



Eating Better

2019-20

IMPACT REPORT

BUILD BACK BETTER



Chair's statement

This year food systems suffered their biggest shock in many of our lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the fragilities of a food system focused almost exclusively on efficiency and price. Sadly, it seems that we have a long way to go before we recover from COVID-19 but we must seize opportunities to build back better and transform our food system.

Our Better by half: roadmap has been recognised in the UK and beyond as a blueprint for action to build back in a more sustainable way. But we must pick up the pace to achieve our aim of a 50% reduction in meat and dairy consumption and move to 'better' for the remainder. The events of this year have only made the need for progress more pressing. The Eating Better alliance has identified 5 actions to focus attention on this year (set out on page 3).

Retailers, food service and the public are showing an appetite for reducing meat production and consumption, but the Government has so far been found wanting. We look forward to the next National Food Strategy report, which we understand will tackle the impact of meat consumption on the environment and lay out a path to a greener food system.

We were encouraged by the call from the Committee on Climate Change for all Government departments to integrate Net Zero into all policy making and ensure procurement strategies are consistent with the UK's climate objectives.

The recent Climate Assembly report commissioned by six parliamentary select committees set out a range of recommendations for Government to meet their target of net zero by 2050. The inclusion of the recommendation by the public panel, of 'some, just less, meat,' is positive and shows an appetite for dietary change.

Public support for the less and better meat message is developing and awareness of the environmental impact of livestock production is growing, as demonstrated by our first youth survey of 11 to 18-year olds. Government and food businesses should take note that the people who will be shaping voting and shopping habits for years to come are showing an interest in reducing meat consumption and see the environment and climate change as a top priority.

Our latest retail survey on ready meals showed that many supermarkets' plant-based options have come a long way. 16% of ready meals on the shelves are now plant-based, a significant increase on the figure of 3% in 2018. But, the sheer volume of meat-based ready meals is still a big concern. Particularly as we know that ingredient meat doesn't always live up to the animal welfare and environmental standards that supermarkets set for their own fresh meat.

Eating Better has always provided a space for a diverse range of NGOs to reach common positions on contested issues. This year we worked with alliance organisations with a range of interests and expertise to produce *We need to talk about chicken*. This report explored and helped to build a public conversation about the impact on the environment, our health, animal welfare and rural livelihoods of the often suggested switch from red meat to poultry.

“
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While the events of the coming year will like this year bring new and concerning challenges, including potential trade deals and Government responses to calls for a green recovery, there are many reasons to be hopeful.

We look forward to continuing to support public sector caterers as they deliver on their announcement of a 20% reduction in meat. We also plan to continue to grow and strengthen our alliance and to work with current alliance organisations from farming groups, to public health experts and environmentalists to animal welfare organisations on a range of exciting initiatives.

I am particularly looking forward to working with alliance members as we work with retailers, food service, farmers, investors and importantly Government to build back better from COVID-19.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people we have worked with over the last year, including alliance members, trustees, staff and our main funder – the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Carol McKenna • Chair, Eating Better

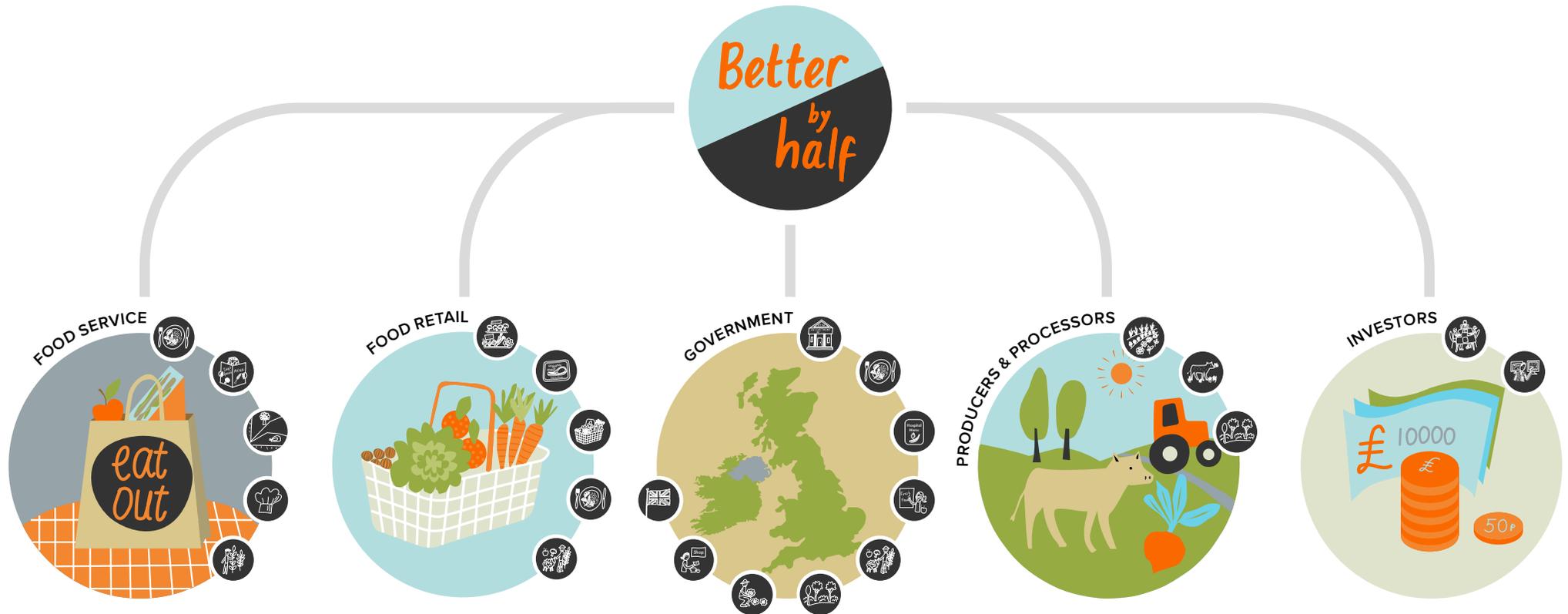
Better by half: a roadmap to less and better meat and dairy

The Eating Better alliance aims to stimulate a 50% reduction in meat and dairy consumption in the UK by 2030, and for a transition to 'better' meat and dairy as standard. This year we set out our blueprint to make this a reality – Better by half: A roadmap to less and better meat and dairy.

The roadmap, which has been supported both within and outside the alliance, provides 24 actions to be taken across five sectors. These actions will create an enabling environment to drive the necessary transformation in eating habits.

“Eating Better alliance members now need to move towards tactical application of what we know using the clout and contacts we have. The Better by half: roadmap provides a blueprint for members and others to do this. The next step will need to be the identification and implementation of a set of metrics with food businesses, Government and others to assess progress towards ‘less and better’ meat and dairy.”

Kath Dalmeny, Chief Executive, Sustain



The time for action is now

Since launching the roadmap, the alliance has identified five priority actions. The COVID-19 crisis and an impending Brexit have exposed the fragilities in the food system, making the case for action ever more urgent.

Following the launch of the roadmap, **Caroline Lucas MP** wrote to the Houses of Parliament Catering Services to ask them to adopt a 'less and better' approach to meat and dairy:
"We should be showing the way. If Parliament can get its procurement policies right, then we've got much greater authority to call on other players in society to get their procurement policies rights as well. As well as health and economic benefits, the 'less and better' approach could make a significant dent in Parliament's carbon footprint."

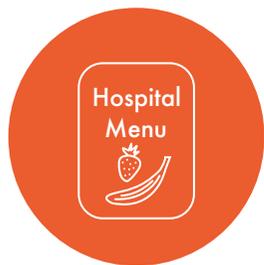
5 PRIORITY ACTIONS

GOVERNMENT

INVESTORS

FOOD RETAIL

1



Normalise sustainable diets through public procurement

2



Deliver a cross-departmental food and farming strategy

3



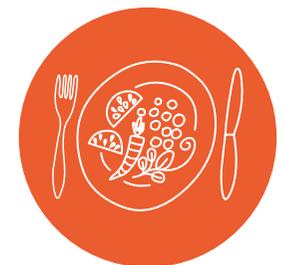
Assess future trade deals for their impact on human health and the environment

4



Engage with companies across the value chain, including producers, wholesalers, retailers, caterers and restaurant chains, to promote healthy and sustainable foods

5



Embed a sustainable diets strategy across the business

We need to talk about chicken

Chicken is the most popular meat in the UK and consumption is growing. 'We need to talk about chicken' set out the true costs of production on this scale.

Chicken is often seen as an affordable source of protein and has been recommended as a good choice for health and the environment instead of red meat. Our publication has helped fuel a public conversation across mainstream, trade and social media about how recommending this switch can lead to big but often hidden consequences. Understanding of the impact of the scale of chicken production on the environment, our health, animal welfare and rural livelihoods is growing across the alliance and more widely.



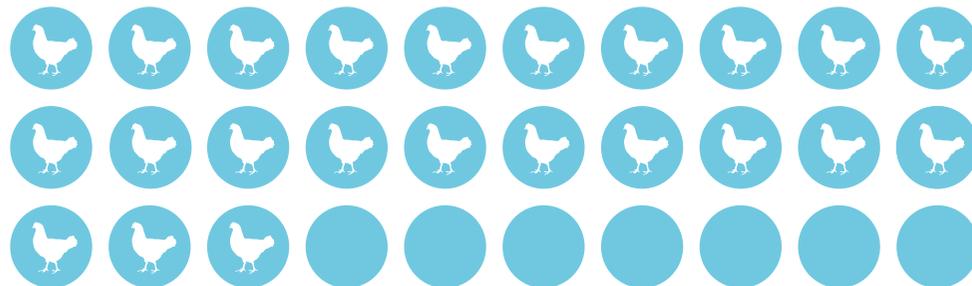
50%

Poultry now accounts for over **50% of meat consumption**, more than any other meat



95%

of the UK's broiler production is in intensive indoor units



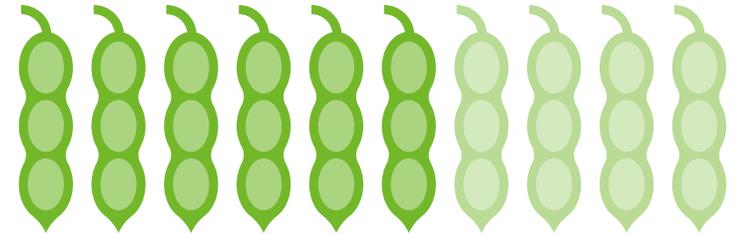
23 billion

of the 30 billion land animals on farms are chickens

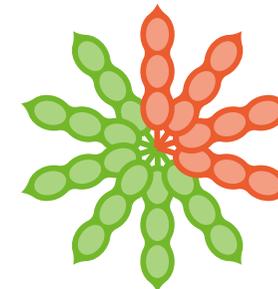
Over the past 10 years, consumption in the UK has been growing at **2.6%** **850 million** chickens are reared for meat in the UK every year



WE CAN'T KEEP FEEDING CHICKENS IN THIS WAY



60% The UK imports **3 million tonnes** of soy annually – 60% is used by the poultry industry



40%

Over 40% of the world's crop-based feed is used for poultry production

"In view of the widespread consumer confusion in relation to differentiating between sustainable and unsustainable livestock production systems, the Sustainable Food Trust strongly welcomes the Eating Better alliance's new publication. The report provides important and accessible new information to the millions of consumers who are currently confused in relation to differentiating between sustainable and unsustainable livestock production systems."

Patrick Holden, Founding Director, Sustainable Food Trust

Ready meals – plant-based progress, but not in all supermarkets

This year we produced our largest ever survey of 2404 ready meals showing that many supermarkets have come a long way. 16% of ready meals on the shelves at the 11 largest supermarkets are now plant-based, a big increase on the figure of 3% in 2018. But, more than 4 out of 5 ready meals still include meat, fish or cheese.

Eating Better wants to see retailers reducing meat-based options so that they make up no more than 50% of the range. The roadmap sets out 5 actions for retailers to take.



The survey shows that more plant-based meals have been making their way to supermarket shelves. Ocado's range shows the most balance, with meat free options making up 40% of ready meals. Morrisons, Asda and Aldi doubled the size of their meat free range in the last two years. Despite Iceland's sustainability commitments, they are still lagging behind with just 11% of their range being meat free.

However, plant-based meals can come at an unwelcome premium over other options. Tesco, Sainsbury's and Co-op plant-based ready meals are on average more expensive than meat, fish and vegetarian ranges.

“While this year's ready meals survey results show some encouraging changes, there is still an enormous amount of work to be done. As our Broken Plate report illustrates, much more action is required (and quickly) to transform our food system. It's deeply concerning to see plant-based options come with a price premium at some supermarkets. We need to make sure healthier, more sustainable food options are part of a food environment that's accessible for everyone.”

Anna Taylor OBE, Executive Director of The Food Foundation

WHAT IS IN READY MEALS?

84% OF MEALS CONTAINED EITHER MEAT, FISH OR CHEESE

68% OF MEALS CONTAINED MEAT

70% OF VEGETARIAN MEALS CONTAIN CHEESE

24%

OF READY MEALS WERE EITHER VEGETARIAN OR PLANT-BASED

Survey shows environment and climate change is top priority for young people

Each year, we survey public opinion to track changes in public attitudes and behaviour. This year for the first time we carried out a youth survey of 11 to 18 year olds. The results told a story of change with implications for the future for civil society, food businesses and policy makers.

63% said the **environment and climate change** was one of their most important issues for the country

29% of meat eaters surveyed want to **reduce their meat consumption**

▶ Respondents who wanted to eat less meat said they wanted more meat-free options to be available in school canteens, and they don't have any say on food shopping at home.

25% of **18 year olds** are **vegan or vegetarian** compared to just 6% of 11-year olds – reflecting the increased freedom to choose how they eat as they get older

“Taking action on improving the sustainability of our diets is a crucial element in solving the climate crisis and it’s one of the easiest to implement as it starts in the home. It is that young people want to change their eating habits to be more environmentally friendly and we need to facilitate this.”

Anna Kernahan, 17 year old climate activist from Belfast

Providing the spark for less and better in public sector catering

In the last year Eating Better has advised the PSC100 Group resulting in a commitment to meat reduction. The group represents public sector caterers across schools, hospitals, universities, care homes, prisons and the MoD. They have now announced that they will work towards a 20% reduction in meat served.

We will continue to support PSC100 including by considering the target number and date, how it is measured and how they can ensure the remainder of the meat and dairy served is from farmers that work in a nature friendly way.

20% PSC100 announce 20% reduction in meat served by public sector caterers

The Committee on Climate Change has called on all Government departments to integrate Net Zero into all policy making, and ensure procurement strategies are consistent with the UK's climate objectives.^{1,2}

“The PSC100 Group’s campaign to target a 20% reduction in meat consumption within public sector catering drew inspiration from the Eating Better Alliance’s Better By Half roadmap, and benefited from some sage advice and guidance from Simon Billing as we moved towards launching the initiative publicly.”

David Foad, Group Editor, The Public Sector Catering Magazine, and part of PSC100

1 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Land-use-Policies-for-a-Net-Zero-UK.pdf>

2 <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reducing-UK-emissions-Progress-Report-to-Parliament-Committee-on-Climate-Change-002-1.pdf>

A strong and growing alliance

IN OUR ANNUAL SURVEY OF MEMBERS

100%

agree that we support them to be more confident in their own sustainable diets messaging

96%

agree that we raise awareness of less and better

93%

agree that we build common ground for NGOs to coalesce on

90%

said we provide thought leadership

78%

said they have used our reports, briefings and articles to support their own work in the last two years

We work collaboratively with an alliance of civil society organisations passionate about health, environment, animal welfare and social justice.

THREE NEW SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

“I am delighted that the Eating Better Alliance is welcoming The Humane League UK among their members. We’re very excited to work alongside Eating Better Alliance organisations as we believe that together we are stronger. To achieve our vision of a future free from animal abuse, the pathway of drastically reducing meat consumption and improving farm animal welfare is a core component of our strategy.”

Vicky Bond, Managing Director, The Humane League UK

“We are delighted to join Eating Better and whole-heartedly support their mission to prioritise fair and sustainable farming systems. For decades farmers have been under pressure to produce an abundance of cheap food which has negatively impacted on the health of the soil, crops, animals and ourselves. The West’s high consumption of low welfare, high input meat has contributed to a rise in chronic disease and unsustainable farming practice. We believe that a better understanding of the links between the way that we farm and human health is part of the solution to these challenges.”

Jacqueline Pearce-Dickens, Managing Director, Whole Health Agriculture

“We are delighted to join the Eating Better Alliance because we feel it’s so important to get the message out to the public that whilst we do need to reduce the overall amount of meat we consume, it’s also vital that the meat we do eat is better for the environment. That’s why Farm Wilder only promotes beef and lamb from regenerative farming that restores soils and wildlife.”

Tim Martin, Executive Director, Farm Wilder



COMING UP

OVER THE NEXT YEAR WE WILL

-  continue to support and champion nature friendly farming and challenge industrial meat production in the UK – by developing and publishing ‘less and better’ metrics to support roadmap actions
-  engage with emerging policy opportunities such as the National Food Strategy and Government recommendations from the Climate Assembly to support a green recovery with less and better meat and dairy
-  track change through survey work on public attitudes and business progress

If you would like to support this, then please contact us:
comms@eating-better.org

“Eating Better plays an important role as a ‘drawstring’ bringing organisations together, creating alignment across sectors and encouraging members to do more. Eating Better has set and is now driving towards a meat reduction target, bringing with it a group of 64 civil society organisations from farming groups to animal welfare organisations. This is alongside a focus on a move to regenerative farming. Eating Better plays a role as an honest broker to move towards less and better meat and dairy.”

Philip Lymbery, Global Chief Executive Officer,
Compassion in World Farming

Supporting organisations and partners



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