

The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill presents an opportunity to cultivate a healthier, more sustainable food system in Scotland



Plant-based
Food Alliance
UK

The Plant-based Food Alliance UK strongly welcomes the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce a national food plan.

We hope that the Scottish Government will:

- Recognise the important role plant-based foods can play in creating a good food system within its good food nation plan.
- Use the process of setting a good food nation plan to gather information on the economic, export, health and green growth potential of Scotland's plant-based food sector.
- Audit its food and drink policies to ensure plant-based options are being promoted in every part of the food value chain.

The need to make the green plant-based

- The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report highlighted the urgent need to address the food system and food security in the context of climate change and clearly set out the role of plant-based diets. We believe that this Bill provides a positive mechanism for food solutions to come forward, and for "Good Food" to encompass nutrition and sustainability as well as food security.
- The Scottish Government can harness the potential of plant-based foods – food and drink free of meat or dairy – within its national food plan, to help reach net zero. A growing number of Scots are adopting flexitarian diets, with a view to eating healthier for themselves and more sustainably for the planet, and there are wider opportunities for farmers and food businesses to lead and grow in this sector. Such a move does not need to conflict with wider support for Scottish farmers and traditional food producers, and can work with regenerative farming, reducing pressure on land.
- Offering people a real choice of tasty and healthy plant-based foods in every food setting – including restaurants, supermarkets, schools and hospitals – would create a virtuous circle of growing plant-based consumption, benefiting every part of the food value chain.
- The plant-based sector is well-placed to underpin progress across the environmental, health and economic development goals that this Bill is looking to support. With this Bill, Scotland has an opportunity to be a leader in innovation and the growth of the plant-based food value chain.

Case study: Sheese

Vegan brand Sheese produces dairy free, gluten free, non-GMO and certified vegan cheese alternatives. From the Isle of Bute, they sell cheese substitute products across Scotland and the rest of the UK, and export to markets across the world as well as producing plant-based products for large supermarkets.



Scotland can show global leadership in food system transitions

A shift towards more plant-based consumption is a key element of the transition towards creating a sustainable food system, decarbonising the economy and improving public health.

- Concerns about the environment are one of the leading reasons why people are turning to greater levels of plant-based consumption. The food system is one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions in Scotland and is thought to account for around a third of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally. 75% of Scottish agricultural GHG emissions are related to livestock production. Research shows that a change in the food system is needed to tackle challenges linked to climate change, food security, biodiversity loss, fresh water and public health as well as to manage to feed the growing population.
- To live by its commitments under the Paris Agreement and to achieve its long-term commitment to decarbonise its economy, Scotland must address the issue of GHG emissions produced from the agricultural sector, particularly livestock.
- Shifting to eating more plant-based foods is one of the most effective ways that individuals and society can help us meet our net zero goals. Plant-based proteins produce, on average, 70 times less greenhouse gas emissions than an equivalent amount of beef, and they use more than 150 times less land. Animal-based dairy causes around three times as much GHGs and uses around ten times as much land as plant-based dairy. Therefore, a shift to the increased production and consumption of plant-based food can be part of the solution towards a more sustainable food system in Scotland.
- Beyond environmental benefits, shifting from an animal to a plant-based diet has been demonstrated to have a significant positive effect in the fight against many lifestyle-related non-communicable diseases – including obesity, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases (such as such as cardiovascular disease, some cancers, type 2 diabetes and obesity). These diseases are among the leading causes of death globally and are very costly for individual wellbeing as well as for broader society.
- Eating more plant-based meals results in the consumption of more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and thereby more fibre, which many people do not consume sufficiently. With meat and milk products now the main source of saturated fats in people’s diets, shifting to a broad range of plant-based products can help lower cholesterol levels.

Case study: Sgaia

Based in Glasgow, Sgaia has pioneered the production of fresh, deli-quality plant-based meats since 2015. They make their alternative meat products from a mix of wheat and either pea or soya protein. Sgaia ships to consumers across Scotland, the rest of the UK and Ireland.



The plant-based transition should be supported through a range of Scottish Government policies

The Scottish Government can use the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill, and the process of developing a national food plan, to audit and improve its existing food and drink policies. The Government should assess where it can do more to support people’s access to plant-based food choices, as well as to realise the benefits plant-based foods can bring to the economy.

- In particular, Scotland’s successor to the Common Agricultural Policy can support farmers and growers who want to transition to supplying crops for direct human consumption instead of animal feed, and for the growth of businesses developing plant-based products. Producer and consumer demand for plant-based foods is growing not just in Scotland, but in our major export

markets across Europe and the world. With the right investment, Scottish farmers can become leaders in plant-based food production and manufacturing as they have been leaders in other food and drink sectors.

- To grow Scotland’s reputation as a Good Food Nation from which other countries can learn, the Scottish Government could strengthen guidance to ensure a greater emphasis on providing a wider range of tasty plant-based alternatives to people in every public sector. Coupled with behavioural insights measures, such as making positive language changes and repositioning choices on menus, these changes could have a tangible impact on boosting plant-based food consumption.
- The School Milk Subsidy operated by the Scottish Government should ensure that plant-based alternatives are offered to children as a matter of course, building on the positive progress that has been made in offering non-dairy options in nurseries. By levelling the playing field for plant-based milks there is the opportunity to broaden the offer and drive more sustainable choices. For example, Scotland’s food and drink regulations restrict plant-based drinks in schools to those with a max of 0.5g/100ml whereas dairy drinks are allowed max 5g/100ml sugar. This results in an extremely restrictive offering and could see children missing out on other very important fortifications found in plant-based products available today such as iodine.
- The Scottish Government also has the scope to be at the front of the work with the UK Government and other Devolved Administrations to examine introducing statutory climate footprint labelling for food and drink products across the UK, so consumers can easily compare and understand the environmental footprint of different products on the market.

A societal shift is taking place, with consumers shifting to plant-based diets for a number of reasons including ethics, medical and health concerns and not least concerns regarding the impact of animal-based diets on the environment. The Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill and the resulting plan offers an unmissable opportunity to support and expedite this vital shift, whilst at the same time increasing the competitiveness of Scottish agriculture, encouraging innovation within the plant-based sector and offering new economic opportunities and employment to benefit the planet, people and future generations.

Case study: The VeganKind Supermarket

Established in 2013 by Karris and Scott McCullouch, TheVeganKind offers an online selection of over 5,000 products and runs the UK’s number 1 vegan subscription box service from their warehouse in Glasgow. In 2021, they secured £3.5m of public investment into their company as they continue to grow.



About us

Launched in October 2021, the Plant-based Food Alliance UK is a coalition of stakeholders organisations from across the plant-based value chain – from farm to fork. We aim to help make every part of the UK a global leader in plant-based food and drink.

Led by Chief Executive, Marisa Heath, we seek to represent food and drink producers, manufacturers, retailers, nutritionists and non-governmental organisations. Our founding members are Alpro, Oatly, Upfield, The Vegan Society and ProVeg UK.

Contact

For more information, or to arrange a meeting, contact **Marisa Heath**, CEO: marisa@plantbasedfoodalliance.co.uk.