The benefits of changing the way we use our land

Land is a critical natural resource. How it’s used and managed is vital to the UK’s ability to deliver deeper emissions reductions and improve resilience to the effects of climate change over the long-term.

Decisions need to be made quickly

The UK’s goals for addressing climate change are unlikely to be met without fundamental land reform. Proposed new UK laws on agriculture and the environment means there is now a one-off opportunity to define a new land strategy.

Nationally, action is required to do the following:

- **26-36%** Reduction in grasslands and rough grazing by 2050
- **(up to) 1.5 million hectares** of new woodland to store carbon by 2050
- **(up to) 1.2 million hectares** for bioenergy crops by 2050

Locally, addressing the risks early could bring multiple benefits:

- Can insulate against rising costs of climate change
- Supports sustainable benefits through long-term resilience
- Protects the natural environment against irreversible decline

It needs a national, coordinated approach

Freeing-up agricultural land and converting it to alternative uses can help achieve deep emissions reductions. It can also prepare us for the impacts of climate change, while preserving food production and land for development.

The emissions benefits of acting now by 2050

The combination of measures required to reduce emissions can lead to long-term benefits. Many of these accrue over time:

- **4-11 MtCO₂e Saved** by restoring peatlands
- **8-18 MtCO₂e Saved** from increased woodland and hedgerow planting
- **(up to) 9 MtCO₂e Saved** from emissions saved annually from better soil and livestock management
- **2 MtCO₂e Saved** from planting bioenergy crops
- **20-50%** Reduction in UK food waste
- **35-80%** Potential overall reduction in MtCO₂e by 2050

*53 MtCO₂e is based on modelling work done for this report