



BRITISH APPLES & PEARS LIMITED MANIFESTO FOR 2024 UPDATED MAY 2024

British Apples & Pears Ltd represents 95% of all British dessert and culinary apple and pear growers in the UK, with almost 300 members.

The UK produces some of the best apples and pears in the world. We have the ideal climate, centuries of experience and are leading innovation in top fruit growing.

Given the global impact of climate change, we will not be able to continue to rely on imports, we can and must increase home production to feed ourselves and, potentially, populations overseas.

Apple and pear orchards have significant carbon sequestration potential and can help the UK meet its net zero targets. Apple and pear trees also improve soil structure and increase biodiversity, especially when compared to arable crops.

However, British apple and pear growers are in crisis, after years of increased costs and low supermarket returns. A new British government has an opportunity to turn around the crisis facing UK growers and in doing so ensure domestic food security, support the rural economy, our environment and the health of the nation.

The UK apple and pear grower crisis in numbers¹:

- Since early 2022, British apple growers have faced 30% increases in costs of production and received just 8% increases in returns from supermarkets.
- Almost half (45%) of British apple and pear growers say retailers buy only on price and that it's not a true partnership.
- 70% of growers say they are less confident than they were a year ago and almost half (45%) say they have scaled back their future investment plans.

What any new UK government could do to help turn around this crisis:

1. **Fair contracts with supermarkets** – impose the fair dealing clause from the Agricultural Act 2020 with specific attention on pricing mechanisms and profitability.
2. **Labour** – ensure the five-year Seasonal Worker Scheme delivers the numbers of workers the fresh produce sector needs. Increase the length of the visas from six to nine months to reflect the length of the growing season in the UK. Ensure the Skilled Worker visa route offers employers an accessible and economically viable solution to skills shortages in the UK workforce.

¹ BAPL commissioned British Growers to survey its members during November 2023. 30 growers and 10 packers responded. The survey was anonymous.

3. **Energy price protection** – include commercial horticulture in the ETII (Energy and Trade Intensive Industries) scheme or other future energy protection schemes, to protect growers from future hikes in energy prices.
4. **British food policy** – replace the “cheap food policy” with a “British food policy”. Too often British produce is being substituted for imports that may sometimes be cheaper but are often grown to a lower standard. We need government support for British produce that has travelled fewer food miles and is top quality.
5. **Carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM)** – ensure that future carbon border adjustments are developed to include food. This would mean that British growers are not competing with cheap imports with a higher carbon and water footprint, while being targeted to reduce footprints in the UK.
6. **Environmental protection** – ensure that ELMs (Environmental Land Management schemes) and all future environmental schemes work **with food production**, not instead of it. For example, recognising the value to the environment of orchards and incentivising/funding environmental measures within commercial orchards.
7. **Finance** – introduce a green finance strategy that ensures supermarkets are incentivised to choose British over imported fruit. Deliver the promised £80 million investment (Horticulture Resilience & Growth offer) for horticulture businesses (increasing non-competitive funding and recognising and rewarding collaboration) to assist smaller growers with routes to markets and funding.
8. **Health** – ensure that health strategies actively support the inclusion of fresh and minimally processed food.
9. **Research and innovation** – work with the orchard industry to determine how the £10 million funding for orchard innovations should best be spent.
10. **Crop protection** – implement a regulatory framework for crop protection products that is cost effective (for applicants) and delivers competitive advantage for British growers.

BAPL supports the NFU manifesto asks: <https://www.nfuonline.com/updates-and-information/farming-for-britain-s-future-our-election-manifesto/#manifesto>

And the NFU Horticulture Growth Strategy: <https://www.nfuonline.com/updates-and-information/delivering-growth-for-the-uk-horticulture-sector/>

Read the NFU Horticulture Growth Strategy here: <https://www.nfuonline.com/media/unpdalyr/horticulture-strategy-document.pdf>

BAPL manifesto updated in May 2024 to reflect new government announcements since it was originally published in March 2024.