, Ocado is seeking innovative organic brands and products.

Food and Drink, and Beauty and Wellbeing entrants to the BOOMs will have the chance to pitch to Ocado's buying team in a 'dragon's den'-style session, with the opportunity to get listed on Ocado.

Ocado Roots Award

The Ocado Roots Award will celebrate the Ocado Roots Programme, designed to support and showcase start-ups and challenger brands. Organic Food and Drink, and Beauty and Wellbeing entrants meeting the criteria can apply for this award.

The Ocado Roots team will select the winner, who will receive exclusive guidance, business support, and access to Ocado's insights tool, Beet by Ocado.

Ocado
Roots

Ocado Roots is a challenger brand accelerator programme that will offer 100 small suppliers "the best support in the industry".

Roots is open to new suppliers and brands less than a year old, giving them access to Ocado's expertise, faster payment terms and mentoring from established brands like The Jolly Hog and the Bold Bean Company.

Not only is this an exciting opportunity for participating Organic Brands – but also for Ocado.

Woodoaks Farm

Woodoaks Farm lies just to the west of London at Maple Cross in Hertfordshire, a 25 minute drive from Ocado Retail's HQ!

It extends to just over 300 acres and includes arable and pastureland and around 75 acres of semi-natural woodland.

The farm has been in the Findlay Family since the 1920's and in 2020 Sally Findlay donated Woodoaks to the Soil Association Land Trust to ensure it will be farmed sustainably into the future; producing good food, improving wildlife and continuing to welcome people.

As the next custodians of the land, we are transitioning to become fully organic, working a regenerative farming system that will support a climate friendly future with rich biodiversity and a vibrant and dynamic sustainable food hub.

As part of our Farm to Fork Partnership we are providing opportunities for Ocado employees to learn more about agroecological farming and organic at Woodoaks. Alongside learning opportunities, employees have been getting stuck in with supporting the farms transition, by taking part in tasks such as mulching around hedgerows and woodland management – because no partnership with the Soil Association would be complete without getting outside and connecting with our work on the ground, and nature.



“The Farm to Fork partnership and volunteering opportunities at Woodoaks Farm are incredibly powerful in connecting our people with the Soil Association's vital work on the ground. These learning days not only give our employees a hands-on understanding of the food system but also deepen their appreciation of organic farming and its essential role in building a more sustainable future.”

Jonathan Wiseman, General Counsel and Chief People Officer at Ocado Retail.

www.soilassociation.org

BEFORE

Woodoaks Farm in 2020 when it was gifted to the Soil Association Land Trust



AFTER

The vision for the farm by 2030; wildlife corridors will have been created and agroforestry systems implemented



15 

metric tons of woodchip moved in 2024. With Ocado employees pitching in with wheelbarrows.

100% 

of Ocado employees who attended a day at Woodoaks would recommend the experience to a friend, business or colleague!

50 x 15m scallop created to open the woodland floor and expose it to sunlight, encouraging wildflower growth and providing greater shelter for wildlife on the farm.

84 Ocado employees

attended Woodoaks Farm to learn more about nature friendly farming and to get stuck in with tasks on the farm

1 milestone birthday celebrated at the farm!

100%

of Ocado employees enjoy being outdoors in nature

When asked to rate their understanding of Nature Friendly (Agroecological practices) after their day at Woodoaks 83.3% of Ocado employees rated their knowledge at 4+ out of 5!

400m

of hedgerows weeded and re-mulched at Woodoaks with help from Ocado



Our Impact in 2024

Delivering dramatic landscape restoration

We were delighted to welcome Steve Dutch in April 2024. Steve brings a wealth of conservation experience with him from his previous role at the Wildlife Trust. Having a full time ranger has enabled Woodoaks to take the ambitious plans to carry out dramatic landscape restoration at pace and scale it to the next level, with the help of both volunteers in the local community and Ocado Retail.

“

Having Ocado employees here at Woodoaks Farm has been incredible.

Seeing 81 team members roll up their sleeves, connect with nature, and actively contribute to our organic conversion has been truly inspiring (and fun!).

From woodland management to biodiversity monitoring, every task they tackled made a real difference, and every day was a sea of smiling faces. It's amazing to see the power of firsthand experience in building understanding and enthusiasm for agroecological practices—it truly brings the partnership to life.

As we enter Year 2 of the partnership, with our 5 year plan for the Farm cemented, I look forward to welcoming both new and returning employees, to continue the work we have started.”

Steve Dutch, Ranger, Woodoaks Farm



“I loved being outside, asking questions and learning loads!”

“My favourite part was being outside in the countryside and doing some manual work, the chance to step away from the computer. It was good to be outside and connecting with nature.”

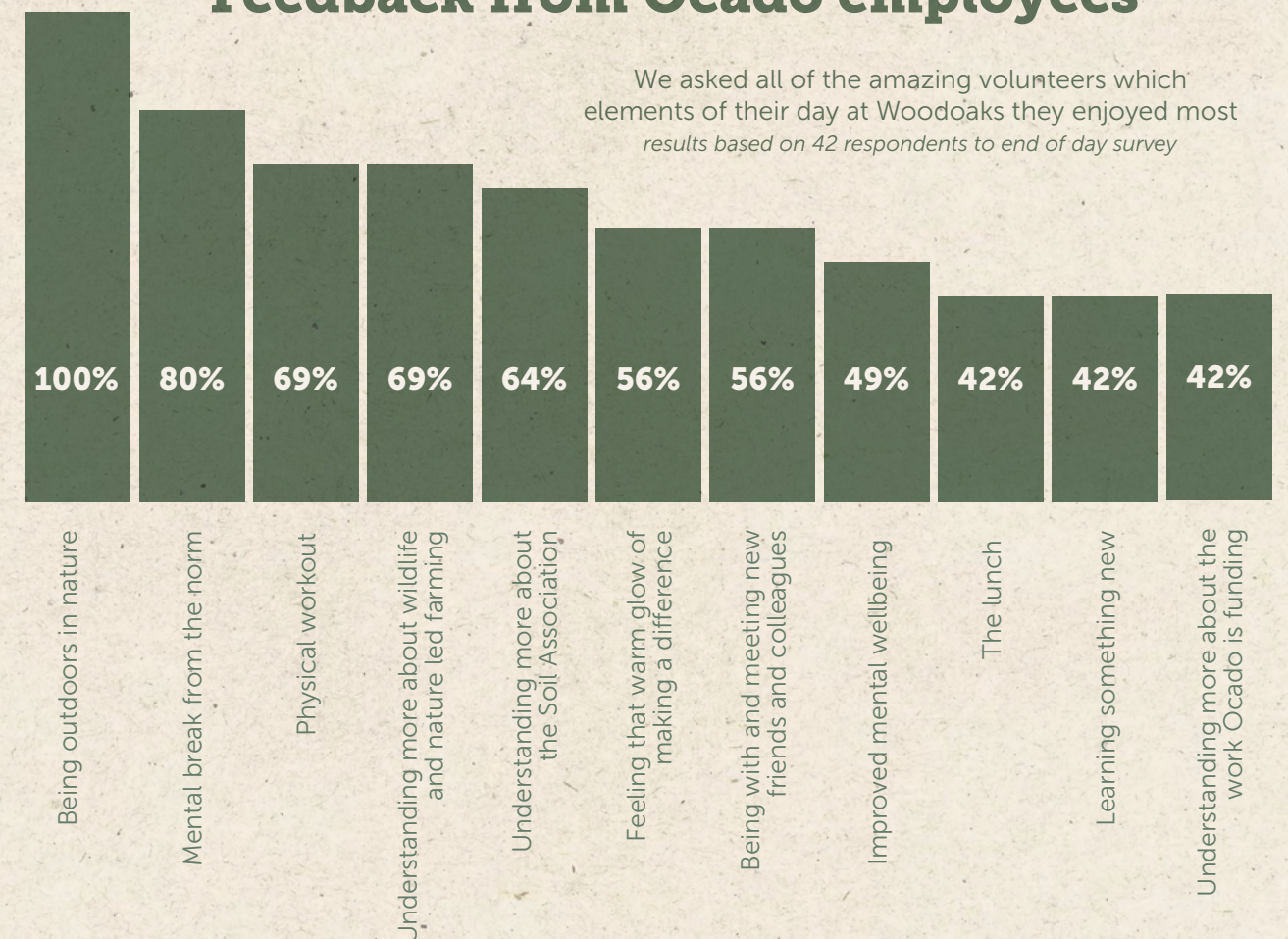
“The highlight for me was the chance to get my hands dirty”

“I didn't realise it was going to be physically demanding, but it was actually quite exciting at the same time. Even using the tools, I've never picked up tools in my life.”

“The hedgerow maintenance was the best part – it was a really heavy duty activity, but everyone got really stuck in!”

Feedback from Ocado employees

We asked all of the amazing volunteers which elements of their day at Woodoaks they enjoyed most
results based on 42 respondents to end of day survey



Our Ambassadors

Soil Association is recruiting passionate people on the frontline of the food system to tell their stories.

Our food system is in a serious state of disrepair. Farmers are not supported to farm in harmony with nature, and people have limited access to 'good food'. However, beneath the surface, there are glimmers of hope. All around the country, there are people working hard in their communities to create a better food future.

By upskilling and training these amazing individuals as Ambassadors, we are creating a network to build a new, positive narrative of ordinary people making big impacts in their local foodscape.

Through training in storytelling, media engagement, and networking, the Farm to Fork Ambassadors will share firsthand experiences, amplifying underrepresented voices and bridging gaps across the food system to drive meaningful change from farm to fork.



Kay Johnson
Community Food Activist
@larder_lancs



Jannine McMahon
Organic veg grower and Educator
@mosslanefarmcsa



Alex Gray
Agricultural Lecturer
@regengray

Demo Farmer



Leigh Ashley
Hospital procurement



Lily Farmer
Bringing good food to vulnerable young people
@themaziproject



Haydn Potts
Nutritionist, Fitness Instructor, Educator and Forager
@rootprojectuk



Catherine Barret
Mixed regenerative tenant farmer

Demo Farmer



Nick Saltmarsh
Founder of Hodmedods, selling British-grown pulses, grains, seeds and flours
@hodmedods

Jess Walker

Organic Mixed Family Farmer and Student
@jesswalker



Holly Silvester

Organic veg and seed grower
@adventuresinseedandsoil



Sean Ruffle

Organic wholesaler working with smaller growers and shops
@organicnorthwholesale



Rob Aitken

Mixed and Arable Regenerative farming
@atkin.rob



Demo Farmer

George Bennet

Organic mixed and veg Farmer
@sandylandfarm
@farmerbennett



Shaun Craig

University procurement and chef
@unibirmingham



Ben MacKinnon

Baker, Miller and Farmer
@e5bakehouse
@fellows_farm



Edward Wombwell

Conservationist and Farmer
@ew_agriculture



Noah Cooper

Community Growing Project leader
@ediblebristol



John Ker (Beef)

Organic beef farmer
@kittisfordbartonfarm

“

Our food system is broken, and the dominant narrative is bleak. Yet, hope is emerging through the efforts of individuals working in their communities to create a better food future. As Farm to Fork Programme Manager, I've met these inspiring people—conservationist farmers, community food growers, seed savers, hospital procurement specialists, and cooking educators for vulnerable youth—each playing a vital role in building a sustainable, healthy, and fair food system.

”

Olivia James
F2F Manager





As Managing Director of Manchester-based wholesalers Organic North, **Sean Ruffle** has played a key role in growing the company into one of the UK's largest suppliers of organic produce over the past 28 years. Driven by a mission to fix the UK's wasteful and polluting food system, Organic North is committed to making organic food more accessible to communities nationwide.

Sean was instrumental in developing bespoke software that has significantly reduced waste, ensuring smaller producers and independent shops can access high-quality organic produce with minimal loss. Beyond his work at Organic North, Sean is a passionate advocate for sustainable food systems.

He serves as an ambassador for Farming the Future and is an active member of The Manchester Food Board, where he helps shape strategic initiatives that use food as a catalyst for meaningful, long-term change in the city.

As a Farm to Fork Ambassador, Sean brings invaluable expertise and a deep commitment to sustainability, helping to connect and amplify voices across the food system to drive lasting impact.

Sean Ruffle
Farm to Fork Ambassador
Managing Director, Organic North

Growing up in the countryside, **Alex Gray** developed a deep appreciation for wildlife and the natural world, shaped by an early awareness of farming's impact on the landscape. His hands-on experience working on farms led him to pursue a career at the intersection of agriculture, conservation, and education.

After university, Alex spent time in New Zealand, contributing to conservation efforts by trapping invasive species while gaining further farm experience. Returning to the UK, he worked as an ecologist, advising developers on minimizing environmental impact—expertise reinforced by his MSc in Environmental Management. However, his passion for education led him to transition into teaching, where he now shares his knowledge of sustainable agriculture, conservation, and land management.

As a Farm to Fork Ambassador, Alex champions regenerative farming, ecological stewardship, and sustainable food systems, helping to bridge the gap between farming and nature. He is also a strong advocate for the sustainability benefits of consuming wild venison and invasive species, highlighting their role in protecting woodland ecosystems while providing a nutritious, ethical food source. Through his work, Alex is committed to reconnecting people with the food systems that sustain them, promoting responsible land management to support biodiversity, soil health, and climate resilience.

Alex Gray
Farm to Fork Ambassador
Agricultural Lecturer & Demonstration Farm Advocate



Jannine McMahon is a passionate organic farmer, environmental activist, and co-founder of Green Teach Community Farm, a not-for-profit based at Moss Lane Farm. Dedicated to giving children—especially those from underprivileged backgrounds—the opportunity to experience a real working farm, Green Teach fosters hands-on learning about food, farming, and sustainability.

With Moss Lane Farm certified organic by the Soil Association, Jannine has worked closely with the organization to deliver educational programs for schoolchildren. A strong advocate for climate awareness, she actively promotes sustainable farming practices and recently organized a fundraiser to replace storm-damaged equipment, inviting over 1,000 primary school children to explore the farm.

As a Farm to Fork Ambassador, Jannine is committed to community-driven change, sustainability, and food education.

She collaborates with organizations like the Greater Manchester Wetlands Group, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, School Food Matters, and Salford Volunteering Service, believing in the power of collective action to create lasting impact. Through her work, she continues to bridge the gap between farming, education, and environmental advocacy, empowering future generations to engage with sustainable food systems.

Jannine McMahon
Farm to Fork Ambassador
Farmer, Community Worker & Educator



GLOSSARY

AGROECOLOGY:

Agroecology is an approach that applies both ecological (the relationship between plants, animals, humans and the environment) and social concepts and principles to the design and management of sustainable food and farming systems. Agroecological systems are designed from the ground up, with people at the centre, and respond to local contexts, constraints and opportunities. There are 10 common principles to agroecology as outlined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

AGRICULTURAL INSTITUTES:

Refers to leading agricultural universities and bodies. NB: The 'Agroecology at Scale' work referenced with agricultural institutes is less focused on research and more on supporting their agricultural syllabuses to include teaching on agroecological and high animal welfare farming. Ultimately bringing the importance of these approaches to the fore for the farmers of the future. This will include providing expertise with regards to; soil health and management, crop protection, integrated pest management and the role of biodiversity in crop health to water protections and storing carbon.

CHALLENGER BRAND:

A challenger brand is a company or product that aims to disrupt its industry and compete against market leaders by offering a distinct, innovative, or bold alternative, often with limited resources.

DEMO FARMS:

Farms identified as part of the Ocado / Soil Association 'Farm to Fork' Partnership. These farms will serve as examples of best practise, trials, and innovation in agroecology. They will be used to host learning network days, farm walks and trainings as part of the delivery of the 'agroecology at scale' project.

Demonstration farms will have already adopted system level agroecological practices and will have experience in establishing and managing a range of practices and be able to evidence a strong business case for their implementation (e.g. reduced input costs, grant funding, animal welfare benefits, climate resilience). NB: these farms may be Ocado suppliers, however the main requirement is that they can clearly demonstrate effective system level progress to agroecology.

FARMING ADVISOR:

Not employed by the Soil Association. Farming Advisors mentioned in this document are rural or agricultural advisors and consultants (e.g. agronomists, AHDB advisors, nutritionists, ADAS advisors, vets). All farms have some form of contact with a Farming Advisor in some capacity. Working with Farming Advisors, (many of whom hold large spheres of influence within their respective farming communities and regions) nationally to bring agroecological practises to the fore enables us to maximise our reach and impact.

FARM TO FORK AMBASSADOR:

Ambassador recruited into the Ocado / Soil Association 'Farm to Fork' programme.

INNOVATIVE FARMERS:

Innovative Farmers is a network, managed by Soil Association, that connects farmers and growers with researchers to conduct on-farm trials known as field labs. Each field lab allows the participants to collect robust data which is relevant to their farm.

LEARNING NETWORKS:

Building on the excellent work delivered via the FABulous Farmers programme, we will continue to run and grow our peer-to-peer learning networks (e.g. the Herbal Leys Learning Network encouraging farmers to understand, and ultimately adopt, the agroecological practise of implementing herbal leys within the farmed landscape). Learning Networks will have knowledge sharing and support relating to agroecological principles related to Soil Health, Biodiversity and Input reduction. The successful implementation of the principles should support farmers in maximising Sustainable Farming Incentive funding to amplify the adoption of Agroecological practises at scale.

OCADO RETAIL:

throughout this report all reference to Ocado refers to Ocado Retail. Since August 2019, it has been a 50:50 joint venture between Ocado Group and M&S.

Ocado Retail fulfils customer grocery orders from seven Customer Fulfilment Centres and a network of spokes around the UK. It delivers to geographies spanning 82% of the UK population (22.4m households).

THE SUSTAINABLE FARMING INCENTIVE (SFI):

The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) Sustainable Farming Incentive – Farming for the future The Sustainable Farming Incentive includes 23 actions farmers choose to get funding for across 8 areas.



Join us to transform the way we eat, farm and care for the natural world.

Become a Soil Association member today.



**Agroecology at Scale
Soil Association**



**Ocado Retail:
Farm to Fork Partnership
Soil Association**



Woodaks Farm



**Ocado Retail
Sustainability**



Ocado Retail has more than one million active customers and a longstanding interest in supporting local farmers and British produce. They are the perfect partner for us to drive widescale change in farming and healthy and sustainable diets.

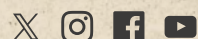
As a charity, we know that we can't make the changes needed on our own. We need to work with powerful players from across the sector, as well as reaching out to citizens and influencing policy makers.



Helen Browning OBE,
CEO, Soil Association

To find out more visit:

www.soilassociation.org



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