

Soil Association 21/22 Impact Report Transcript.

Introduction

The backing of our brilliant Soil Association members and supporters enables our work to restore climate, nature and health.

The generosity, compassion, and kindness that you send our way each year ensures that a nature friendly way of life is possible and popular; it helps everyone build natural solutions together.

You prove that a nature-friendly way of life is possible and popular. You join forces with us for positive change.

We give the people the tools that they need to make positive change happen. We help different groups of people to connect, and we raise standards and secure policy change to create a food, farming and forestry system that works for people AND the planet.

We want to share with you a snapshot of the impact you've had over the last eighteen months, and we'll show you 15 ways you make that impact a reality.

Farming and Land Use

Through our work on fields and in forests, you are supporting a transition to nature friendly farming and land management. By providing resources and support to anyone in the industry looking for information, we empower individuals to make changes that benefit the environment, health, and the climate.

In our Agroforestry on Upland Farms in the UK video, we explored the effect that this

has on our licensees' practices - and how farmers like Andrew have been able to make changes.

Andrew: "My family have been farming here in different ways for a long time. Many generations - [but] we've changed our mindsets now to realise that when you're designing new shelter woods or woodlands its perfectly possible to design them so that the animals can use them right from an early stage rather than wait thirty years until we're thinning it."

By supporting programmes like Innovative Farmers to succeed, you are enabling different groups to connect, build relationships and develop unique projects that wouldn't usually happen in a busy working sector.

This participant from one of our focus groups highlights the effect this has on their work:

Participant: "[This opportunity] has made me realise how valuable getting feedback could be for us on different projects. Having a day to think about and evaluate things is something we rarely give ourselves permission for! Coming and being a very tiny part of the process has given the motivation and appetite to go away and play with more of the tools! Brilliant job and thank you!"

And we use what we learn from people on the ground to influence policy. Through this influence, we are working to ensure that farmers are rewarded for stewarding the land in nature friendly ways. Thanks to you, we have been able to work with DEFRA to ensure that changes to agricultural policy keeps benefits to farmers at the forefront of discussions.

George Eustace: I first wrote in about 201 about how we can have a really radical change to what was then the common agricultural policy. Many of those principles I've followed through right into the current policies, and I wanted to begin as well by thanking the Soil Association and in particular Helen Browning and the policy team for all the support and engagement they've given to DEFRA."

Healthy and Sustainable Diets

Promoting healthy and sustainable diets have remained a central focus of the Soil Association this year, meaning that you're reinforcing a transition to good food and sustainable living.

We do this by working on the ground through our programmes. Food for Life inspires change in local groups, schools and organisations by sharing skills with people of all ages and helping them to access sustainable options, especially in communities where access to fresh and wholesome food may be limited.

That means that your support makes a difference across the country - as this local student explains:

Student: "We have learned about composting. We have learned about the allotment and the trees that grow in our orchard."

"We help make sure that people are having healthy meals because we help with the school menu and give certificates."

And we bring leaders together to boost their impact, like in our partner programme, Sustainable Food Places. This means that you're helping to join together food networks of councils, community leaders, caterers and producers to make healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of local authorities.

Our Food for Life Scotland Ambassadors programme celebrates these individuals and the impact that they make as a group in the communities they work in:

Jean: "what I liked about the ambassador programme was hearing what everybody else is doing, picking up some good ideas from them, they're taking ideas from us. It was that whole mix of everybody putting their ideas on the table."

With our ambassadors behind us, we have made loud calls for what a national food network should look like, as emphasised by Food for Life's influence on Henry Dimbleby's National Food Strategy, which highlights a number of our recommendations and learnings from Food for Life as excellent.

And the influence that your generosity gives us doesn't stop there...

Cathy: "Hi, I'm Cathy, Campaigns Advisor at the Soil Association. I'm here at the ASDA store in Bedminster, Bristol, representing over 30,000 people who have signed our petition calling on UK supermarkets to remove wildlife killing pesticides from their soya supply chains "

Joining Forces for Positive Change

Joining Forces for Positive Change: it's what we're all about. Whether it's change in one person or a whole country, we think that supporting movement towards a better, nature friendly future is our most important role.

By growing evidence, we grow confidence. By growing confidence, we grow support. And by growing support, we grow our community, who are providing us with evidence that our methods work.

Our differences are our strengths, and together we are a force for nature.

Ben: "As an Organic farmer as well, I know that diversity is key to a healthy, functioning, sustainable farming system whether that's using diverse crop rotation or the various things that we do to not just allow wildlife in but to help certain threatened species to thrive. I don't see why the people who work in the agriculture industry shouldn't be as diverse as the produce that we grow."

Your support is the wind under our wings as we champion food, farming and forestry as a solution to climate, nature and health crises. It helps us to bring even more people into the movement for a better future by influencing at places like the COP26 Climate convention, as well as to our 250,000 combined followers on our social media platforms.

Our social activity for COP26 sent this message to audiences around the country, and was featured on BBC News and BBC Radio Bristol:

Claire: "At the Soil Association, we want the Government to recognise the fact that sustainable food and farming is part of the solution to the climate crisis. We are a charity, so by supporting the Soil Association, you're helping to create a nature-friendly farming future. The more people who advocate for sustainable food and farming the louder our voice is and the more difficult it is for the Government to ignore"

We inspire hope and change by showing that despite the crises we are facing, there are solutions can turn things around. You inspire us to continue to show the world that there is a better way of living. We couldn't do any of it without you.

James: "You can create positive tipping points that allow nature to regenerate itself. Allow human systems to improve, and you can create incentives in political and economic and social systems. Change norms, change attitudes, change what's rewarded. So in these tipping points, there is hope, there is the power to change."

Thank you segment

Helen: "We can only do all that needs to be done with so many friends, supporters, and partners by our side."

Ian: "The more support we get, the more we can help our beneficiaries."

James: "And thank you very much to all of you."

George Eustice: "Very grateful for all the support that all of you are giving us as we develop this future policy programme so thank you."

Conference lead: "many thanks to you all for joining us today."

Webinar lead: "a massive thank you again for everyone who's attended."

Alliance to Save Antibiotics group: "thank you!"

Hugh: "thanks very much."

Helen: "thanks as ever for all that you do, and do stay with us in this next vital decade."

Conclusion

No matter the lives we lead, all roots eventually lead back to the soil. The more people feel connected to it, the nature all around us, the earth beneath our feet, the more we can look after it and in turn each other.

The time for change is now.

