

'Increase homegrown fruit and veg and add £0.5bn to the economy,' say scientists as UK reels from supermarket shortages

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As the UK reels from recent fruit and vegetable shortages, scientists are advising how to increase homegrown produce—benefitting the economy

and the environment.

The UK has a heavy reliance on other countries for the supply of fruit and vegetables. As diets shift to plant-based foods and climate-vulnerable countries increasingly struggle with food production, there is a need for increasing production and resilience in UK agriculture.

To address this problem, a new Green Paper is set to shape national strategy on promoting [fresh produce](#) grown here in the UK. It follows the National Food Strategy released in 2022, setting out targets for a healthy nation.

"Growing British" is informed by research at the University of Warwick and its internationally renowned Warwick Crop Centre which promotes [sustainable agriculture](#), horticulture and [food security](#). Growing British backs a 30% increase in UK consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables by 2032, and if even half of this was home-grown would add an extra £0.5 billion in direct GDP contributions to the UK economy per year—while also reaping environmental and nutritional benefits.

Other key opportunities highlighted in the research include up to £126 billion of long-term [economic benefits](#) from a healthier, more sustainable UK food system of which increasing fruit, vegetable and fiber consumption is a core component. This also has the potential to create more than 16,000 jobs in the UK agriculture industry.

Professor Richard Napier, Deputy Head of the University of Warwick's School of Life Sciences, said, "The current shortages of fresh food on supermarket shelves demonstrates the high dependence of our diets in the UK on imports. With appropriate support the UK can and should grow much more of our fresh food—vegetables, salads, herbs and fruit."

"To encourage expansion of the fruit and veg sector in the UK we need

to provide and promote new research-led solutions. The University of Warwick has world-leading research in plant breeding, [green energy](#), automation and solutions for pest and disease management. With improved strategic support, this excellence can provide a clean, green and economically viable future for the [fresh food](#) sector."

Postgraduate researcher Alex Kelly, University of Warwick, added, "An increased consumption of fruit and vegetables is one of the central dietary recommendations of the national food strategy. As climate vulnerable countries begin to struggle more with weather uncertainties and [water scarcity](#), we need a long-term strategy that promotes and supports British grown fruits and vegetables."

More information: Report: [Growing British](#)

Provided by University of Warwick

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