

Debate Pack
18 July 2022
Number CDP 2022/0147

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The effect of the war in Ukraine on UK farming and food production

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1

Summary

The effect of the war in Ukraine on UK farming and food production will be debated on Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 9.30am. The debate will be opened by Christian Matheson MP.

Global supply chains were under significant pressure before the war in Ukraine. The UK's supply chain issues stemmed from global shortages of materials, staff shortages and transport delays occurring at the same time as sharp spikes in demand, particularly for consumer goods and construction materials. The conflict in Ukraine has added to food supply chain pressures, particularly in relation to rising costs for fertilisers, animal feed and energy.

Conflict in Ukraine

On 24 February 2022, [Russia launched military action in Ukraine](#), with forces crossing into the country from Belarus in the north, Russia in the east and Crimea in the south.

Russia and Ukraine supply key produce to parts of the world where food supply is already under pressure. North Africa and the Middle East import significant amounts of cereal, wheat and barley from Ukraine and Russia, and Ukraine is an important supplier of maize to the EU and China.

The conflict has prevented farmers in some areas of Ukraine from attending to their fields and has disrupted transport networks. Farm machinery and buildings have been damaged and fire is destroying crops. The [UN Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\) has projected](#) that the conflict in Ukraine will lead to a rise in global food prices in 2022 of between 8% and 22%. It could lead to an increase of 13 million more chronically undernourished people this year, and 17 million more in 2023.

Impact on the UK: price increases predicted

The UK Government does not expect any significant impact on UK food supply but has acknowledged the likelihood of further food price increases due to trade disruption and fertiliser supply issues. This echoes the [European Parliament's assessment](#) that the main impact in EU countries will be on food prices rather than food availability.

Farmers in the UK have concerns about input costs, particularly fertilisers and animal feed, as well as energy costs.

Energy prices were increasing before the war in Ukraine. As a net importer, the UK is exposed to volatility in gas prices. [Energy input costs for farms increased by 34%](#) between January and April 2022. Farm motor fuel costs increased by 30% over the same period.

England's farming sector

The farming sector in England is also undergoing a transition from Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments to a new system of Environmental Land Management (ELM) and other schemes.

Representatives of the agricultural sector have been concerned about the availability of labour for years. Between April 2020 and the end of March 2022, [Ukrainians made up 67% of temporary workers](#) issued with a Seasonal Worker visa. The adoption of martial law in Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion has prevented Ukrainian men of fighting age, defined as age 18 to 60, from leaving the country.

[UK Government figures show that Ukrainians and Russians made up 43% and 5% respectively](#) of the 6,618 people that came to the UK under the Seasonal Worker scheme between 1 January 2022 and 31 March 2022. More recent government figures for 2022 are not yet available.

Food strategy for England

The Government published a [Government food strategy for England](#) on 13 June 2022. In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Government outlined actions taken and further steps planned, including:

- Putting in place a package on fertilisers to help farmers manage increased input costs;
- future work with industry on barriers to farmers taking up risk management and other farming insurance products;
- helping businesses to manage vegetable oil substitution and access more diverse supply chains where there are shortages of ingredients;
- future work with industry to develop plans to bolster resilience of critical inputs such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and fertiliser. This will include a specific long-term plan on CO₂ in 2022 and a focus on pioneering more organic-based fertilisers; and
- strengthening the resilience of domestic supply chains, alongside continued work with international partners to support worldwide action

to mitigate the impacts of food crises on the most vulnerable countries and people.

Farmers' and food producers' views

Farmers and food producers are concerned about the pressures of rising input costs on their businesses. The [National Farmers' Union \(NFU\) said that growers were "doing everything they can"](#) to reduce overheads but "double or even triple digit inflation" for fertiliser and energy meant that, if the pressure continued, it would be "simply unsustainable for some businesses to continue as they are". [The NFU called on the Government to support farmers](#) in the "continued production of food for consumers at affordable prices. [...] the Government must act now, with a clear signal that food security is a priority for the nation".

The [Food and Drink Federation said that, with the Ukraine crisis likely to impact negatively on their businesses' trading ambitions](#), the Government needed to work closely with industry to "develop new markets and seize new opportunities in a difficult economic environment, to underpin their resilience".

2

Farming and food supply challenges before the Ukraine crisis

Global supply chains were under significant pressure before the Ukraine crisis. The Library's briefing on [UK supply chain problems](#) covers this as of October 2021.

The UK's supply chain issues stemmed from global shortages of materials, staff shortages and transport delays occurring at the same time as sharp spikes in demand, particularly for consumer goods and construction materials. The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) explained some of the existing causes of global disruption of markets:

Ongoing fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors have already [driven up food prices](#). Poor harvests in South America, strong global demand, and supply chain issues have reduced grain and oilseed inventories and driven prices to their highest levels since [2011-2013](#). Vegetable oil prices have also been at record levels, reflecting the short South American soybean crop, reduced palm oil supplies due to harvest problems in Malaysia, and sharply increased use of palm and soybean oil for biodiesel production. Prices of key energy-intensive inputs like fuel, fertilizer and pesticides have also been at near-record levels.¹

2.1

The Covid-19 pandemic

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee has published two reports into the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and food supply. Its July 2020 report on [COVID-19 and food supply](#) concluded that:

- The measures put in place by Government to control the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly had a significant and disruptive effect on food systems in the UK;
- Before the pandemic, many people were already unable to have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that met their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. This was evidenced by the already-increasing demand for food banks over the past decade. The pandemic exacerbated these existing food insecurities and [the Committee] heard warnings that the situation is likely to worsen;

¹ International Food Policy Research Institute blog, [How will Russia's invasion of Ukraine affect global food security?](#) 24 February 2022

- Disruptions that reduce the supply of food to the UK, for example because of a disorderly end to the transition period or climate change effects, will pose different, and potentially greater, challenges altogether. There also remains the possibility that further waves of COVID-19, or another future pandemic, may still lead to the disruption of cross-border supply chains.²

The EFRA Committee's follow-up report on [Covid-19 and the issues of security in food supply](#) was published in April 2021. It raised concerns about the lack of Government support for businesses in the food supply chain:

We support the Chancellor's announcement in the Budget that the hospitality sector will continue to receive at least the same level of financial support. However, we remain concerned that those who supply them have not received the same level of financial support. Many of these suppliers are small businesses, who will be particularly vulnerable as the economy starts to re-open. Both hospitality providers, and many public sector organisations, are reliant on them. The Government's support to hospitality businesses will be wasted if their supply chain collapses.³

2.2 Changes in farm funding

In addition to supply chain pressures, the farming sector in England is also undergoing a transition from Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments to a new system of Environmental Land Management (ELM) and other schemes.

Before the UK left the EU, farmers were supported by Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds (£4.7 billion in 2019). The Government has committed to maintaining pre-Brexit UK farm funding levels for this Parliament, but under new types of support schemes for farmers in England.

From 2021-27 the Government is phasing out in England the CAP-style 'direct payments' which are based on how much land is farmed. Farmers and land managers will in future be paid to produce 'public goods' such as environmental and animal health improvements under Environmental Land Management and other new schemes.

Further detail, including the approaches to farm funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is set out in the Library briefing [Farm funding: implementing new approaches](#) (July 2022).

The NFU has called for more support for food production in the new approaches, as an end in itself. There have also been calls to increase self-

² Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, [COVID-19 and food supply](#), July 2020, paras 115-7

³ Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, [Covid-19 and the issues of security in food supply](#), April 2021, para 50

sufficiency in food production. The NFU, for instance, citing its September 2021 report [British Food: Leading the Way](#), has argued that the Government should commit to keeping self-sufficiency levels above 60%. The NFU contends that “not enough importance has been placed on Britain’s food production. This has been all too clear as the country has watched its self-sufficiency drop from as high as 78% in the mid-1980s to its current level of just 60%”.⁴

2.3 Seasonal labour supply

The arable and horticulture sector relies heavily on seasonal workers to harvest crops and process foods. As farmers have long found it difficult to recruit sufficient seasonal workers from the UK, a significant proportion of such workers have been sourced from overseas.⁵ Defra’s [Food Security Report 2021](#) estimated that 99% of seasonal workers in the horticultural sector used to come from outside the UK.⁶

Representatives of the agricultural sector have expressed concerns about labour supply for several years, with concerns intensifying in recent years. The National Farmers’ Union (NFU) has said that unfilled vacancies “threaten our own UK food security”.⁷ The Environment Food, and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee’s report on [Labour Shortages in the Food and Farming Sector](#), published in April 2022, also expressed concerns about the potential effects of labour shortages in the food and farming sector.⁸

The Government has acknowledged that it has been challenging to ensure that the sector has access to sufficient labour, [citing](#) the disruption caused by COVID-19 and EU exit.

To alleviate labour shortages in the agricultural sector in the short term, the Government launched the [Seasonal Worker](#) visa in 2019.⁹ It allowed people to come to work in the UK for up to six months to work in horticulture. The scheme was initially launched as a pilot and limited to 2,500 places. It has since been extended and has a [quota](#) of 30,000 places for 2022, with the

⁴ NFU, [Government urged to back British food at home and abroad](#), 15 September 2021

⁵ House of Commons Library Debate Pack, [Recruitment Support for Agricultural Workers](#), CDP-2022-0094, 24 May 2022

⁶ Defra, [Food Security Report 2021](#), indicator 3.1.9, Labour and skills dependency

⁷ NFU News, [Efra labour shortages report warns of shrinking sector](#), 6 April 2022

⁸ Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, [Labour shortages in the food and farming sector Fourth Report of Session 2021–2](#), HC 712, April 2022

⁹ The UK has had different iterations of seasonal agricultural worker visas since WW2.

potential to increase by 10,000 if necessary. The scheme [is intended](#) remain in place until the end of 2024.¹⁰

In the long term, however, the Government [has said](#) that the agricultural sector should make greater use of automation and recruitment of domestic workers to reduce its reliance on foreign workers.¹¹

The debate pack on [Recruitment Support for Agricultural Workers](#), published in May 2022, summarises the concerns about labour supply and the policy measures taken by the Government to support the agricultural sector. Further information on the contribution of Ukrainian workers to the Seasonal Workers' scheme are set out in section 4.5 below.

2.4 UK Food Security Report

The Government published a [UK Food Security Report](#) in December 2021. It was the first time that such a report had been published under [section 19 of the Agriculture Act 2020](#), which requires the UK Government to report to Parliament on food security at least once every three years.

The report highlighted that since 2010, the UK's food system has been impacted by leaving the EU, greater climate change impacts and the Covid-19 pandemic. It suggested that these had "stress-tested" the supply chain highlighting vulnerabilities but also "the resilience and flexibility of the UK's food supply".¹²

The Government concluded that global food supply and availability "has improved since 2010" and was expected to recover from the problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Government expected that agricultural production would increase due to the use of more efficient and productive methods.

However, the UK Food Security Report also raised concerns about future climate change, biodiversity loss and overexploitation of natural capital such as fish and water resources. It also noted that undernourishment and obesity data suggested that "global food production is not equitably meeting populations' nutritional requirements, including the UK's".¹³

¹⁰ Home Office, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, [Industry given certainty around seasonal workers but told to focus on domestic workforce](#), 24 December 2021

¹¹ Home Office, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, [Industry given certainty around seasonal workers but told to focus on domestic workforce](#), 24 December 2021

¹² DEFRA, [UK Food Security Report 2021](#), December 2021, p 7

¹³ DEFRA, [UK Food Security Report 2021](#), December 2021, p 11

2.5

National Food Strategy

In 2019, the former Environment Secretary Michael Gove [commissioned an independent review](#), referred to as a “National Food Strategy”, to consider the UK food chain, including food security. The review was led by Henry Dimbleby, the co-founder of Leon restaurants, and the lead non-executive director at Defra.

The independent review published two reports. The first report, “[Part one of the National Food Strategy](#)”, which was published on 29 July 2020, and considered how the Government should prepare for EU Exit and respond to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A second, more detailed report, known as [The Plan](#) made a series of recommendations in 2021 targeting many aspects of the food system.

The NFS Plan called for:

- Increasing the frequency of food security assessments from every three years (as under the Agriculture Act 2020) to annual reports, consulting with a broader range of expertise to help future preparations.
- Changing farming methods to produce better environmental outcomes and higher yields. Earlier chapters of the NFS Plan set out several areas to improve. Recommendation 8 from the NFS Plan asked the Government to guarantee agricultural payments until 2029 to support a transition to more sustainable land use. Other recommendations in the NFS Plan also suggested ways to work towards more sustainable land use in the UK, in part to protect domestic food systems.¹⁴

The Government responded to the National Food Strategy with a [Government food strategy policy paper](#) on 13 June 2022. This is explored in more detail below.

¹⁴ National Food Strategy: Independent Review, [The Plan](#), July 2021, p.133

3

Global impacts of the war in Ukraine

On 24 February 2022 Russia launched military action in Ukraine, with forces crossing into the country from Belarus in the north, Russia in the east and Crimea in the south.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its subsequent conduct, which has led to widespread allegations of war crimes, has been met with international condemnation. An "[unprecedented" package of sanctions](#) has been imposed on Russia by the US, EU, UK and other allies and partners around the world.

Peace talks between Russia and Ukraine have stalled with each side blaming the other. Since the end of February 2022, the UN Refugee Agency estimates that [millions of refugees have fled Ukraine](#).

The Library has several [briefings on the Ukraine crisis](#) which contain further information on the military and humanitarian situation, the international response and implications for the UK.

3.1

Impacts on global food supply

Ukraine is sometimes referred to as the "breadbasket" of Europe.¹⁵ Ukraine and Russia are significant producers of sunflower seed, barley, wheat, maize, rapeseed and soybean and play major global supply roles as net exporters of agricultural products.¹⁶ The two countries were collectively responsible for around 29% of the world's wheat exports.¹⁷ According to the United Nations World Food Programme, Ukraine grows enough food to feed an estimated 400 million people.¹⁸ North Africa and the Middle East normally import significant amounts of cereal, wheat and barley from Ukraine and Russia, and Ukraine is an important supplier of maize to the EU and China.¹⁹ For example:

- Egypt, Laos, Benin and Somalia obtain over 80% of their wheat supply from the two countries.

¹⁵ Marca, [War in Ukraine threatens world food supply](#), 6 March 2022

¹⁶ FAO, [The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with the current conflict](#), 2022

¹⁷ Reuters, [Analysis: Russia-Ukraine conflict highlights wheat supply vulnerability](#), 3 March 2022

¹⁸ World Economic Forum, [The Ukraine war is driving up food and energy prices of the world](#), 25 March 2022

¹⁹ IFPRI blog, [How will Russia's invasion of Ukraine affect global food security?](#), 24 February 2022

- Yemen, Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sudan obtain between 50% and 79% of their wheat supply from Russia and Ukraine.²⁰

More information about global reliance on Ukraine and Russia for grains can be found in the International Food Policy Research Institute [IFPRI blog](#) and in this [Financial Times article](#) (subscription required).

The conflict has prevented farmers in some areas of Ukraine from attending to their fields and has disrupted transport networks. Farm machinery and buildings have been damaged and fire is also destroying crops, with allegations that “the Russians deliberately do not allow anyone to extinguish the fires”. [CNN reported](#) on 11 July that “Ukrainian officials are in no doubt that part of Russia's strategy is to destroy Ukraine's agricultural wealth”.²¹

In addition, exports of crops have been hindered with sea channels mined and vessels stuck in port.²² On 13 July, [Euronews quoted Ukrainian President Zelensky](#) saying that some 22 million tonnes of grain have been trapped in Ukraine.²³

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has projected that the Ukraine conflict will lead to a rise in global food prices in 2022 of between 8% and 22%.²⁴ The FAO has published an information note about [The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agricultural markets and the risks associated with the current conflict](#). The [FAO has said](#) that “the war in Ukraine has added to an already challenging situation and could lead to an increase of 13 million more chronically undernourished people this year, and 17 million more in 2023”.²⁵

However, Dr David Laborde Debucque from the International Food Policy Research Institute said that whilst the Ukraine conflict has “poured fuel into the fire” of the global food crisis, and that freeing up some 20 million tonnes of food currently trapped in Ukraine will be important, it will not solve world food price crises.²⁶

On 13 July, the [UN Secretary-General told reporters](#) that recent negotiations between Ukraine, Russia, Türkiye and UN officials were “a critical step

²⁰ UN Conference on Trade and Development, [The impact of trade and development of the war in Ukraine](#), 16 March 2022, p5

²¹ CNN, [Ukraine's harvest becomes the new battlefield, as fires blacken its arable heartlands](#), 11 July 2022

²² CNN, [Ukraine's harvest becomes the new battlefield, as fires blacken its arable heartlands](#), 11 July 2022

²³ Euronews, [Russia and Ukraine hold talks to ease grain export blockage](#), 13 July 2022

²⁴ UN Food and Agriculture Organization, [The importance of Ukraine and the Russian Federation for global agriculture and the risks associated with the current conflict](#), 16 March 2022, p2

²⁵ Agriland, [FAO: Global threats to agri-food systems require complex approach](#), 12 July 2022

²⁶ International Food Policy Research Institute news article, [Ukraine conflict ignited a global food crisis](#), 16 June 2022

forward to ensuring the safe and secure export of Ukrainian food products through the Black Sea”.

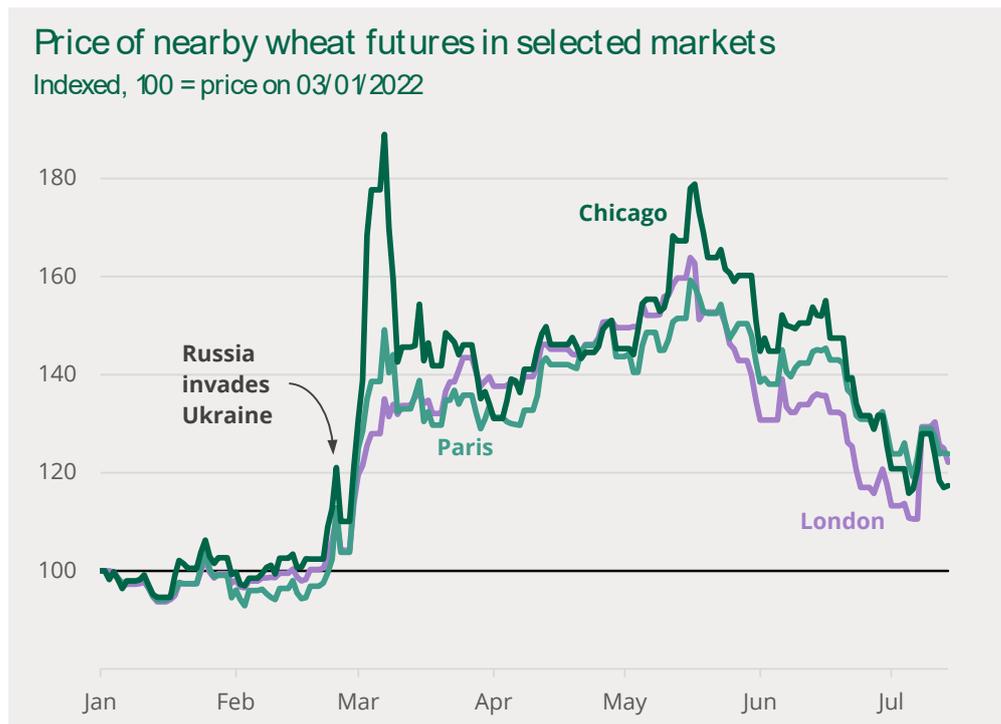
There is a chance of significant reduction in production long term in Ukraine with the conflict directly affecting some of the most productive areas of the country.²⁷ More information about such potential longer term impacts can be found in this [analysis from the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board](#) (AHDB). The [Library briefing on Ukraine Crisis and Africa](#) also has further information on the impacts on Africa.

Commodity price rises

The price of food futures commodities rose sharply in response to the invasion, indicating market concern about future supplies. Agricultural products like grain are traded on global markets, just like oil or minerals. This makes them commodities. Often, it is not the commodity itself which is traded, but rather a contract to buy the commodity for a specific price on a set date in the future. These agreements (called futures contracts) have developed over time to reduce the risks of market volatility for producers, as the future price of their product is guaranteed.

The futures system means that commodities like grain can be traded before they have been sowed or harvested, giving an indication of the market’s confidence in future supplies. The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) data on the wheat prices in selected markets is shown in the chart below.

²⁷ Sky News, [Ukraine war: Are we on the brink of a global food security crisis?](#), 10 March 2022; Institute for Grocery Distribution, [Ukraine crisis: supply chain implications and key actions](#), 25 February 2022



Source: [Futures Prices](#), AHDB

There was a sharp spike in the price of ‘nearby’ wheat futures contracts (those closest to their expiry, or delivery date) just after the invasion, particularly on the Chicago market. Prices increased more gradually from mid-March to mid-May when futures traded on the Chicago market were around 80% above their early January level and those on the London and Paris markets were both around 60% higher.

Prices have subsequently fallen, but in mid-July were still around 20% above pre-invasion levels.

The AHDB states that the price rise is driven by uncertainty about global access to Black Sea wheat. Black Sea wheat is the commodities market’s name for the harvest from Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria and Romania. As a result, EU markets are likely to see the greatest price rises in grain over the medium- to long-term. This is because countries that are normally reliant on Black Sea wheat (such as Egypt and Turkey) will shift their demand to the EU market, as it is geographically closer.^{28 29}

This is significant because wheat and other grains are an essential input into the food system. A rise in wheat prices will contribute to a rise in overall food prices. However, the strength of this relationship will vary globally, depending on the extent to which national diets rely on wheat and the proportion of wheat imported from the Black Sea region. In countries where

²⁸ S&P Commodity Insights, [Black Sea wheat prices soar on supply disruptions; futures prices rally](#), accessed 18 July 2022

²⁹ AHDB, [Fresh new highs for UK wheat futures: Grain market daily](#), accessed 29 March 2022.

wheat-derived foods constitute a greater part of their calorific intake, richer people are likely to be slightly more insulated from any price rise. This is because their diets are less reliant on cereals, as they consume more meat, fruit and vegetables.³⁰

Since the spike in prices started in late February, there have been further fluctuations in the wheat price. The AHDB suggests that wheat markets are responsive to the geo-political situation, meaning that any likelihood of a peace deal in Ukraine could cause the price to fall.³¹

³⁰ IMF Blog, [War-Fueled Surge in Food Prices to Hit Poorer Nations Hardest](#), accessed 18 July 2022

³¹ AHDB, [Global wheat falls on the back of Ukraine/Russian negotiations: Grain Market Daily](#), accessed 18 July 2022

4 Impacts on UK farming and food production

4.1 Increases in input costs

The [UK Food Security Report](#) explained that the cost of inputs varies year to year and was a “significant risk to farming economies due to the narrow margins on which they operate – and therefore to food security”. The report notes that, out of £26.7 billion gross agricultural output in 2020, £17.3 billion was spent on ‘intermediate consumption’ (costs and inputs).

In 2020, seeds cost UK farmers £922 million, fertilisers £1,147 million, energy and fuel £1,290 million, pesticides £1,097 million, and animal feed £5,586 million. Animal feed is both the most expensive input across the entire sector and the one for which prices fluctuate most.³²

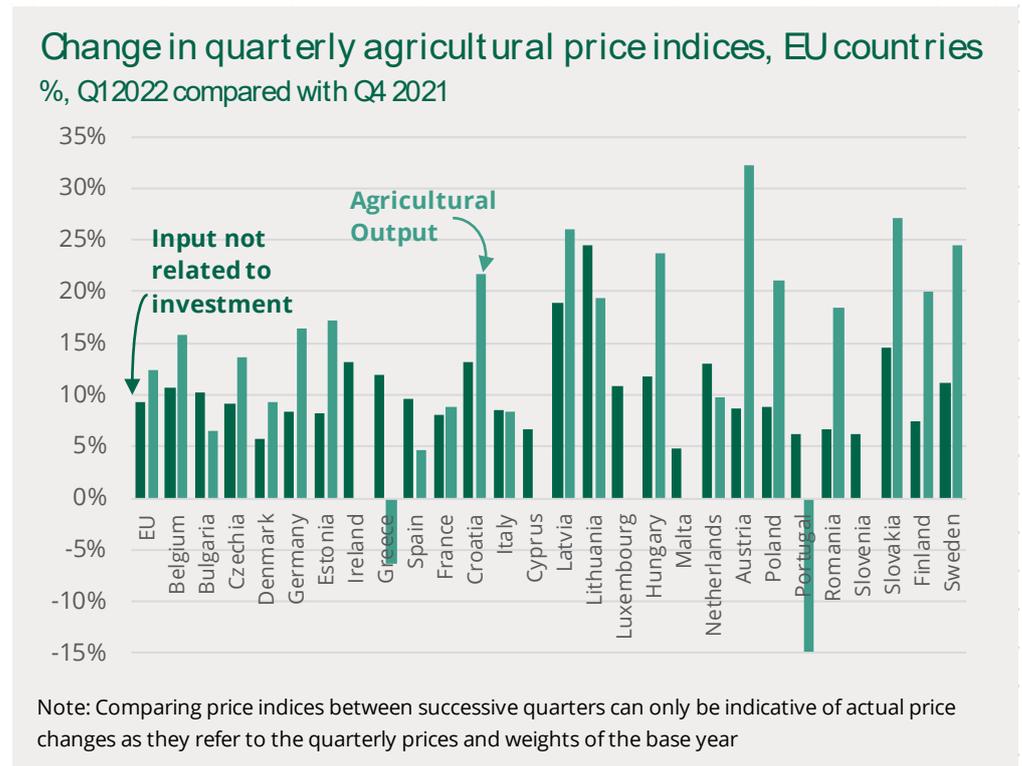
The position in the EU

Around the EU, many farmers and food producers are currently facing the challenge of steep increases in the cost of their essential inputs, such as energy, fertiliser and feedstuffs for animals. Across the bloc, in the first quarter of 2022, the average price of goods and services consumed in agriculture (i.e., inputs not related to investment) increased by 9.5% compared with the fourth quarter of 2021. This was underpinned by strong rises for fertilisers and soil improvers (+21.2%), energy and lubricants (+17.4%) and animal feeding stuffs (+9.2%). Meanwhile, the average price of agricultural goods as a whole (output) increased by 6.0%.³³ The latest quarterly price rises build on increases since the start of 2021.

On an annual basis, the average price of agricultural inputs not related to investment jumped by 27.4% for the EU between the start of 2021 and the start of 2022. In particular, the price of fertiliser and soil improvers almost doubled on average in the EU (+96.2%), and the average price of energy and lubricants rose by just over one half (+55.6%). The higher cost of cereals and energy also passed through to animal feeding stuffs (+22.9%).

³² Defra, [UK Food Security Report 2021](#), December 2021, p 119

³³ Information from data on agricultural price indices published by Eurostat on 12 July 2022. Source datasets: [apri_pi15_inq](#) and [apri_pi15_outq](#)
Eurostat News, Europa, [EU agricultural markets affected by Russian invasion - Products](#), 11 July 2022

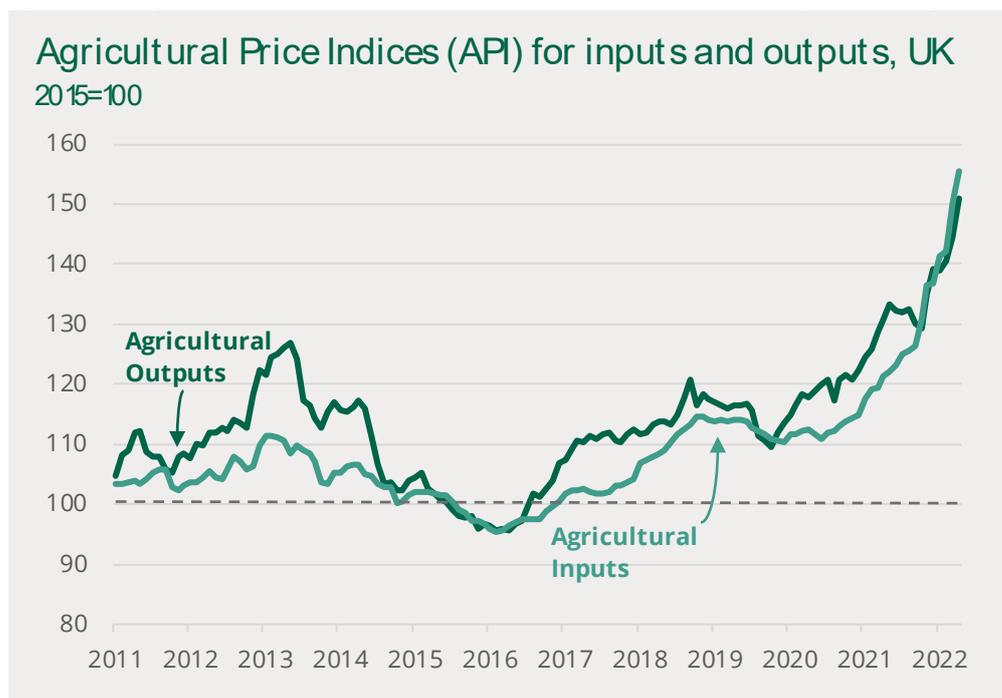


Source: Eurostat, [Price indices of agricultural products](#), API (2015-100)

The position in the UK

Defra publishes monthly data on UK agricultural prices, measured using the Agricultural Price Index (API).

This chart shows how agricultural prices have changed since 2011, relative to 2015 prices:



Source: DEFRA, [Latest agricultural price indices](#), API (2015 =100)

In the UK, the agricultural price indices (API) for inputs and outputs increased dramatically from the end of 2021 to the beginning of 2022. In April 2022, agricultural inputs not related to investment (i.e., energy, fertiliser) increased by 13.8% compared with December 2021. Over the same time period, agricultural outputs increased by 8.5%.

These increases build on the steady increases seen throughout 2021. Between April 2021 and April 2022, the average price of agricultural inputs increased by 28.4% and the average price of agricultural outputs increased by 15.7%.

The input price rises were driven by large increases in fertilisers and soil improvers (+40%), energy and lubricants (+33%) and animal feeding stuffs (+11%) between December 2021 and April 2022. Even greater increases were seen from April 2021 to April 2022 with a 150% increase for fertilisers and soil improvers, a 60% increase for energy and lubricants and an 18% increase for animal feeding stuffs.

The position on the rises in farm input costs in relation to the key inputs of fertiliser, feed prices, and energy is set out below, together with discussion on the impacts on labour supply.

4.2 Fertilisers

Before the Ukraine conflict, fertiliser supply was already under pressure: China had restricted fertiliser exports and a Canadian rail strike was

negatively affecting the productivity of the world's largest fertiliser producer.³⁴ Fertiliser costs were also volatile before the Ukraine crisis, in part due to a reliance on gas prices which had been rising.³⁵

In the UK, inorganic fertilisers are often imported: more details can be found in the [UK Food Security Report](#).³⁶ In 2021 the UK imported 266,000 tonnes of fertilisers from Russia; the fourth largest source and 8.0% of the total. Imports of fertiliser from Russia in the first four months of 2022 were 28% lower than in the same period in 2021. The UK imported no fertiliser from Russia in May 2022. There were no imports from Ukraine.³⁷

Many countries, including the UK, import fertilisers and their components from Ukraine and Russia. This [IFPRI blog](#) contains graphics that demonstrate global reliance on this trade.³⁸ The decline in exports from the two countries since the start of the war in Ukraine and resulting sanctions has led to the price of fertiliser to increase significantly across the world.

On 15 March 2022, the UK Government announced a range of trade sanctions against Russia and Belarus. This included a 35% increase in the tariff on a number of goods including fertilisers.³⁹ The Russian Government has banned fertiliser exports until the end of the year, although an article in the Guardian noted this was “largely symbolic”, as most of exports are through ports disrupted by the conflict in Ukraine.⁴⁰

Fertiliser prices

Fertiliser prices vary by type, but all main classes have increased substantially since mid-2020, with particularly rapid price increases from early 2021. Many fertilisers in June 2022 were around three times their level in January 2021.

The Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) [published](#) statistics on fertiliser prices from January 2017. The following chart shows the average price (in £/tonne) of fertiliser since 2017:

³⁴ The Guardian, [Fertiliser prices hit new highs as multiple problems affect global supplies](#), 21 March 2022

³⁵ DEFRA, [UK Food Security Report 2021](#), December 2021, p.120

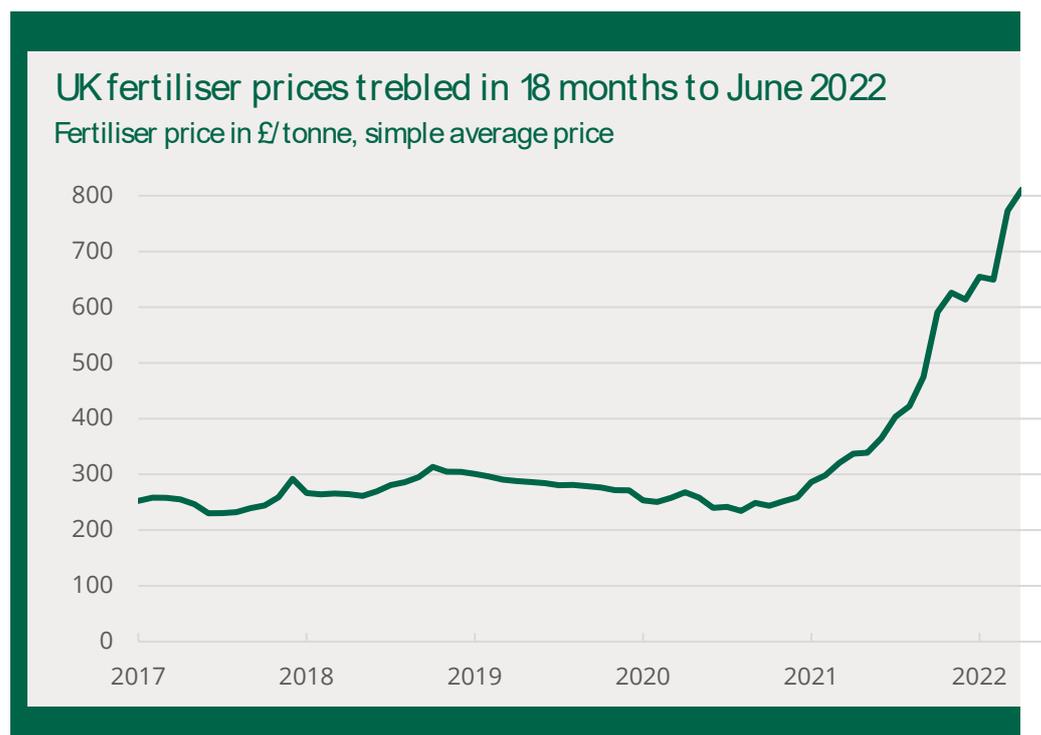
³⁶ DEFRA, [UK Food Security Report 2021](#), December 2021, p.123

³⁷ UK Trade Info, [Custom tables \(Harmonised System Commodity Code 31\)](#), Accessed 18 July 2022

³⁸ IFPRI blog, [How will Russia's invasion of Ukraine affect global food security?](#), 24 February 2022

³⁹ Department for International Trade, [UK announces new economic sanctions against Russia](#), 15 March 2022

⁴⁰ Financial Times, [Putin's war is a tragedy for the Russian people, too](#), 18 March 2022; The Guardian, [Fertiliser prices hit new highs as multiple problems affect global supplies](#), 21 March 2022



Source: [GB Fertiliser Prices](#), Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

Note: The average price of fertiliser shown is a simple average, calculated by obtaining the mean of all available prices each month for different fertiliser types. It is not weighted according to the relative amounts of each fertiliser sold by price or mass.

Since the end of 2020, the (simple) average price of fertiliser has risen from around £250/tonne to a peak of over £800/tonne in May 2022. This is a much faster increase in prices when compared to other agricultural inputs: Between December 2020 and April 2021 fertiliser prices trebled, whereas all other agricultural inputs increased in price by around 35%.⁴¹

Farmers face the prospect of higher prices for animal feed and fertiliser.⁴² This is likely to impact food prices, but the extent is unknown: agricultural businesses in the UK are often seen as the “price takers” and may absorb some or all of the hike in prices.⁴³

⁴¹ Defra: [Latest agricultural price indices](#) (June 2022)

⁴² Independent, [UK farmers face ‘existential crisis’ as Ukraine invasion hits grain, energy and fertiliser supplies](#), 8 March 2022

⁴³ The Conversation, [Russia’s war with Ukraine risks fresh pressure on fertiliser prices](#), 3 March 2022

Government response

On 18 March, when asked what it was doing to support businesses affected by shortages of fertiliser, the Government responded that it was in “regular contact with key industry figures” and was monitoring the stability of fertiliser supply chains.⁴⁴ Acknowledging the increase in fertiliser costs, the Government also stated that it was working with the UK’s main manufacturer to keep up domestic production. It was also setting up a group to identify long term solutions that “rely less on the price of gas”. The Defra Secretary of State noted however that most farms would have already purchased their fertiliser for the current growing season.⁴⁵

The AHDB agreed that arable farmers were “already covered for their fertiliser requirements this season” but noted that “there will be questions around how much of the fertiliser should be carried over to next season instead, to buffer from some of the market volatility”.⁴⁶

On 30 March, the Government [published a blog](#) outlining the support and guidance they were providing to farmers regarding fertilisers.

On 1 June, the Minister of State for Farming, Fisheries and Food Victoria Prentis said that [eligible farmers would receive payments in two instalments](#), half from the end of July and the rest from December 2022. She also said that Defra had created a fertiliser taskforce, where government and industry were “working together to help improve market confidence and provide farmers with the information they need to make business decisions on fertiliser use”.

The [Government published its food strategy](#) on 13 June 2022. This document refers to previous measures the Government has announced to “help farmers and food producers manage increased input costs, including a package on fertilisers”. The strategy says that the Government would “work with industry to develop plans to bolster resilience of critical inputs”, including fertilisers.

A House of Lords Library briefing on the [Rising cost of agricultural fertiliser and feed: Causes, impacts and government policy](#) was published on 22 June 2022 and provides more detail, including stakeholder comments.

⁴⁴ [PQ 138039 \[Fertilisers: Russia\], 18 March 2022](#)

⁴⁵ [HC Deb 10 March 2022 c 453](#)

⁴⁶ Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, [Blog: long shadow on markets from war in Ukraine](#), 10 March 2022

4.3 Feed prices

As discussed above, the cost of grains and other agricultural products in the UK could be indirectly impacted as other countries struggle to source produce from the conflict region, causing instability in global prices. This impacts animal feed costs. The cost of feeding livestock has risen considerably in the past six months, with many farmers dependent on feed prices set on a global market. Feed prices for livestock were stable in the first half of 2021, but increased by 18% between August 2021 and April 2022.⁴⁷

4.4 Energy costs

The Library briefing [The energy price crunch](#) (January 2022) explains some of the reasons for increasing energy prices before the Ukraine conflict. An important factor was the return of global gas demand as economies restarted after pandemic-related restrictions.⁴⁸ Supply has not been able to keep up with demand; for example, global liquified natural gas (LNG) production has been lower than normal due to several unexpected outages and delayed maintenance.⁴⁹

As a net importer, the UK is exposed to volatility in gas prices. There are some additional factors within the UK that have contributed to the high price. Low levels of wind, outages at nuclear plants, and a fire that has shut down a key electricity interconnector (that imports electricity from France) have all contributed to a need for greater use of gas power stations, which has added to demand.⁵⁰

International prices of gas and oil increased during the second half of 2021 largely due to supply not keeping pace with strong demand as economies came out of lockdown. Prices continued to increase in early 2022 as a build-up of Russian forces close to the border with Ukraine led to concerns about a possible invasion and disruption to supply.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022. On the day of the invasion, Brent crude prices exceeded \$100 a barrel for the first time in more than seven years. Gas prices in Europe increased by 50% on 24 February to \$4.40 /therm (around 11 p/kWh).⁵¹ Gas prices continued to increase rapidly up to early March. Oil prices increased more steadily to mid-May and have fallen somewhat since then. UK wholesale gas prices fell back in April and May

⁴⁷ Defra: [Latest agricultural price indices](#) (June 2022).

⁴⁸ The Times, [China, one cold winter, and the origins of Britain's fuel crisis](#), 7 October 2021

⁴⁹ IEA, [Statement on recent developments in natural gas and electricity markets](#), 21 September 2021

⁵⁰ Jillian Ambrose, [What caused the UK's energy crisis?](#) The Guardian, 21 September 2021

⁵¹ IEA, [Gas Market and Russian Supply](#) (accessed 4 March 2022)

partly due to the falling demand for gas at this time of the year and a 'glut' of gas in the UK. These are spot prices for immediate delivery and forward prices do not show the same downward trend.⁵²



Sources: Financial Times; HoC Library electronic holdings; nationalgrid.com [Prevailing View tool](#) (system average price)

Energy input costs for farms increased by 34% between January and April 2022. Farm motor fuel costs increased by 30% over the same period.⁵³ The impact on domestic energy prices is detailed in the Library briefing [Domestic energy prices](#) and on road fuel prices in [Petrol and diesel prices](#).

International oil crude price rises quickly led to higher diesel and gas oil prices. These increases were larger than the crude oil price rise due to an international shortage of refinery capacity and reduced imports of petroleum products from Russia.⁵⁴ Mid-June 2022 pump prices of diesel were around 190 pence per litre; a 43% increase on June 2021. Gas oil prices were around 120 pence per litre in June 2022 which was more than double its price in June 2021.⁵⁵

On 7 April 2022, the UK Government published [its British Energy Security Strategy](#). The strategy proposes to accelerate the UK towards a low-carbon, energy independent future. The Government recognised that “UK industrial electricity prices are higher than those of other countries” and set out the following actions to address this:

⁵² Sky News, [The surreal, but also real, problem of Britain's gas glut](#) (17 May 2022)

⁵³ Defra, [Latest agricultural price indices](#) (June 2022).

⁵⁴ See the Library briefing [Petrol and diesel prices](#) for more details.

⁵⁵ BEIS, [Monthly and annual prices of road fuels and petroleum products](#)

The government recognises that and will act to address this. We will extend the EII Compensation Scheme for a further 3 years, and intend to increase the aid intensity to up to 100% (1.5% of GVA). We have increased the overall budget limit for the scheme accordingly, but as is the case under the current scheme, if there is a risk of budget over-spend, we may choose to reduce the aid intensity.

We will also consider other measures to support business including increasing the renewable obligation exemption to 100%.⁵⁶

For more information, see the [Library briefing on the British Energy Security Strategy](#) (July 2022).

For information on the EU response on energy security following the Ukraine crisis see the [Library briefing on EU energy security: Implications for the UK](#). (May 2022).

4.5 Labour supply

As discussed in section 2.3 above, UK farmers and growers have found it challenging to recruit enough temporary workers to harvest crops and pick fruit and vegetables. The seasonal workers scheme was set up to enable businesses to recruit temporary workers from overseas.

Between the second quarter of 2020 and the end of April 2022, some 42,661 visas were issued under the Seasonal Worker scheme to support UK farming and food production needs for labour. Ukrainians have made up the overwhelming majority of temporary workers issued with a Seasonal Worker visa. Of the 29,631 visas issued under the Seasonal Worker Scheme in 2021, 67% (19,290) went to Ukrainians. This was followed by Russians with 2,278 visas (8%), Bulgarians (1,111), Belarussians (1,007), and Tajiks (980).⁵⁷

The quota for seasonal agricultural workers to be sponsored from all countries under the Seasonal Worker visa for 2022 is 30,000.⁵⁸

Government figures show that Ukrainians and Russians made up 43% (2,676) and 5% (341) respectively of the 6,618 people that came to the UK under the Seasonal Worker scheme in the first quarter of 2022.⁵⁹ The Russian invasion of Ukraine took place on 24 February 2022.⁶⁰ The Chart below shows seasonal worker visas issued to Ukrainian and Russian workers up to the end

⁵⁶ BEIS, [British energy security strategy policy paper](#), 7 April 2022

⁵⁷ Home Office, [Managed Migration Datasets](#)

⁵⁸ Home Office, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, [Industry given certainty around seasonal workers but told to focus on domestic workforce](#), December 2021

⁵⁹ Home Office, [Managed Migration Datasets](#)

⁶⁰ Gov.uk, [Prime Minister's address to the nation on the Russian invasion of Ukraine](#), 24 February 2022

of March 2022. More recent government figures for 2022 are not yet available.



Source: Home Office, [Managed migration datasets](#), Entry clearance visas

The adoption of martial law in Ukraine in response to the Russian invasion has prevented Ukrainian men of fighting age, defined as age 18 to 60, from leaving the country.⁶¹ Because government statistics for the Seasonal Worker visa are not broken down by gender, it is not possible to say how many Ukrainian seasonal workers are potentially affected by this decree.⁶²

In April 2022, the EFRA Committee’s report on [Labour Shortages in the Food and Farming Sector](#) stated that “there are potential effects of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and the ensuing war and associated sanctions, on the Seasonal Worker Scheme”.⁶³ In March 2022, George Eustice, the Environment Secretary, [also acknowledged](#) that “clearly those [Ukrainian] people aren’t going to come this year”.⁶⁴

The National Farmers’ Union (NFU) has concerns about potential labour shortages, releasing guidance for farmers in April 2022 on how to navigate

⁶¹ UK Visas and Immigration, [Country policy and information note: military service, Ukraine](#), Guidance, 7 July 2022

⁶² Home Office, [Managed Migration Datasets](#)

⁶³ Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, [Labour shortages in the food and farming sector Fourth Report of Session 2021–2](#), HC712, April 2022

⁶⁴ Judith Evans, [UK farms race to recruit harvest pickers as Ukrainians trapped by war](#) [online], The Financial Times, 22 March 2022

these issues. It acknowledged that the conflict “may mean that some businesses are unable to fulfil their contractual obligations”.⁶⁵

To replace Ukrainian and Russian seasonal workers, recruitment agencies have had to turn their attention to other labour markets. As the Financial Times and The Economist reported, recruitment agencies licensed to operate the Seasonal Worker scheme have said they are looking to recruit workers from central Asia and have again turned to Bulgarians and Romanians, among others.⁶⁶ Speaking at the Royal Highland Show in June 2022, Defra Secretary of State, George Eustice, said that the “physical recruitment of those sorts of numbers [the current quota of 30,000 seasonal workers] from multiple countries has proved a bit harder”.⁶⁷

Though seasonal workers may be recruited from other countries to make up for the decrease in those coming from Ukraine, some in the industry have voiced concerns that new workers could lack experience, which could slow crop harvests and food production down. They have also expressed concerns that the cost of training new workers could further add to pressures on food prices.⁶⁸

The Work Rights Centre, a charity supporting workers leaving precarious employment, has expressed concerns that recruiting seasonal workers from new labour markets could result in new risks for abuse and exploitation. In its report on [Seasonal Work After the War in Ukraine](#) published in June 2022, it makes a series of recommendations for enforcement agencies on how to address these risks.⁶⁹

Government response

The Home Office [announced](#) that the visas of Ukrainian seasonal workers would be extended until 31 December 2022. Visa holders would not need to apply for an extension themselves. Instead, the Home Office would liaise with their visa sponsors. This means that Ukrainians hired before the Russian invasion started will still be able to work for the same visa sponsor doing the same job until the end of the year.⁷⁰ At present, the Government [has said](#) it has no plans to extend the visas of Ukrainian seasonal workers beyond 31 December 2022.

⁶⁵ NFU News, [Ukraine crisis: Supply contract guidance](#), 12 April 2022

⁶⁶ Judith Evans, [UK farms race to recruit harvest pickers as Ukrainians trapped by war](#), The Financial Times [online], 22 March 2022; The Economist, [The war in Ukraine has caused a labour crunch on Britain's farms](#), The Economist [online], 5 May 2022

⁶⁷ Philip Case, [Ukraine war has hit farm labour recruitment, says Eustice](#), Farmers' Weekly [online], 27 June 2022

⁶⁸ Aine Quinn, [UK farmers look further afield to replace Ukrainian workers](#), Bloomberg [online], 18 June 2022

⁶⁹ Work Rights Centre, [Seasonal Work after the War in Ukraine](#), 18 June 2022

⁷⁰ UK Visas and Immigration and Home Office, [Ukrainian nationals in the UK](#), Guidance, 3 May 2022

Separately, the [Ukraine Extension Scheme](#) is open to any Ukrainian national (or their family members) with a valid UK visa, or one which expired on or after 1 January 2022. It gives up to three years' permission to live, work, study and access public funds in the UK. A Seasonal Worker visa holder could apply to switch to the Ukraine Extension Scheme.⁷¹ Successful applicants would no longer be restricted to doing seasonal agricultural work, however.

Government figures show that, as of 12 July 2022, 8,500 Ukrainians have been granted permission to stay in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme. An additional, 3,000 applications are currently awaiting conclusion.⁷² Data on what proportion of applicants to the Ukraine Extension Scheme originally came on a Seasonal Worker visa are not available.

4.6 Impact on the food manufacturing sector

As in the farming sector, the food manufacturing sector is experiencing pressures on its operations and costs because of the conflict in Ukraine. The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) [summarised the impact of the Ukraine crisis on food manufacturing](#):

- Availability of ingredients/raw materials: We have identified key ingredients and raw materials where trade flows have been most significantly impacted. The greatest concerns relate to the availability of sunflower oil and derived ingredients. There are also concerns relating to rapeseed oil, white fish, herb oils, packaging raw materials and wider impacts on global cereals markets.
- Product labelling requirements: 80% of global sunflower oil exports originate from Ukraine or Russia and many manufacturers and supply volatilities have meant that manufacturers have had to switch to alternative vegetable oils to maintain food production. This has had implications for information included on product labels. Based on our work with Government, pragmatic enforcement has been advised, which allows Local Authorities to grant temporary derogations from label changes when sunflower oil is substituted with one of the following five risk assessed refined vegetable oils: rapeseed, palm, soybean, coconut and corn.
- Energy/fuel issues: Manufacturers are extremely concerned about further large price increases to already high energy and fuel costs. This

⁷¹ UK Visas and Immigration and Home Office, [Apply to stay in the UK under the Ukraine Extension Scheme](#), Guidance, 13 June 2022

⁷² Home Office and UK Visas and Immigration, [Ukraine Family Scheme, Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme \(Homes for Ukraine\) and Ukraine Extension Scheme visa data](#), Transparency data, 14 July 2022

presents a major challenge for many producers, especially high energy using sectors of our industry.⁷³

In relation to energy costs, the FDF highlighted that:

As many food and drink production processes are energy-intensive, this shock leaves the food and drink manufacturers particularly vulnerable. An ONS survey found that 63% of the food and drink businesses (including manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers) reported in March that energy prices had already had an impact on production and/ or supply. That compares to 38% across all UK sectors.⁷⁴

The FDF said in March 2022 that:

The war in Ukraine is likely, however, to negatively impact our businesses' trading ambitions, at least in the near term, with supply chains and trade routes disrupted. That underscores the need for business and government to work closely together, ensuring that companies can develop new markets and seize new opportunities in a difficult economic environment, to underpin their resilience.⁷⁵

⁷³ Food and Drink Federation, [Ukraine crisis](#), accessed 14 July 2022

⁷⁴ Food and Drink Federation, [Food prices on the rise again](#), 13 April 2022

⁷⁵ Food and Drink Federation, [UK food and drink firms seek new trade opportunities but shadow of Ukraine looms](#), 18 March 2022

5 UK food security and prices

5.1 Impact on UK food security

Defra does not expect any significant impact on UK food supply, but has acknowledged the likelihood of further food price increases due to trade disruption and fertiliser supply issues.⁷⁶ This echoes the [assessment by the European Commission](#) [pdf] that the main impact in EU countries will be on food prices rather than food availability.⁷⁷

On 22 March, in response to a PQ, the Government said that the UK's dependency on food from Eastern Europe was "very low", and as a result Defra did "not expect any significant direct impact of this conflict on UK food supply."

Grains and cereals

As discussed above, Ukraine and Russia are key exporters of grains and cereals and there have been global impacts on food security because of disruptions to exports from these two countries. In March, Ukraine announced a ban on export of certain agricultural products, including wheat, subject to certain exceptions.⁷⁸ In addition, on 15 March, the UK Government announced a range of trade sanctions against Russia and Belarus. This included a 35% increase in the tariff on several goods including cereals.⁷⁹

However, in most of the last three decades the UK has been self-sufficient in cereals and has exported more than it imported. Since 2017 production has been below demand and the UK has been a net importer of cereals.⁸⁰ In 2021, 14% of demand was met by net imports.⁸¹

In 2019 and 2020 the UK imported more cereals by mass from Ukraine than from any other single country. In 2021 it was the third largest source with 685,000 tonnes or 12.4% of UK cereal imports. In the first five months of

⁷⁶ Defra, [Environment Secretary attends G7 Agriculture Ministerial meeting on Ukraine and food security](#), 11 March 2022; Farmers' Guardian, [Food security under scrutiny as Ukraine situation escalates](#), 10 March 2022

⁷⁷ European Parliament, [Russia's war on Ukraine: Impact on food security and EU response](#), April 2022

⁷⁸ Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, [Government amid martial law has established new rules for the export of a number of agricultural goods](#), 8 March 2022

⁷⁹ Department for International Trade, [UK announces new economic sanctions against Russia](#), 15 March 2022

⁸⁰ Gross imports are greater than gross exports

⁸¹ Defra, [Agriculture in the UK 2021 \(table 7.1\)](#), 14 July 2022

2022 the UK imports of cereals from Ukraine were almost 50% less than in the same period in 2021. In 2021 Russia accounted for less than 1% of UK cereal imports.⁸²

The Government said that the UK produced 14m tonnes of wheat in 2021, close to the volume of wheat the UK consumes. It added that the UK has stocks of 1.7m tonnes and that it was possible to import cereals from alternative sources.⁸³ Between 2018 and 2020, domestic wheat production was equivalent to between 86% and 99% of UK consumption,⁸⁴ so, as stated in the 2021 UK Food Security Report, the UK is “largely self-sufficient” in grain production. UK resilience is also “supported by trading with a variety of external partners”.⁸⁵ The Government reiterated this point during [oral questions on Food Prices](#) on 10 March 2022.

5.2 Impact on UK food prices

In response to the supply chain issues outlined above, global and UK food prices have been rising. It is not possible to precisely determine the direct impacts of the war in Ukraine on food prices, as they are dependent on a range of interrelated factors. However, it has caused food prices in international markets to rise which has fed through to rising food prices in the shops.

The ONS publish monthly data on UK food prices, measured using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).⁸⁶ This chart shows how food prices have changed since 2010, relative to 2015 prices:

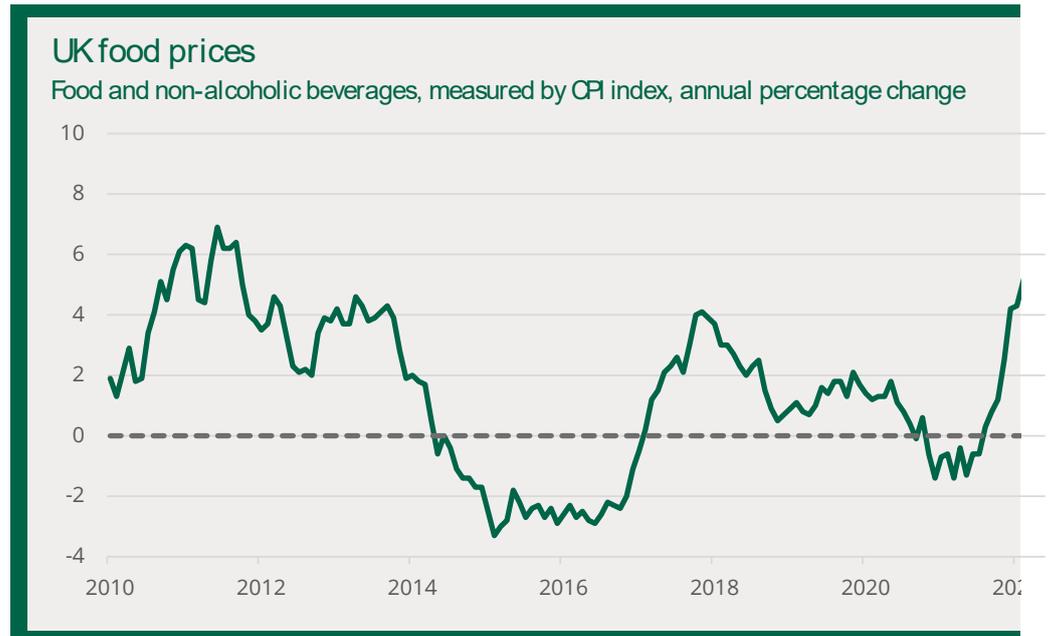
⁸² UK Trade Info, [Custom tables \(Harmonised System Commodity Code 10\)](#), Accessed 18 July 2022

⁸³ [PQ 139529 \[Wheat\], 22 March 2022](#)

⁸⁴ DEFRA, [Food Security Report 2021](#), Chart 2.1.6b

⁸⁵ DEFRA, [UK Food Security Report 2021](#), December 2021, p.96, pp98-99

⁸⁶ The Consumer Price Index measures the change in price in a standard basket of goods. The CPI index is weighted according to the relative quantity of goods purchased by the average consumer. Constituent goods and weightings are frequently updated to reflect consumers’ purchasing habits, meaning the CPI is an accurate measure of price changes over time.

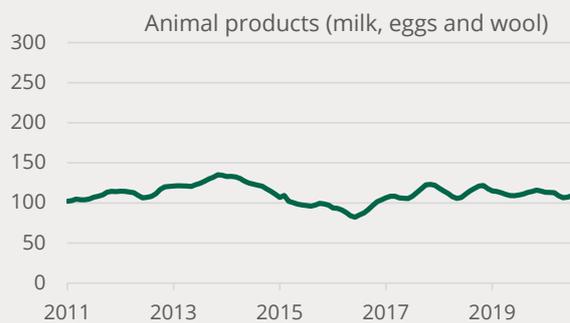
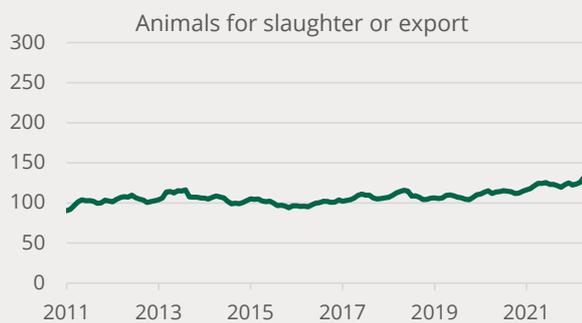
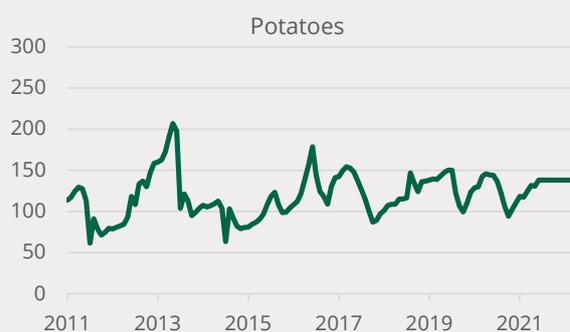
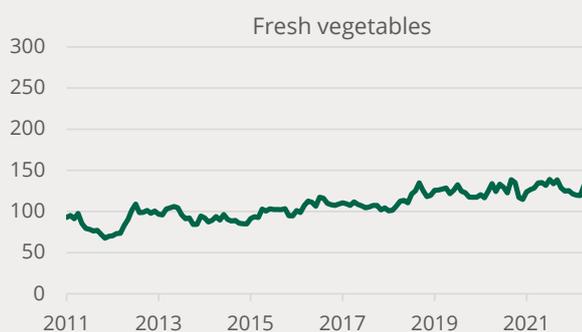
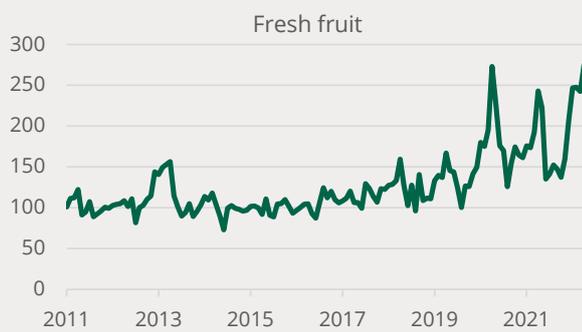


Source: [CPI Annual Rate, Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages](#), ONS.

Food prices have sharply increased since the end of 2021, faster than their recent peak in 2013. Food price inflation was 8.6% in the year to May 2022. The only periods since the late 1980s when they were rising faster were in 1990 and late 2008/early 2009. Prices fell slightly during the coronavirus pandemic. It is not possible to establish the extent to which rising food prices are caused by higher fertiliser prices.

Defra publishes data on the world prices of major food commodities. This chart shows the change in prices since 2011 for six major food groups. The data is indexed, comparing prices now with average prices in 2015.

UK commodity prices Indexed, average 2015 prices = 100



Source: Defra: [Latest agricultural price indices](#) (June 2022).

Fresh fruit prices have seen the greatest increase across the decade and potatoes have shown the greatest seasonal volatility. Prices for animals and animal products, as well as vegetables, have stayed relatively stable, increasing slowly in price over the decade. All commodities have shown price increases over the last decade.

Cereal prices have increased during the last year and now exceed their previous highest price in 2013. Cereal markets will be vulnerable to further price increases, due to the high proportion of the commodity grown in Ukraine and Russia, as well as the rise in the cost of fertilisers.

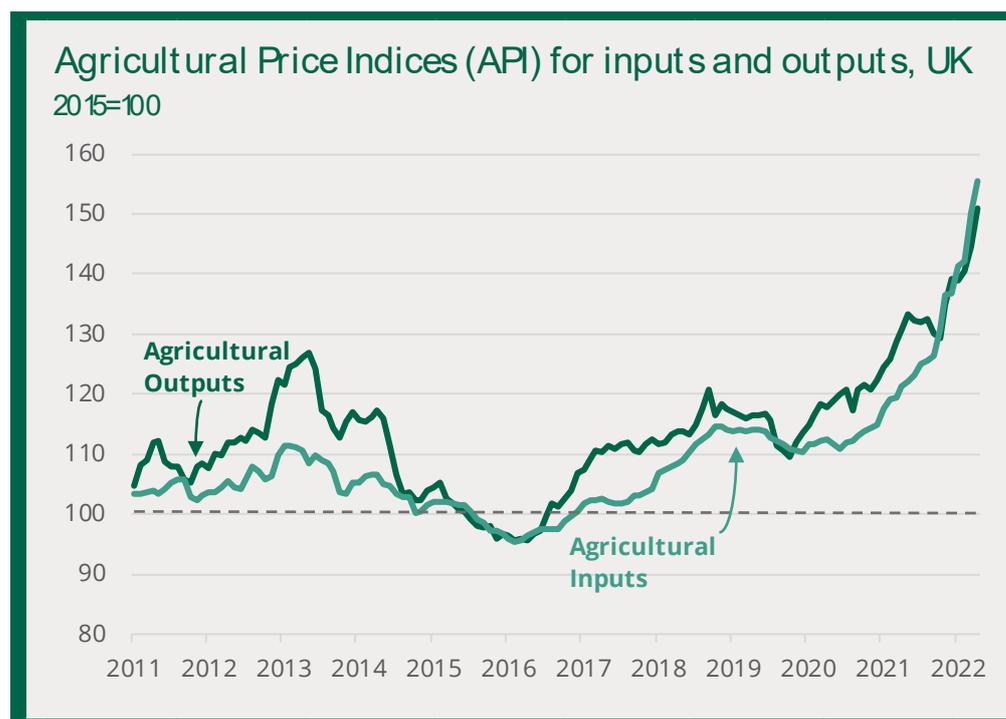
Rising food prices particularly affect low-income households, because these households spend a larger proportion of income than average on groceries.

The Library briefing [Rising cost of living in the UK](#) provides more analysis of how food prices are driving inflation and how low-income households are particularly affected by rising prices.

The Library briefing [Food poverty: Households, food banks and free school meals](#) provides more information on household food insecurity.

5.3 Are farmers and food producers benefitting from higher shop prices?

Farmers have seen significant price rises in key inputs and, for consumers, prices have risen for many food products. However, farmers are not necessarily receiving these increases from processors and retailers. These differences can be seen in the chart that shows how the Agricultural Price Indices (API) for agricultural inputs start to overtake the API for agricultural outputs in October 2021.



Source: DEFRA, [Latest agricultural price indices](#), API (2015 =100)

Despite rising prices in the shops, farmers are concerned that farm gate prices are not keeping pace with rising input costs. Farm gate prices are the price for the sale of farm produce direct from the producer. Analysis of the increase in the prices of agricultural inputs is in section 4.1 'Increases in input costs'.

The NFU commissioned a study on the rising costs of production from Promar International.⁸⁷ The April 2022 report shows that fruit and vegetable growers are facing inflation rates of up to 24%. The key drivers of inflation for growers are energy and fertiliser. Labour continues to be the biggest cost for businesses, representing 30-70% of turnover.

Based on research carried out between February and March 2022, Promar warns that these rapidly rising costs could lead to:

- a 10% drop in production;
- produce being left unharvested; and
- in a worst-case scenario, producers forced out of the sector altogether.⁸⁸

Horticulture businesses are warning they may not be able to continue production if inflationary pressures continue. An [NFU spokesman said](#):

While growers are doing everything they can to reduce their overheads, some are experiencing double or even triple digit inflation for key products like fertiliser and energy. If this pressure continues, it will be simply unsustainable for some businesses to continue as they are.⁸⁹

The NFU has called on the Government to support farmers in the continued production of food for consumers at affordable prices. The NFU said it had written to the government to call for urgent action to help UK farmers produce enough food to keep supermarkets stocked and affordable. It said that “the government must act now, with a clear signal that food security is a priority for the nation”.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ [NFU, New report shows impacts of rising costs on growers, 25 April 2022](#)

⁸⁸ [NFU, New report shows impacts of rising costs on growers, 25 April 2022](#)

⁸⁹ As above

⁹⁰ BBC News, [Farmers warn Ukraine war will hit UK food prices - BBC News](#)

6

Government food strategy

In March, various agricultural stakeholders in the UK criticised the “blasé” attitude of the UK Government to the Ukraine food insecurity crisis, highlighting that food supply is likely to be affected by rising global food prices despite domestic production.⁹¹ Northern Ireland Agriculture Minister, Edwin Poots, sent a [letter to the Secretary of State](#), highlighting various supply chain issues and calling for government intervention to help.

The Government published a [food strategy for England](#) on 13 June 2022. This response to the Government-commissioned National Food Strategy was originally intended to be a White Paper. However, on 22 May [the Telegraph reported](#) that “the plans were due to be unveiled earlier this year but were delayed because of the invasion [of Ukraine] and the paper will now place increased emphasis on food security”.

[According to the Government](#), “the strategy comes at a time of significant increases in food prices, largely because of energy prices and exacerbated by events in Ukraine, which is very challenging for people across the country”. In relation to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the Government outlined actions taken so far and further steps it would take:

- The Government has set out measures to help farmers and food producers manage increased input costs, including a package on fertilisers. Going forward, we will engage with industry to understand and address barriers to uptake of risk management or other farming insurance products, recognising that effective business planning is a key enabler of resilience at the individual farm level.
- We have also helped businesses to manage vegetable oil substitution and access more diverse supply chains where there are shortages of ingredients.
- We will work with industry to develop plans to bolster resilience of critical inputs such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and fertiliser. This will include a specific long-term plan on CO₂ in 2022 and a focus on pioneering more organic-based fertilisers, to ensure continued certainty and availability for all inputs which underpin our food production.
- As well as strengthening the resilience of domestic supply chains, we will continue to work with international partners to support worldwide action to mitigate the impacts of food crises on the most vulnerable countries and people. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has escalated the global food security crisis, by pushing up wheat, maize and fertiliser

⁹¹ [Farmers slam Defra's blasé food security statement](#), Farmers’ Guardian, 16 March 2022 [available via Nexis News]

prices. We produce 88% of the wheat that we need domestically, with the rest coming predominantly from Canada. However, we are working with like-minded countries around the world to ensure that we keep trade flowing and keep food prices down.⁹²

The Government food strategy included a commitment to support farmers to “broadly maintain” domestic food production. It made the following commitments on labour:

To address near term need, the government will release the additional provision of 10,000 visas under the Seasonal Worker Visa Route, including 2,000 for the poultry sector. This means that in total 40,000 visas will be made available for seasonal workers in 2022, providing labour for food businesses across the UK. We will also work with industry to support the upcoming Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) review of the Shortage Occupation List. In addition, we will commission an independent review to assess and ensure the quantity and quality of the food sector workforce. The review will encompass the roles of automation, domestic employment and migration routes.⁹³

6.1 Reactions to the food strategy

Following the publication of the Government food strategy, Henry Dimbleby, who led the National Food Strategy, said that [the policy paper was not detailed enough to be called a strategy](#), though had implemented more than 50% of the recommendations he highlighted. [Farmers Weekly](#) reported that:

Mr Dimbleby said there were “big gaps” in the contents of the strategy. The most interesting part was the commitment to produce a land use framework next year, he said, which was “fundamental” to the future policy development of ELM.

NFU President Minette Batters [said that](#):

The National Food Strategy represents a clear milestone with the government recognising the importance of domestic food production, maintaining our productive capacity and growing more food in this country, particularly at a time when the war in Ukraine has focused attention on the importance and fragility of our global food security. Food production will always be core to a nation’s resilience and I’m pleased the government has recognised this.

[Farmers Weekly reported](#) that “Mrs Batters said the strategy also contained good commitments on growing more of our own fruit and vegetables and sourcing more local food in the public food sector”. Farmers Weekly added “the question now was what this would all mean for small family farmers and how the commitment on food production would change the

⁹² Defra, [Government food strategy policy paper](#), 13 June 2022

⁹³ Defra, [Government food strategy policy paper](#), 13 June 2022

government's thinking on its Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme".

The [Country Land and Business Association \(CLA\)](#) stated that "the Government Food Strategy appears to have come up short, disappointing almost all stakeholders who expected more".

Anna Taylor, Executive Director of the Food Foundation and Chief Independent Adviser to Henry Dimbleby for the development of the National Food Strategy, [stated](#) that:

Today's Food Strategy shows that no one in leadership in government appears to have really grasped the scale and urgency of the challenges posed to our health and our planet by the food system.

What's more, these challenges are growing exponentially with the cost of living crisis. Despite its name, the whole document is lacking a strategy to transition the food system towards delivering good food which is accessible to everyone.

And without a commitment to a new Food Bill, many of the commendable commitments made are in reality toothless. It is a feeble interpretation of Henry Dimbleby's recommendations, which will not be sufficient to drive the long-term change that we know is so urgently needed.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ Food Foundation, [Our reaction to the Government's food strategy](#), 13 June 2022

7 Parliamentary material

7.1 Debates

Westminster Hall debate: Cost of Living: Support for Farmers

HC Deb July 2022 | Vol 718 c54WH-

Lords Question for Short Debate: Agricultural Fertiliser and Feed: Rising Costs

HL Deb 29 June 2022 | Vol 823 Col 715-

Commons debate: Cost of Living and Food Insecurity

HC Deb 8 February 2022 | Vol 708 c823-

7.2 PQs

Ukraine: Cereals

Asked by: Lord Selkirk of Douglas

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effects of the Russian blockade of exports of grain from Ukraine; in particular, the impact on food supply and food security in developing countries; and what plans they have to use the Official Development Assistance budget, and the resources of the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, to mitigate these effects.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The threat to global food security from Russia's blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports is huge. Putin's illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is exacerbating price rises in commodity markets. 49 million people are already living a step away from famine and almost 860,000 people are estimated to be in famine-like conditions.

Over the next 3 years, we will direct £3 billion to the most vulnerable countries and people to help them recover from crises. We welcome the World Bank's announcement of \$30 billion to address food insecurity globally over the next 15 months, which responds to the UK's calls for the

Bank to mobilise funding to tackle the growing crisis. The UK has also committed another £10 million to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to build resilience in agriculture and food security in the poorest countries, bringing our total contribution to £186 million.

HL Deb 30 Jun 2022 | PQ HL1060

Agriculture: EU Countries

Asked by: MacNeil, Angus Brendan

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of recent measures the EU has taken to support its agricultural sector during the conflict in Ukraine on the competitiveness of (a) farmers and (b) fertiliser manufacturers in the UK.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK is working with G7 and other partners in multilateral I such as the World Trade Organization, to monitor and address global food security issues, focusing on the ongoing benefits of open markets, and working together to ensure that sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious food continues to be available and accessible to all. We are aware that other countries have put various measures in place to support their agricultural sectors. We are monitoring developments and applying our own measures in the UK.

The Secretary of State recently announced a range of measures in support of the current situation, such as delaying changes to the use of urea fertiliser to help farmers manage their costs and improving statutory guidance for use of slurry. On 31 March I hosted the first meeting of the Fertiliser Taskforce with key industry bodies to discuss potential mitigations to the challenges which global supply pressures are causing. The second Taskforce meeting occurred on 18 May, hosted by Minister Churchill. Ministers will continue to meet with key industry bodies for further Fertiliser Taskforce sessions in the coming months, to help identify and mitigate potential risks.

In addition, the 2022 Basic Payment Scheme payment will be made in two instalments to give farmers an advance injection of cash. Farmers with eligible applications will receive half of their payment from the end of July, and the rest from December. By doing this, the Government intends to inject cash into farm businesses, helping them to make business decisions sooner, with more confidence. Leaving the EU has given us flexibility to introduce this measure. In the days of the EU this would never have been possible due to the way audits worked and the need to enforce the three crop rule during the summer.

We continue to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real-time intelligence.

HC Deb 27 June 2022 | PQ 19591

Wheat: Prices

Asked by: Shannon, Jim

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help tackle the rise in wheat prices relating to trade.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Most cereals are internationally traded commodities. As a matter of course, supply chains are dynamic and responsive to global market developments in price and availability, whether those developments are driven by the weather or other global factors.

We continue to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real-time intelligence and to identify where mitigations are available.

Government departments across Whitehall are working hard to find ways to resume the export of grain from Ukraine and to the countries that desperately need it. We also continue to engage with international partners in the G20 Agricultural Market Information System, the WTO and the International Grains Council to build consensus on the importance of keeping markets open and facilitate smooth functioning of the global food trade.

HC Deb 23 June 2022 | PQ 14488

Agriculture: Costs

Asked by: Zeichner, Daniel

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of increases in the cost of (a) animal feed, (b) fertilisers and (c) fuel on (i) the agricultural sector and (ii) food prices.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The turbulence of the market in light of the invasion of Ukraine, and the global spike in oil and gas prices, has brought into focus again the importance of a resilient global supply chain and the importance to our national resilience of having strong domestic food production. In the UK, we have a high degree of food security. We are largely self-sufficient in cereal production, growing 88% of all the cereals that we need. We are 86% self-sufficient in beef and fully self-sufficient in liquid milk, and we produce more lamb than we consume. We are also close to 100% self-sufficient in poultry. Sectors such as soft fruit have seen a trend towards greater self-sufficiency in recent years because of the extended UK season.

Farmers are however facing increased input costs including for fertiliser, feed and fuel. I have already set out measures to support farmers and growers in England ahead of the coming growing season. Those measures are not a silver bullet, but they will help farmers to manage some of their input costs from fertilisers. We continue to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real time intelligence.

As a result of those rising input costs, there are of course also some pressures on households, predominantly as a result of energy costs. There have also been some rises in food prices in recent months, although the ferocity of retail competition means that price pressures have been contained on certain product lines.

In March, overall food prices rose by 0.2%; the price of fruit actually fell in March by 1.2%. In April, however, food prices rose by 1.5%, which is a faster rise than we have seen in some years. If we look at the price of specific categories of food, in April, bread and cereals rose by 2.2%; sugar, jams and syrups rose by 2%; fish rose by 2%; meat rose by 1.9%; vegetables, including potatoes, rose at a lower level of 1.3%; fruit remained broadly stable; and oils and fats decreased slightly by 1.1%.

The single most important measure of household food security and the affordability of food remains the household food survey that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has run for many decades. That shows that, among the poorest 20% of households, the amount spent on food consumption was relatively stable at around 16% of household income between 2008 and 2016. It then fell slightly to 14.5%, but with the recent price pressures, we can expect it to return to those higher levels of around 16% in the year ahead.

We are monitoring the situation. The Government have put in place an unprecedented package of support to help those who need it. That includes

targeted cost of living support for households most in need through the household support fund, where the Government are providing an additional £500 million to help households with the cost of essentials.

HC Deb 17 June 2022 | PQ 9905

Food Security

Asked by: Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton (Con)

The most pressing food security issue facing the United Kingdom at the moment is the inability of Ukraine to export its grain to the West. I ask my noble friend: what assessment have the Government made as to the challenge that this will present us and the West? Also, how do the Government intend to mitigate this problem?

Answered by: Lord Benyon (Con)

It is having an enormous effect on the global cost of agricultural production. The Government are working internationally with organisations such as the World Bank, which has invested \$180 billion in trying to make sure that the countries that are going to be deprived of grain as a result of the Ukraine war are supported. In this country, we are largely self-sufficient in grain, and what we do import comes from countries such as Canada. But my noble friend is entirely right to point this out to make sure that we are working with the international community: first of all, to get the grain out of Ukraine; and, secondly, to support the countries that are going to be affected, in a devastating way, by the shortages that arise from this crisis.

HL Deb 13 June 2022 | Vol 822 c1351

Ukraine: Exports

Asked by: Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they are giving to create a safe sea channel for (1) agricultural, and (2) other exports, from Ukraine to the outside world, using such military force as may be necessary.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Department: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Russia's war against Ukraine is making food insecurity an issue for people everywhere, in particular for the poorest and most vulnerable. Russia's blockage of Ukrainian ports and destruction of civilian infrastructure has further exacerbated the dysfunctionality of in global agricultural supply chains and food systems. President Zelenskyy has called on the international community to take immediate steps to end the Russian blockade and has

been followed by repeated calls from the World Food Programme for Russia to allow the re-opening of the ports at Odesa and allow food to flow freely. The UK is working with Ukraine and international partners to find ways, whether by sea or overland, to re-start the export of grain from Ukraine and to the countries that desperately need it. The focus of this effort is on agricultural exports, though it is possible the establishment of a corridor would allow other products to reach global markets. In addition, the UK led a statement on food security at the WTO, supported by nearly 60 countries, committing signatories to keeping their food and agricultural markets open, predictable and transparent by not imposing unjustified trade restrictive measures on agricultural and agri-food products.

HL Deb 26 May 2022 | PQ HL201

Food Supply

Asked by: Sobel, Alex

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the impact of the war in Ukraine on the UK's food supply chain.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Our food import dependency on the Eastern Europe region is very low. We do not expect any significant direct impact on overall UK food supply as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.

We are, however, working closely with the food and feed industry to understand the impacts of the situation in Ukraine on sunflower seed, oil or sunseed meal supplies, while the Food Standards Agency has informed consumers that refined rapeseed oil, palm oil, coconut oil and soyabean oil may start to replace sunflower oil in some products.

We speak regularly with food industry figures, who remain confident in the food supply chain. We continue to keep the market situation under review through the UK Agriculture Market Monitoring Group, which monitors UK agricultural markets including price, supply, inputs, trade and recent developments. We have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real time intelligence.

HC Deb 20 May 2022 | PQ 1321

Agriculture: Land Use

Asked by: McCarthy, Kerry

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on (a) the recommendations on land use in the National Food Strategy and (b) the allocation of land within the planning system for food growing and farming.

Answering Member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

(a) The Food Strategy White Paper will set out Government's ambition for the food system: to support exceptional British food and drink producers, and to protect and enhance the nation's health and the natural environment for generations to come. We are working closely with other Government Departments to consider the evidence of Henry Dimbleby's independent review, which has made a significant contribution to our work on land use change and land management.

We are working closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Secretaries of State have regular discussions about a range of issues including land use, planning and food production. Given ongoing wider circumstances we are postponing publication of the Food Strategy until after the pre-election period for the local elections.

b) The Government recognises the importance of food production and has set out a legal obligation to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years, set out in December 2021's first UK Food Security Report. It recognised the contribution made by British farmers to our resilience, and the importance of strong domestic production to our food security. This report will serve as an evidence base for future policy work.

In many parts of England, using land for food and agriculture will not specifically require planning permission. However, our National Planning Policy Framework is clear that food production and farming should be recognised to ensure that sustainable development is achieved, including requiring local authorities to reference the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The Framework is also clear that local authorities should encourage efficient use of land and acknowledges the importance of undeveloped land for food production.

HC Deb 28 March 2022 | PQ 144855

Fertilisers

Asked by: Kawczynski, Daniel

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to safeguard British production of fertilizer for food production.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK sources fertiliser from a wide range of countries and also produces fertiliser such as ammonium nitrate domestically. The situation and impacts on farmers in particular, and industry more widely, from current high fertiliser prices, are being monitored closely.

There are nutrient management techniques and technologies that can be used alongside fertiliser products that help the efficacy of fertilisers and help maintain high yield and good quality produce. Support in the form of guidance from fertiliser suppliers and agricultural organisations such as National Farmers Union can be found from various public sources. Defra is aware that AHDB have published many helpful public pieces of guidance, advice and webinar recordings on mitigating high fertiliser prices.

Defra is in regular contact with key industry figures including the National Farmers Union, fertiliser producers and importers, and the key sector representative body for fertilisers, the Agricultural Industries Confederation. We are continuing to monitor the security and stability of fertiliser and other supply chains, and working closely with colleagues across Government and devolved administrations as well as industry figures to share knowledge and discuss all options available to tackle these issues. This will help inform how Defra and other industry bodies can best support farmers.

Defra is committed to promoting the use of less environmentally damaging fertilisers and better nutrient use efficiency. The current shortage of inorganic fertilisers provides an opportunity for farmers to continue exploring increasing their use of environmentally sustainable products and more efficient nutrient management methods.

In the short term, farmers are paying more for their fertiliser and must pass that cost on through the produce they sell. However, as the Secretary of State explained to the NFU conference in February, those increased costs will cause some farmers to use less fertiliser, some to use more nitrogen fixing cover crops as part of their rotation and some to seek to substitute at least a portion of their manufactured fertilisers with organic manures as a substitute. Many of the challenges we face in agriculture will require a fusion of the best new technology available to us with a rediscovery of some of the conventional principles of good farm husbandry. It is important that we keep our minds open to creative solutions.

HC Deb 28 March 2022 | PQ 141161

Food Supply

Asked by: Redwood, John

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to help strengthen national resilience by increasing domestic food production in the UK.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the Covid-19 response. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year. These figures have changed little over the last 20 years.

Strong domestic food production is an important factor in our food security. The UK enjoys considerable self-sufficiency in food, with production to supply ratios of nearly 100 percent in poultry, carrots and swedes, and we also produce 88% of all the cereals that we need. In addition, UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply. The Government is also supporting farmers in England to become more efficient and has recently awarded grants of £48.5 million through the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, helping boost productivity at this critical time.

Recognising the importance of food production, the Government has set out a legal obligation on the Government to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years. The first UK Food Security Report was published in December 2021. It recognised the contribution made by British farmers to our resilience, and the importance of strong domestic production to our food security. This report will serve as an evidence base for future policy work.

HC Deb 25 March 2022 | PQ 141110

Food Poverty

Asked by: Maskell, Rachael

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will set out a new food poverty strategy in the context of significant increases in the cost of living.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government Food Strategy will be published later this year. This will build on existing work across Government and identify new opportunities to make the food system healthier, more sustainable, more resilient and more accessible. The strategy aims to create a food system that provides choice and access to high quality, nutritious products that support healthy and sustainable diets for all.

Tackling poverty in all forms is a key priority for this Government. We are providing support worth around £12 billion this financial year and next to help families with the cost of living.

HC Deb 24 March 2022 | PQ 136595

Fertilisers

Asked by: Kawczynski, Daniel

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an estimate of the total amount of fertilizer used in Britain and produced in British plants as a percentage of total consumption in (a) 2018 and (b) 2021.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Of the 3.98 million tonnes of inorganic mineral fertiliser used in Britain in 2018 approximately 40% of this was produced domestically. This amounted to approximately 1.5 million tonnes primarily of ammonium nitrate. Regarding 2021 figures we don't yet have sight of the related British Survey Fertiliser Practice which outlines the types, amounts and how fertiliser is used across Britain for that year as these are usually released in June or July.

HC Deb 21 March 2022 | PQ 141162

Food Supply

Asked by: Crosbie, Virginia

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what estimate he has made of the acres of grassland and arable land that will be required to sustainably feed the projected population of the UK over the next (a) 10, (b) 25 and (c) 50 years.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK's high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, including strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year, and these figures have changed little over the last 20 years. In addition, the UK has nearly 100% sufficiency in poultry, carrots, and swedes.

Recognising the importance of food production, the Government made a commitment to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years. The first UK Food Security Report was published in December 2021. It recognised the contribution made by British farmers to our resilience, and the importance of strong domestic production to our food security. This report will serve as an evidence base for future policy work.

The Food Strategy White Paper will set out Government's ambition and priorities for the food system – to support our exceptional British food and drink producers, and to protect and enhance the nation's health and the natural environment for generations to come. The Government will consider the evidence of Henry Dimbleby's independent review throughout the development of Food Strategy. Given ongoing wider circumstances we are postponing publication of the food strategy until after the pre-election period for the local elections.

HC Deb 18 March 2022 | PQ 140588

Food Supply

Asked by: Smith, Henry

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of plant-based foods as an alternative to meat-based products in the context of the forthcoming Food Strategy White Paper.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government gathers and coordinates data and statistics to monitor food purchasing and eating habits to understand consumption trends. This includes the National Diet and Nutrition Survey, designed to collect detailed, quantitative information on the food consumption, nutrient intake and nutritional status of the general population in the UK and the Food Family Survey with detailed statistical information on purchased quantities, expenditure and nutrient intakes by UK households.

The Government's advice on consumption and diet is set out in the Eatwell Guide - which provides advice on how to obtain a balance of healthier and more sustainable food and includes recommendations such as to have a diet that includes more fibre, fruit and vegetables.

HC Deb 17 March 2022 | PQ 133988

Food: Production

Asked by: Anderson, Stuart

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps her Department is taking to encourage self-sufficiency in food production.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The UK has a highly resilient food supply chain, as demonstrated throughout the COVID-19 response. Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources; strong domestic production as well as imports through stable trade routes. We produce 60% of all the food we need, and 74% of food which we can grow or rear in the UK for all or part of the year, and these figures have changed little over the last 20 years.

Strong domestic food production supports our food security. The UK enjoys considerable self-sufficiency in food, with nearly 100 percent sufficiency in poultry, carrots and swedes. 88% of cereals consumed in the UK in 2020 were produced domestically.

In addition, UK consumers have access through international trade to food products that cannot be produced here, or at least not on a year-round basis. This supplements domestic production, and also ensures that any disruption from risks such as adverse weather or disease does not affect the UK's overall security of supply.

Recognising the importance of food production, the Government has set out a legal obligation on the Government to produce an assessment of our food security at least once every three years. The first UK Food Security Report was published in December 2021. It recognised the contribution made by British farmers to our resilience, and the importance of strong domestic

production to our food security. This report will serve as an evidence base for future policy work.

HC Deb 14 March 2022 | PQ 134087

Food Prices

Asked by: Kate Osborne

The cost of living is rocketing and the price of food has risen by 3.9% year on year. Food banks such as Hebburn Helps and Bede's Helping Hands in my constituency tell me that they are as busy as ever, as more and more people are being driven into poverty, having to choose between eating and heating. Does the Minister agree that the time has now come for the Chancellor to commit to ending food poverty in the UK by including in his forthcoming spring statement all the measures set out in the "Right to Food" campaign of my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool, West Derby (Ian Byrne) to achieve the permanent eradication of hunger in the UK?

Answered by: George Eustice | Department: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The hon. Lady will be aware that the Government have put in place a number of measures to help households, particularly with the sharp increase in energy costs that they face. The Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have set those out previously. In addition, we have other schemes such as the holiday activity programme to support those suffering from food insecurity and additional food costs, and we have given local authorities additional measures to help them with those struggling to afford food.

HC Deb 10 March 2022 | Vol 710 c852-

Food: Supply Chains

Asked by: Zeichner, Daniel

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the level of food and drink demand (a) currently and (b) in April 2022; and what steps he plans to take to ensure supply chain resilience during periods of high demand for food and drink.

Answering member: Victoria Prentis | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Our high degree of food security is built on supply from diverse sources, strong domestic production, as well as imports through stable trade routes. The capability, levers, and expertise to respond to disruption lie with the

food and drink industry sectors who have highly resilient supply chains, responsive to changes in demand. They are well equipped to deal with potentially disruptive situations as we have seen throughout the COVID-19 response. The UK Government has well-established ways of working with the industry and with the Devolved Administrations to monitor risks that may arise. This includes extensive, regular and ongoing engagement in preparedness for, and response to, issues with the potential to cause disruption to food supply chains.

The Government monitors consumer food prices using the Consumer Prices Index (including Housing Costs) (CPIH) and will continue to do so as changes are made in the next financial year. The latest published statistics show annual food and drink inflation as 4.4 per cent in the year to January 2022, up from 4.2 per cent in the year to December 2021. The CPIH month-on-month food and drink inflation rate was 0.7 per cent between December 2021 and January 2022, down from 1.3 per cent between November and December 2021. Consumer food prices depend on a range of factors including agri-food import prices, domestic agricultural prices, domestic labour and manufacturing costs, and Sterling exchange rates. Change in food prices are dependent on changes in one or more of these factors. The Government is committed to a sustainable, long-term approach to tackling poverty and supporting people on lower incomes, providing support worth around £12 billion this financial year and next, to help families with the cost of living.

HC Deb 28 February 2022 | PQ 125197

7.3

Other

[EFRA Committee letter to Secretary of State regarding Fertiliser inflation and food security](#)

29 March 2022

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Press items

The Northern Farmer

13 July 2022

[Help us drive up food production, say farmers at Great Yorkshire Show](#)

Farmers' Weekly

10 July 2022

[Opinion: War in Ukraine is no excuse to abandon green focus](#)

Prospect

16 June 2022

[Welcome to a new age of food insecurity](#)

The Grocer

16 June 2022

[Can government's new strategy help boost UK food production?](#)

Guardian

16 June 2022

[UK food price rises could hit 15% over summer, report says](#)

Farming UK

23 May 2022

[Ukraine war highlights 'vulnerability' of UK food security](#)

Food Manufacture

20 April 2022

[Ukraine war: UK food and drink manufacturing output falls to 8-month low](#)

The Grocer blog

23 March 2022

[Rishi Sunak's tax tweaks cannot stem the inevitable rise in food poverty](#)

Farmers' Weekly

18 March 2022

[Ukraine crisis: Scots set up food security taskforce](#)

Times

16 March 2022

[Looming food crisis means it's time to put Green ambitions on the backburner](#)

The Grocer blog

14 March 2022

[Surviving the looming food crisis must be balanced with climate change policies](#)

Food Manufacture

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[Ukraine crisis: calls for Government action to protect food chain](#)

Guardian

11 March 2022

[UK farmers call for urgent action to prevent soaring food prices](#)

BBC News Online

10 March 2022

Farmers warn Ukraine war will hit UK food prices

Farmers' Weekly

10 March 2022

Ukraine war could trigger double-digit fall in UK food output

The Conversation

11 March 2022

Ukraine: how the global fertiliser shortage is going to affect food

New Statesman

9 March 2022

"Austerity is coming back": Tim Lang fears for food security as war rages

Farmers' Weekly

9 March 2022

Fertiliser price sky-high as Ukraine war worsens energy fears

Guardian

9 March 2022

Cost of living crisis could be fatal for some UK children, Jack Monroe tells MPs

The Grocer

9 March 2022

Ukraine makes the 'new normal' obsolete already. Our food system needs rethinking

FT

7 March 2022

Russia's war on Ukraine threatens a global food security crisis

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