

Scottish Food Coalition

2026 Manifesto Asks

The Scottish Food Coalition is a diverse alliance of 60+ national and international organisations working for a just transition to a fair, healthy, sustainable food system in Scotland. For more information on our work, [please visit our website](#).

This paper presents our six manifesto asks for the 2026 Scottish Election and relate directly to the outcomes of the proposed [National Good Food Nation Plan](#) as published on 27th June 2025. Each ask is underpinned by robust research and evidence, which is referenced at the end of the document.

ASK 1: Incorporate the Right to Food and the Right to a Healthy Environment into Scots law

Scottish law must exist to ensure universal access to high quality and appropriate nutritious food, produced in a way that is equitable for people, animals and the planet.⁽¹⁾ This includes the right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment,⁽²⁾ and must recognise the interconnectedness of human, environmental, and animal well-being as outlined by the One Health approach.⁽³⁾ These principles must equally be embedded within social care and care planning.⁽⁴⁾

This ask relates to all Outcomes as described in the National Good Food Nation Plan.^{(5) (6)}

ASK 2: End the need for charitable food aid through well-paid and secure work, improved social security and embedding cash-first approaches.⁽⁷⁾

Significant and rapid progress towards this goal could be achieved by increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £55,⁽⁸⁾ greater investment in the Scottish Welfare Fund, implementing a Minimum Income Guarantee⁽⁹⁾ to reduce poverty and raising eligibility thresholds to ensure broader access to essential entitlements. Particular attention needs to be paid to addressing food insecurity among those most at risk, including but not limited to care workers, agricultural workers, disabled people, older people working age adults and families with children, and extending support to individuals with no recourse to public funds.⁽¹⁰⁾

This ask relates to Outcome 1 of the National Good Food Nation Plan.

ASK 3: Use policy, new / existing regulation and funding to ensure that all food production is resilient, sustainable and nature-friendly, and underpinned by fair work, positive animal welfare and a circular economy approach.

Scotland needs a food system grounded in honesty, fairness, and environmental stewardship, with Fair Trade and fair work conditions embedded in business practice and procurement, with investment in skills across the sector. Clear, ambitious and achievable targets must be set for emissions reduction and nature restoration, while supporting higher animal welfare standards, such as more space, social enrichment, and species-appropriate conditions for farmed animals. Food production and consumption should minimise food waste and eliminate harmful chemicals and reduce unnecessary plastics from the food chain.

All workers across the food chain should have access to trade union membership and specialist support on employment and connected legal matters important in workers' lives, including housing, health, and, where relevant, migration. The Scottish Government should both monitor and act to ensure access to help for marginalised workers, including those on the UK Seasonal Worker visa, through trade unions and support services that operate in workers' native languages, as well as enforcement authorities.⁽¹¹⁾

The Scottish Government must commit to transforming how Scottish agriculture is funded by allocating 75% of the existing agriculture budget to support climate resilient and nature-friendly farming and agroecological practices,⁽¹²⁾ while upholding fair work and higher animal welfare standards. A £500m Agricultural Transformation Fund should be established to drive this shift over the duration of the next Parliament.

Food production from our marine environment must follow science-based guidance to reduce damage caused by bottom trawling and scallop dredging with reforms to fisheries quotas that incentivise low-impact fishing, prioritises coastal communities and serve to prevent illegal fishing, labour abuse and exploitation.

Animal welfare legislation must be brought in line with modern scientific understanding of animal sentience,⁽¹³⁾ which emphasises the importance of mental state and positive welfare. Examples include ending cages for hens and farrowing crates for sows, replacing these with spacious, enriched environments that provide opportunities to display motivated behaviours such as dustbathing and nesting. Additionally, ending zero-grazing of dairy cows, and supporting 'cow-with-calf' farming practices. Farmed fish require protection, with any expansion of the farmed salmon sector meeting evidence-based enhanced standards of animal welfare and environmental protection.

This ask relates to Outcome 2 and elements of Outcome 4 of the National Good Food Nation Plan.

ASK 4: Use policy, new / existing regulation and associated funding to achieve dietary shift towards nutritious and sustainable diets for both physical and mental health.

Dietary guidance must reflect the twin goals of nutrition and sustainability, reducing our reliance on intensively farmed animals, while ensuring that all dietary needs are fully met, particularly for vulnerable groups such as older adults, young mothers and babies, and those in care. For example, commitment to early years nutrition includes increased support and initiatives to keep raising breastfeeding rates, where appropriate and desirable, would provide both nutritional and developmental benefits for infants and lower risks of cancers and chronic diseases in mothers.⁽¹⁴⁾

Clear targets should be set to reduce the consumption of ultra-processed foods and consumption of processed meat and intensively farmed animal products, replacing them with more nourishing, ethical and sustainable alternatives, such as fruit, vegetables, pulses and plant-rich options. Where animal-sourced food is consumed, it should come from systems with demonstrably higher animal welfare and environmental standards.

Comprehensive regulation of the food environment would support this shift, curb the influence of unhealthy food marketing, and ensure that healthy, sustainable options are accessible and affordable to all, and promoting a healthier food culture in Scotland.

This ask relates to Outcome 3 and 5 of the National Good Food Nation Plan.

ASK 5: Invest in public food and local food economies

Public food must be seen as an investment not a cost.

- It is an investment in health and well-being where fresh, nourishing meals are culturally appropriate and meet all dietary needs, focusing on fruit, vegetables and sustainably sourced protein, with a ban on processed meat and lower welfare imports;
- It is an investment in local economies, natural environments and people where we prioritise local, fairly farmed in line with fair work standards, seasonal, and organic food - meeting a 15% organic target and supporting small producers and short supply chains on land and sea;
- It is an investment in staff where fair work standards are met throughout the supply chain and caterers are trained to understand nutritional needs, sustainability and welfare implications of sourcing animal-based products and are upskilled to cook from scratch.

This means increasing and ring-fencing food budgets with legally protected nutrition standards, especially in care settings, and investing in the necessary processing facilities, such as abattoirs, to further support local food economies. Continue to invest in initiatives that facilitate positive food system change, such as 'Food For Life Served Here',⁽¹⁵⁾ and source ethical Fair Trade where local options are not viable.

Public food should also be seen as a cornerstone of health, dignity, and community with the provision of more social dining spaces, such as 'Public Diners',⁽¹⁶⁾ and safeguarding existing community spaces that serve as essential hubs for social connection, health support, and wellbeing.

This ask relates to Outcome 1, 3 and 4 of the National Good Food Nation Plan.

ASK 6: Strengthen democracy and participation

We call for stronger accountability in delivering food system change, starting with full implementation of the Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022 commitments.

A vibrant community food sector must be supported through stronger local democracy and alignment with Community Wealth Building legislation.^{(17) (18)} To do this Scottish Government needs to create and maintain secure access to land for communities in line with the Land Reform Act, the Crofters Act and National Performance Framework 4, with planning powers used to deliver on the promises of the Community Empowerment Act.

Ensure full compliance with the Aarhus Convention⁽¹⁹⁾ so people in Scotland are fully empowered to participate in environmental decision-making and exercise their environmental rights.

Future policy should be co-created with the communities that it will impact, ensuring young people and less well represented communities, including isolated and marginalised workers within food supply chains, have a meaningful voice.

At sea, a new Marine Minister should deliver a comprehensive and transparent National Marine Plan⁽²⁰⁾ and deliver on decade-long delays to consulting on inshore Marine Protected Areas and Priority Marine Features, embedding genuine co-management and community involvement at its core.

Public procurement decisions must be weighted to ensure adherence to fair work standards, including payment of the real living wage, respect for workers, and workers' voice, expanded trade union recognition, and collective bargaining across the sector.

This ask relates to Outcome 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the National Good Food Nation Plan.

References

1. About the Right to Food

Definition and discussion on the Right to Food from the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food

2. Right to a healthy environment: good practices

Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

3. One Health Joint Plan of Action

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Organisation for Animal Health, and the World Health Organisation outline their commitment to collectively advocate and support the implementation of One Health to mitigate the impact of current and future health challenges at the human-animal-plant-environment interface at global, regional and country level.

4. Older Age and the Human Right to Food: An Opportunity for Scotland

This report highlights the importance of integrating the right to food into social care and care planning, particularly for older individuals. It advocates for clear and explicit obligations upon both national and local governments, and upon organisations delivering public services, to ensure that the right to food is upheld. The report emphasises the need for adequate allocation of resources to enable real nutritional and health-beneficial sustainable and environmental food to be provided to those in care settings.

5. Good Food Nation (Scotland) Act 2022

This Act mandates the Scottish Government to prepare and publish a national good food nation plan, with a focus on ensuring that everyone in Scotland has reliable access to safe, nutritious, affordable, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food. It emphasises the importance of a sustainable food system that contributes to a flourishing natural environment, supporting net-zero ambitions, and improving animal welfare and biodiversity.

6. National Good Food Nation Plan

Under 'Annex B - Legislative Requirements' it states:

"Scottish Ministers must have regard to...the fact that adequate food is a human right (as part of the right to an adequate standard of living set out in Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) and essential to the realisation of other human rights."

7. Cash-First - towards ending the need for food banks in Scotland: plan

Sets out Scottish Government's human rights approach to tackling food insecurity and outlines nine collaborative actions they will take over the next three years to improve the response to financial hardship and start to reduce the need for emergency food parcels.

8. Best Start, Bright Futures: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-2026

This Scottish Government plan sets ambitious targets to reduce child poverty, including increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25 per week for children under 16. It also focuses on enhancing employment support for parents and mitigating the UK Government's Benefit Cap, aiming to lift 60,000 children out of relative poverty by 2023.

9. If Not Now, When? - Social Renewal Advisory Board Report (2021)

This report recommends a long-term commitment to a Minimum Income Guarantee for all, extending support to individuals with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), and addressing food insecurity among older people. It also advocates for raising eligibility thresholds for entitlements and aligning social security payments with Minimum Income Standards.

10. Hunger in Scotland

Trussel Trust report examining the scale and drivers of food insecurity and food bank use in Scotland.

11. An immigration option for Scotland? Safeguarding workers on tied and temporary migration programmes.

Study to evaluate the risks of exploitation to workers on temporary migration programmes.

12. The 10 elements of Agroecology

Food & Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations guide to transitioning to sustainable food and agricultural systems.

13. Ascribing sentience to fish: potential policy implications

Report on the potential policy implications of ascribing sentience to fish produced by the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission.

14. The 2023 Lancet Series on Breastfeeding

Society, politics and economics all contribute to fewer than half of infants and young children globally being breastfed than recommended by the WHO. The 2023 Lancet Series on Breastfeeding explores how the value of breastfeeding is wasted by governments and public health, and how the vulnerabilities of women and children are exploited by the Commercial Milk Formula industry. It highlights our collective responsibility to protect our youngest.

15. Food For Life Served Here Scotland

An overview of the Food For Life Served Here programme.

16. Public Diners - The idea whose time has come

Public diners are state-supported restaurants serving good meals at prices everyone can afford. They are public infrastructure in the same way as public libraries, parks, leisure centres and the NHS.

17. Local Governance Review

Scottish Government jointly launched the Local Governance Review with COSLA to ensure Scotland's diverse communities and different places have greater control and influence over decisions that affect them most. The Review does this by considering how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities.

18. Community Wealth Building Bill

The Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill was introduced to Parliament in March 2025.

The provisions in the Bill will:

- seek to ensure consistent implementation of the CWB model of economic development across Scotland
- address economic and wealth inequality by supporting the generation, circulation and retention of more wealth in local and regional economies

19. What is the Aarhus Convention?

The Aarhus Convention is an environmental treaty signed by the UK in 2005 which guarantees legal right to participate in democratic processes relating to environmental matters. This overview gives the Scottish context.

20. National Marine Plan 2

In the Programme for Government 2022 to 2023, Scottish ministers committed to start developing a new national marine plan for Scotland - National Marine Plan 2 (NMP2) - to address the global climate and nature crises by carefully managing our shared marine space. In the Programme for Government 2024 to 2025 Scottish ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continue developing a new national marine plan.

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