



**Nature
Friendly
Farming
Network**

A Practical Guide



to **Net Zero** Carbon
for **UK** Farming



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The Nature Friendly Farming Network (NFFN) is a farmer led movement across the UK. We believe that farming with nature is better for our businesses, our environment and is also the most productive and sustainable way of getting food from our land.

We are committed to securing farming policies that support the environment and nature, tackle climate change, will support sustainable agriculture and provide fairness for farmers.

We hope our carbon friendly farming guide will help support your net zero carbon journey.

What is Net Zero?

Net zero carbon is achieving an overall balance between emissions produced and emissions taken out of the atmosphere. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), we only have till 2030 to contain global warming within the 1.5°C Paris Agreement target.

Achieving net zero will require all sectors to act urgently, the UK farming and land use sector can contribute significantly, helping to both reduce emissions and sequester more carbon.

What Should Policymakers Do?

Farmers can lead the way, however, achieving a net zero agricultural sector will require comprehensive policy and legislative frameworks in each of the four UK countries using a range of mechanisms, including:

- **Funding** – At least £3 billion a year is required to support nature and carbon friendly farming across the four UK countries.
- **Regulation** – NFFN supports the use of effective regulatory standards to underpin carbon and wildlife friendly farming. Enforcement of and compliance with regulation is needed to drive up standards and protect investment in environmental delivery. Trade measures will also be required to ensure that imported produce meets equivalent standards.
- **Incentives** – Well funded environmental land management schemes are needed to reward the delivery of public goods including nature and carbon stewardship. Environmental productivity grants and low-cost loans could help to support shifts in agricultural practices towards nature and carbon friendly farming.
- **Market instruments** – The NFFN supports mechanisms such as carbon labelling to inform consumer choice and carbon markets to drive private investment.
- **Training, advice and support** – This is needed to drive uptake of nature and carbon friendly measures. Country governments have an important role in ensuring access to good quality and trusted advice, training and guidance.



What Can Farmers Do?

Farmers can make many changes to contribute to delivering net zero carbon. Some changes will be simple but many will require support including funding and advice. The NFFN have drawn up an evidence-based list of interventions farmers and land managers can do, if supported by incentives such as well-funded environmental land management schemes and environmental productivity grants in all four UK countries. Funding and advice are also essential to support the transition period.



Big positive changes: (longer-term or targeted changes)

- Peatland restoration and management, including areas of farmed lowland peatland
- Plant native trees and woodland in the right place and for the right management reasons (e.g. ensure carbon and biodiversity benefits)
- Incorporate agroforestry on some land
- Plant new hedgerows
- Conserve and manage existing trees and woodland
- Conserve and enhance grassland and heathland
- Conserve and enhance coastal habitats such as saltmarshes

Things all farmers can do: (shorter-term changes and easier wins)

- Undertake a farm carbon audit to understand the sinks and sources of emissions on their farm
- Protect, enhance and create on-farm wildlife habitats (e.g. meadows, trees, margins, ditches, ponds)
- Maintain and restore tall thick hedgerows
- Reduce energy and fuel use, e.g.
 - Switch to renewable energy sources
 - Where possible use energy efficient vehicles and machinery
 - Reduce vehicle emissions through changes in agricultural practices such as reduced tillage

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Actions for Arable Farms



Positive steps

- Introduce spring cropping or use of fallows
- Reduce tillage (where appropriate)
- Use nitrogen fixing crops in the rotation
- Use cover crops
- Use improved crop varieties, nitrogen-efficient cultivars
- Introduce agroforestry
- Make most efficient use of mineral fertilisers



Try to avoid

- Bioenergy and anaerobic digestion

Actions for Livestock Farms



Positive steps

- Reduce stocking density, particularly on intensively managed grassland
- Pasture feed livestock or use home grown feedstocks
- Consider keeping native breed livestock
- Go organic
- Introduce agroforestry
- Best practice manure and/or slurry management



Try to avoid

- Use of artificial fertilisers
- Reliance on concentrates



Actions for Mixed



Positive steps

- Go organic
- Introduce spring cropping
- Use nitrogen fixing crops in the rotation
- Reduce stocking density particularly on intensively managed grassland
- Pasture feed livestock or use home grown feedstocks
- Introduce agroforestry
- Use cover crops
- Use improved crop varieties, nitrogen-efficient cultivars
- Make most efficient use of mineral fertilisers
- Use manure and slurry as fertiliser appropriately and incorporate into soil



Try to avoid

- Use of artificial fertilisers
- Reliance on concentrates
- Bioenergy and anaerobic digestion



Actions for Horticulture



Positive steps

- Practice sustainable soil management
- Use improved crop varieties, nitrogen-efficient cultivars
- Introduce agroforestry



Try to avoid

- Use of artificial fertilisers
- Peat-based growing media, this has high carbon cost and there are more sustainable peat-free alternatives

Actions for Pig and Poultry



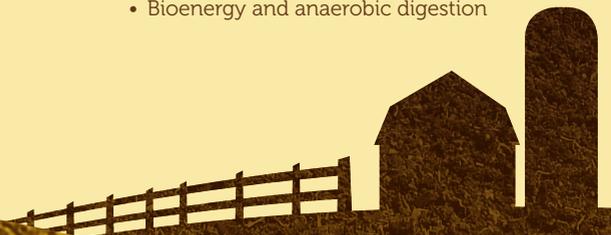
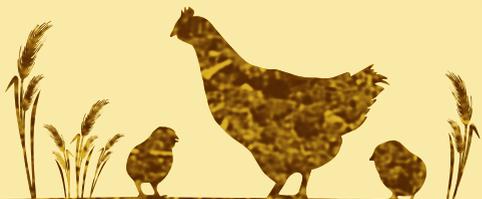
Positive steps

- Reduce use of imported feedstocks
- Appropriate stocking densities
- Reduce ammonia emissions through best practice manure management
- Practice sustainable soil management
- Introduce agroforestry



Try to avoid

- Reliance on concentrates
- Bioenergy and anaerobic digestion





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What Can Private Companies Do?

- Invest in habitat creation projects such as peatland restoration
- Invest in nature and climate friendly farming
- Improve food sourcing to actively choose products with a lower carbon footprint and which are nature friendly
- Reduce the length of and have transparent food chains
- Improve food labelling to support consumer choice e.g. carbon labelling
- Look to minimise your own carbon footprint

What Can the Public Do?

The public have a key role in supporting a shift to net zero and nature friendly farming, by:

- Asking their MP to back funding for nature and carbon friendly farming
- Supporting a farmer to undertake a carbon audit or nature survey of their farm
- Reducing food waste
- Choosing a sustainable and healthy diet, shifting to less but better quality meat, and reducing food miles
- Putting pressure on companies to label food so consumers can understand the carbon footprint of food

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