

# Sustainability in the Food Industry

**According to a most recent update, the central government spent £142.5m on food, of which £117m met the Government Buying Standards. And these are basic standards that have received plenty of criticism for being too weak.**

The emphasis is focused on British food, rather than sustainable food with hopes that this will help drive sustainable procurement across the sector, public and private.

This focus is aimed at businesses large and small and provides a document offering 'four steps to responsible food sourcing'.

These include everything from the development of a strategy and the identification of where to take action, to the measurement of progress and the communication of achievements. It tackles the issues of waste reduction and energy use, as well as more controversial subjects like carbon labelling and changing menus to include fewer meat options.

Many business have focused on certain themes, for example sourcing sustainable fish or fairly traded coffee. with limited guidance being offered by the government to what a 'truly' sustainable menu look like there are calls for clearer guidelines and support for creating sustainability within the industry.

## **But what is the business case for sustainability?**

- Mitigates risk of limited resources
- Increases resilience to future environmental, social and economic impacts
- Simplifies compliance
- Delivers bottom line benefits from improved resource efficiency
- Improves business reputation
- Builds trust around your products
- Increases competitive advantage
- Stimulates innovation

How do the government plan to respond to the growing population's demand for food, while minimising the impacts of farming and food production on the environment?

## **Building a sustainable food chain**

### **2010 to 2015 government policy: food and farming industry**

- contributing to EU policies and initiatives on environmentally sustainable consumption and production and international food security
- negotiating reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
- encouraging the UK food and drink industry to use natural resources more efficiently

- making sure the government buys food that has been produced in environmentally sustainable ways, through rules on government buying standards and food procurement policies

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