

Food security

WHY: IS SUSTAINABLE FOOD PRODUCTION AN ISSUE?

BECAUSE: FOOD COMES AT A HIGH COST TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Society has come to expect cheap and plentiful food but this comes at a high cost to the environment. This cost needs to be reduced to ensure that underpinning ecosystem processes and resources are conserved. Sustainable food production is further threatened by external environmental pressures including changes in climate, population, pollution and land use.



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DELIVERING IMPACT

CEH's Countryside Survey and Land Cover Maps provide unique evidence for UK land management policies.

CEH science defines regulatory limits for river and groundwater abstraction for irrigation.

CEH researches the impacts of pollutants on food production and coordinates international policy-driven research on the effects of low-level ozone and nitrogen deposition.

CEH develops land management practices and evaluates the effects on farm productivity and the conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

CEH provides advice to government on the environmental impacts of cultivating GM crops.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

Novel remote sensing technologies will allow Land Cover Maps to be continuously updated, thereby improving analyses and predictions of how changes in land use, climate and pollution affect food production in the UK.

Better understanding of how different environmental pressures interact will improve predictive models of their impacts on food production and help inform policy decisions and develop mitigation strategies.