



**Project title:** SUPPORTING UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH INTO RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE CAREERS IN FOOD AND FARMING

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### Project Overview:

Specific objectives were to:

- Develop quantitative and qualitative data on sustainable employment in food and farming.
- Produce a report that draws together multiple HRP projects on sustainable employment in food and farming, to guide future activity and research.

Supervisors worked with students to develop specific research questions and objectives, aligned with the overall project objectives. Students were supported to use their Honours Research Project (HRP) to address a specific question that was aligned to their own interests and within the remit of this project. Students were informed that they would each have access to up to £250 of funding to support them in their HRP work, for costs such as transcription, event attendance, focus groups costs, materials and resources etc.

### Research Outcomes:

This project clarified several key considerations and challenges for sustainability of employment in food and farming, as follows:

- Staff shortages across food and agriculture in the United Kingdom are linked to systemic issues, exacerbated by Brexit and Covid-19.
- There is a widespread lack of awareness of food and agriculture sector opportunities.
- Media representation of food sector careers has limited impact on public awareness, and can lead to misunderstanding, particularly in relation to the technical and scientific opportunities available.
- In both the food and agriculture sectors, practical experience can enhance knowledge and understanding of potential careers.
- A range of factors influence career choice and decision making, including career prospects, location and lifestyle, and influential individuals such as teachers and parents.
- There is a demonstrable need for industry involvement, firstly with education and government to develop and support curricula and qualifications that deliver what employers need, and secondly with wider outreach activities to develop public understanding of the agriculture and food sectors.

### Practical application / Sector use:

The individual HRP findings can be used to guide employer activity in education and outreach, and to develop depth of understanding of the challenges facing the food and agriculture sectors at the present time. The four projects all produced quantitative and/or qualitative data that will be of value to interested individuals and bodies, and can help to guide effective choices and activity in relation to sustainable employment in food and farming across the UK.

A suggestion was also made about more effective support for students on projects in similar research areas, facilitating better peer interaction and learning, and also the need to encourage students to spend allocated project funds.