

KNOWING TO GROW: INCREASING THE RESILIENCE OF PLANT CENTRED FOOD PRODUCTION SKILLS

Knowledge and skills are essential for resilient agri-food systems.

What will enhance resilience?



Photo: Daniel Fazio / Unsplash.com

For growers at all scales, resilience will come from treating knowledge as a commons - a shared good available to benefit all through collective responsibility and ownership.

Securing essential knowledge depends on public recognition that horticultural work is skilled and essential.

Research into UK horticulture suggests immediate actions:

- Growers need certainty about numbers of seasonal worker visas over the coming decade.
- Migrant workers need recourse to an independent inspection regime and robust enforcement of protections.
- Training placements should receive government funding, in return for coordinated quality control and curricula.
- Rural development funding should be directed to fostering a more diverse, resilient sector, including new growers.
- Growers should collaborate more to act collectively on skills issues.

Looking ahead



The UK needs a strategic approach to feeding itself without exploiting people or planet.



Considering who will do the work, and how they will access essential know-how should be central to this.



Government should maintain a strategic overview of horticulture's knowledge ecosystem, and coordinate action to ensure it is resilient.



Concentrations of power and capital within current agri-food systems make it too difficult to earn a fair income from food growing. Resilience for production and producers cannot be achieved without addressing this.

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