Plant-Rich
UK

UK retailers must lead on protein diversification – for our health, food security and the planet



Extreme weather, geopolitical conflicts and other crises are disrupting supply chains and driving food inflation, creating an urgent need for retailers to prioritise food security.

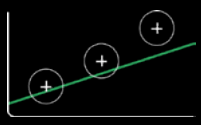
Animal agriculture is especially vulnerable to these threats, with farmers warning of shortages driven by climate pressures, rising costs and disease.

Plant proteins, by contrast, are more resource efficient, have simpler supply chains and a far lower climate impact.

There's rising demand for them too, with consumers increasingly choosing healthy options like beans, pulses and tofu. Supporting this shift can grow these categories and advance the Planetary Health Diet, which recommends 75% plant-based foods by 2050 to maximise human and planetary health.

As well as a category opportunity, protein diversification is a resilience strategy. It's the lever to secure long-term financial viability and the most cost-effective way for supermarkets to hit their climate targets.

We're asking all UK supermarkets to:



01 Set targets

Set targets to increase the ratio of plant-to-animal food sales to 30% of all protein group sales by 2030, and limit dairy sales to 8% of all food sales by 2030.



02 Measure

Measure and publicly report their progress annually.



03 Take action

Take action to implement a shift in protein sales.

Why supermarkets?

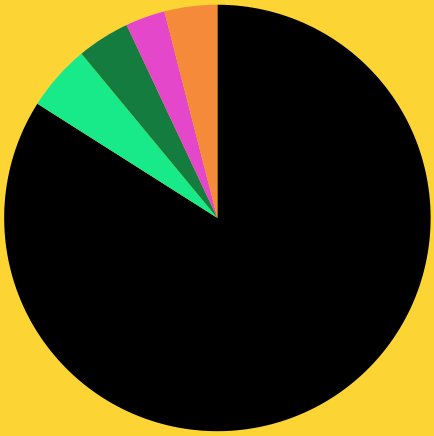
Food accounts for the equivalent of 38% of UK emissions. In the UK, 80% of our calories come from 11 supermarkets, giving them enormous influence on consumer behaviour and a vital role in food system change.



Why now?

Climate impacts are already affecting food systems. Most retailers have emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050. Many are making progress in some areas, such as transport, energy in stores and packaging, but very little progress has been made on FLAG (Food, Land Use Change, Agriculture) – despite it accounting for 85% of food system emissions.

Food-related emissions in the UK



- FLAG
- Packaging
- Processing
- Retail
- Transport and Storage

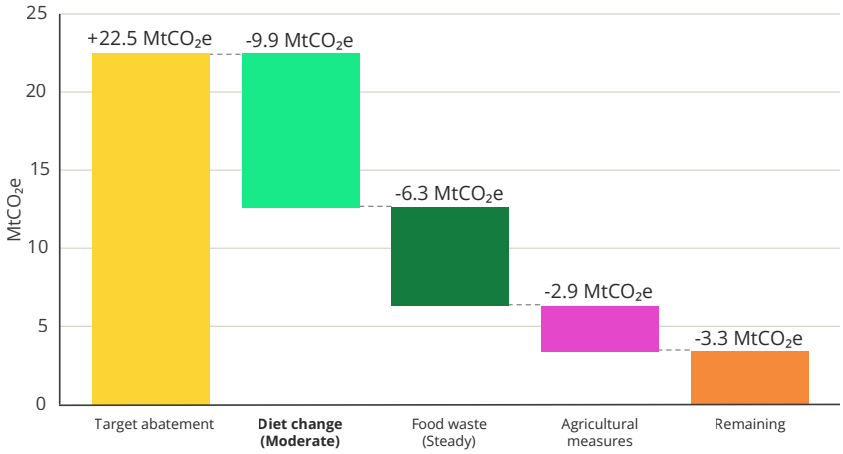
Forest, Land use change and Agriculture (FLAG) emissions account for **84% of total food-related emissions**.

Of these emissions, **roughly 75%** is from animal proteins (meat, dairy, cheese, fish, eggs).

Meeting climate targets while building commercial resilience

Research shows that the most cost effective way UK supermarkets can meet their climate targets is by selling a higher proportion of plant-based proteins.

Source: Eunomia analysis of UK food consumption data and routes for change. The 'moderate' diet ambition is presented alongside the 'steady change' scenario for food waste, as these are the most feasible near-term actions.



With 2030 climate targets looming, inconsistent measurement, limited disclosure and weak category activation is slowing progress.

- 7 retailers measure their protein sales and report privately to WWF. Only 5 report publicly. Some don't report in consistent and comparable ways.
- Lidl is the only UK retailer with a target for protein diversification.
- Research shows that the most cost effective way UK supermarkets can meet their climate targets is by selling a higher proportion of plant-based proteins.

Why plant proteins?

Commercial opportunity

The first half of 2026 saw a plant-based resurgence in the UK, with beans, pulses, tofu and tempeh growing 7.3% (10.1% in value), compared to the same period last year.



Dairy alternatives **+2.2% to £812.3m**

YoY 2024-2025 (The Grocer, 2025b)

Household penetration **35%**

July 2025 (The Grocer, 2025b)

Yoghurt alternatives value **+12.3%**

YoY 2024-2025 (The Grocer, 2025b)



Tofu value **+15.3%** Tofu volume growth **+25.2%**

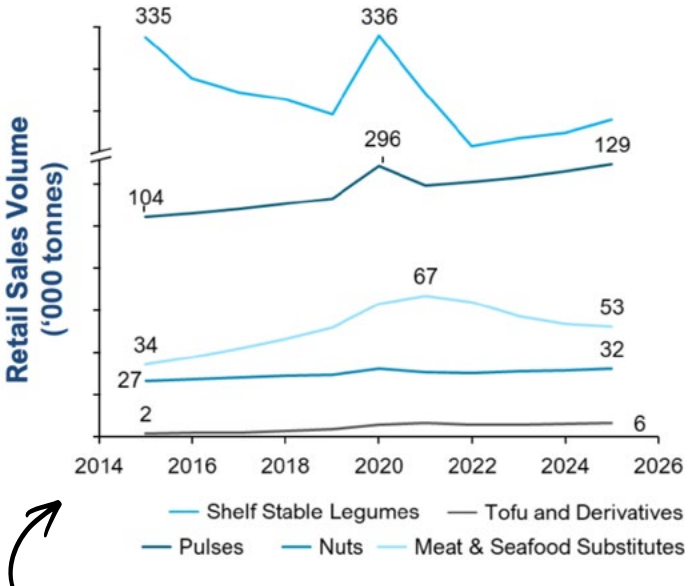
YoY 2024-2025 (The Grocer, 2025b)

Tibah Tempeh retail sales value growth **+736%**

YoY 2024-2025 (The Grocer, 2025b)

Butter beans **+30%** Dried lentils **41%**

YoY 2025-2026 (Nielsen IQ PB sales data)



The plant-based share of protein sales is projected to rise from 14% in 2025 to 29% by 2040.

Supermarkets in Europe are charging ahead

- **Netherlands:** 98% of the retail market has a protein diversification target. A plant-based shopping basket is now up to 30% cheaper than a standard one.
- **Germany:** Rewe, Lidl and Aldi Süd have targets. Lidl has the highest ambition and Aldi Süd has the most detailed assortment insights.
- **Lidl** has set group-wide targets, making it the first UK retailer to take action. It has committed to increase the proportion of its plant-based protein to 25% of total protein sold by 2030. In 2025, it surpassed its 400% sales target of own-label meat-free and plant-based milk – reaching a 694% increase.

A 'stocked to scaled' activation framework can help retailers move beyond product availability and improve category performance.

5: Scaled
Build shared confidence and measurement

4: Sold
Shift from discounting to demand-building

3: Shoppable
Connect products to meals and missions

2: Sign-posted
Close the execution gap

1: Stocked
Build the right product and range foundations



Resilience

- Climate change is hitting meat and dairy with unprecedented supply chain volatility.
- One in eight UK households is food insecure, with continued volatility disproportionately impacting the purchasing power of lower-income consumers.
- Farmers are already evolving through protein diversification, with 42.5% of those surveyed reporting positive economic outcomes.
- Supporting a shift towards more plant-rich diets – alongside responsible sourcing and supplier engagement – enables retailers to meet their climate goals, reduce agricultural pressure on land, strengthen supply-chain resilience and foster nature-positive food systems.
- By setting targets, supermarkets can provide the long-term volume predictability that domestic farmers and value-added manufacturers need, in order to invest and capture growth in sustainable protein.

Health

- The PHD is associated with a reduced risk of dying from all major causes, including heart disease, cancer and lung disease.
- Its recommended high intake of whole grains and legumes reduces the risk of type-2 diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular diseases.
- With full-scale adoption, it could prevent 40,000 deaths globally daily.

In an economically uncertain world, food system resilience is a direct commercial stake for supermarkets. By driving protein diversification, the sector can become catalysts for planetary and human health, in turn securing its own future.

Plant Rich UK is a call to action by Eating Better, The Food Foundation, Madre Brava, ProVeg and WWF, signed by 20 other CSOs. Find out more: www.plantrichretailuk.org/#call-to-action

proveg international
madre brava
WWF
Eating Better
The Food Foundation