

# Report points way to a more resilient UK food system

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# Resilience of the UK Food System in a Global Context: key messages for stakeholders

Insights from a major interdisciplinary research programme to enhance the UK's food security in a changing world



Government, the food industry, financial investors, charities and researchers all have a key role to play in securing the food system into the future—according to the results of a five-year research program.

The "Resilience of the UK Food System in a Global Context" (GFS FSR) research program's [report](#) outlines multiple approaches to enhancing [resilience](#) and provides tailored messages for a range of key players and responsible stakeholders. Summarizing five years of research and containing messages focused on specific stakeholders, the report recommends three essential strategies for boosting resilience:

- Robustness: resist disruption to existing [food system](#) outcomes
- Recovery: return to existing food system outcomes after disruption
- Reorientation: aim to accept alternative food system outcomes before or after disruption

[Dr. John Ingram](#), Coordination Team Lead on the GFS FSR Program and head of the Food Systems Transformation Group at Oxford's [Environmental Change Institute](#), said, "Together, the Projects have produced a rich and diverse set of outputs that help to further our understanding of how to move towards a more resilient food system."

Among wide-ranging recommendations, the report says:

- Government policy should take a whole food system approach across government departments and agencies;
- Industry should address the negative relationship between food prices and system sustainability and resilience;
- NGOs should play a more substantial, evidence-based role in holding government and business to account;

- Finance and investment should include short and long-term financial stress testing of their portfolios, reflecting a wide range of exposures;
- Researchers and funders will have an increasingly important role in helping to enhance the resilience of the UK food system.

Dr. Ingram added, "What's become clear, since we embarked on the Program, is that there is no single route towards this goal. Furthermore, due to the complexity of the system, unless a systems approach is taken, actions to enhance resilience in one part of the system may not result in system-wide benefit, and indeed may even undermine another part.

"Over the past five years, the Program has successfully engaged with a wide range of food system stakeholders. We hope this distillation of the research into meaningful messages will aid those working in the food system to put many of the Program's insights into practice."

The report outlines key issues, to boost research impact, including:

- promoting a circular food economy;
- removing barriers to stakeholder inclusion;
- minimizing 'stakeholder fatigue';
- enhancing cross-Council, and UKRI-foundation collaboration
- maintaining the newly-found emphasis on food system research.

[Dr. Riaz Bhunnoo](#), Director of the Global Food Security program, which coordinates official research on UK and global food systems, said, "The recent pandemic has underlined the importance of a resilient food system. With [climate change](#) coming down the line, it is more important than ever that we drive interdisciplinary research on food system resilience into policy and practice. The FSR program has been instrumental in driving this agenda forward."

The major research Program, launched in 2016 by the GFS program, comprised 13 interdisciplinary research projects research based in UK institutions.

The report argues that any debate around enhancing [food](#) system resilience needs to be framed by the answers to four key questions:

- Where do we need to increase resilience?
- What do we need to build resilience against?
- From whose perspective is enhanced resilience needed?
- Over what time period is enhanced resilience needed?

**More information:** [www.foodsystemresilienceuk.org...ges- WEB-VERSION.pdf](http://www.foodsystemresilienceuk.org...ges- WEB-VERSION.pdf)

Provided by University of Oxford

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