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Affairs Committee

The UK's new immigration policy and the food supply chain

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The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee

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Summary

The food supply chain is highly reliant on labour from the EU, and the wider European Economic Area (EEA). An estimated 99% of seasonal agricultural labour is from the EU, while food manufacturing is the sector of the economy with the highest proportion of EU employees. Approximately 95% of official veterinarians, who undertake vital certification and supervision work in abattoirs, are EEA-qualified nationals.

The Government's new immigration policy will take effect on 1 January 2021. Whereas previously EEA and Swiss nationals could work in the UK without a visa under freedom of movement rules, a new Points-Based System (PBS) will apply to all skilled migrants. Except for seasonal workers, there will be no immigration route for low skilled or temporary workers from overseas.

This report considers the expected effect of the immigration policy on the food supply chain and highlights:

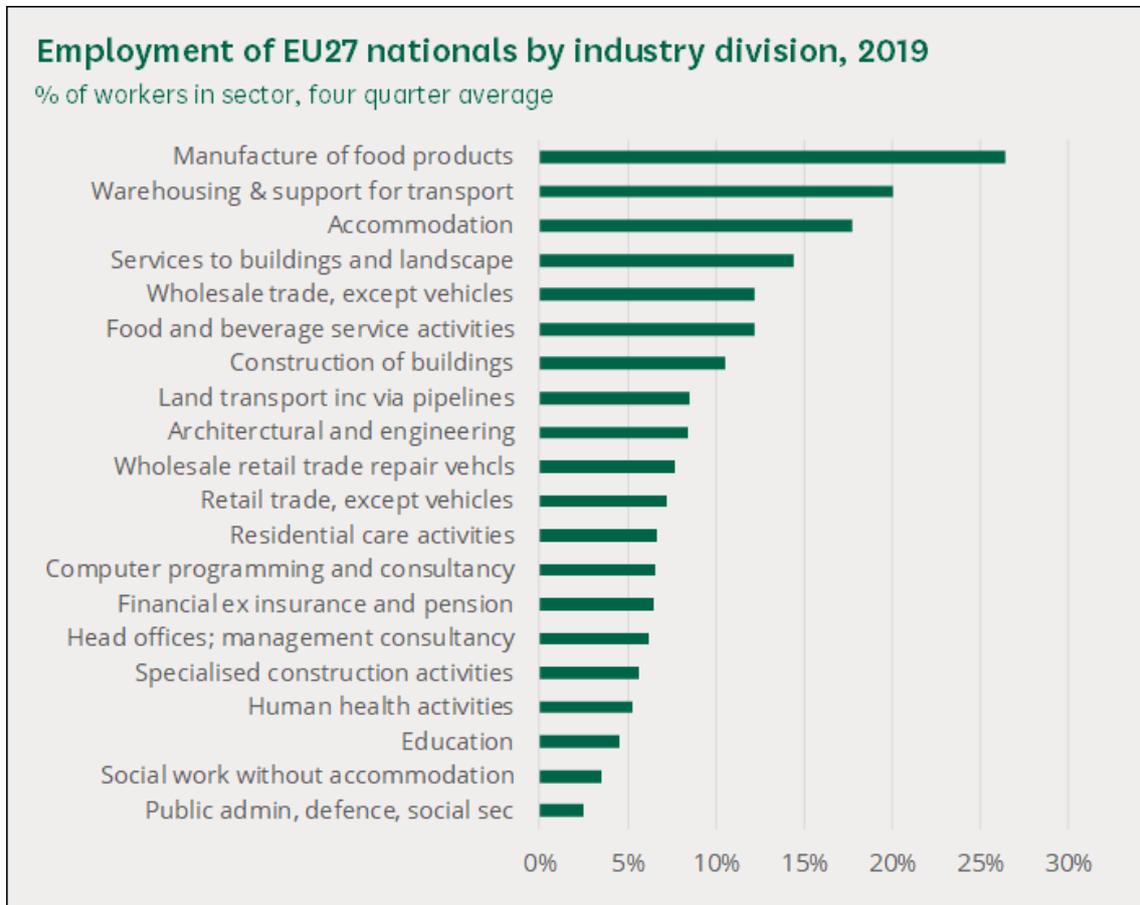
- **The limited time to prepare, and the absence of a transition period poses considerable challenges to businesses in the food supply chain.** The new immigration policy was announced in February 2020, and a further details document was published in July 2020. The Government is introducing several substantial changes to the rules business must follow but there will be no transition period to allow food supply chain companies to adjust. Furthermore significant aspects of the policy are currently unresolved including the number of visas to be issued under the Seasonal Workers' Pilot for 2021 and the definition of a "highly skilled" worker making it difficult for businesses to plan or make investment decisions. The Government should therefore pay particular attention to food prices and imports in the period after the introduction of the new immigration policy - if prices or imports rise, due to a shortage of labour in the UK, it should stand ready to make appropriate policy adjustments.
- **We identified different issues across skill groups in the food supply chain.** All skilled workers will require a visa and they and their employer will have to pay immigration-related fees. Where businesses are reliant on skilled EEA nationals to fill critical roles, such as official veterinarians, this risks increasing their costs and their jobs being less attractive to potential applicants. While we welcome the lower skill and salary levels to qualify as a skilled worker, compared to the previous arrangements, many jobs in the food supply chain require expertise acquired through experience which are not recognised by the immigration policy's definition of skilled work. The continuation of the Seasonal Workers Pilot into 2021 is welcome, but the Government has yet to state what the cap on the number of visas will be, or if it will be extended into sectors such as ornamental horticulture, meaning farmers cannot plan for next year. The Government should closely monitor labour developments across the food supply chain and be prepared to take action to alleviate any problems.

- **More needs to be done to attract domestic workers.** Businesses need to attract more domestic employees, not just through pay but also better conditions. During the inquiry, a consistent theme was that there was a need to improve the food supply chain as a place to work for domestic workers, which is a task for both the private and public sectors. However, the Government also needs to recognise that these structural changes will take time and investment and reflect this in the decisions it makes on matters such as the cap on the Seasonal Workers Pilot.
- **Technology cannot be expected to substitute for labour in the short-term.** Food supply chain businesses have already introduced some automation but there are currently technological limits, for example in harvesting crops, and the cost of such technology may mean it is not economic for many, especially small, businesses for many years. Accelerating progress will require further Government support. Defra should publish a strategy within 6 months setting out how it will work with technology providers and the food supply chain to ensure our farming and food production sectors can help develop and take advantage of the latest technological advancements.

1 Introduction

1. The UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020, and on 31 December 2020 the “transition period”, under which EU law continues to apply to the UK including on matters such as freedom of movement and the right to reside, will end.¹ From 1 January 2021, the UK will have a single immigration policy which will apply to all immigrants, whether they are European Economic Area (EEA, which includes the EU, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) or Swiss nationals, or from elsewhere in the world.²
2. The Government’s new immigration policy has significant implications for the food supply chain because of its greater reliance on overseas workers compared to most other sectors of the economy as Figure 1 highlights.

Figure 1: Proportion of employees from the EU across the economy³



It also calls upon a diverse range of skills, particularly, like most western European countries, a reliance on migrant seasonal labour to harvest crops and flowers, as well as for shearing sheep in summer and processing turkeys for Christmas.⁴ The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) told us that “non-UK EEA workers

- 1 HM Government, [Agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community](#) (19 October 2019)
- 2 The European Single Market includes the Member States of the European Union, plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway—which together make up the European Economic Area (EEA)—and also Switzerland through bilateral agreements. The term “EEA workers” used in this report includes both EEA and Swiss nationals.
- 3 House of Commons Library
- 4 National Farmers Union ([LF50013](#)) paras 4, 24

accounted for 35% of low-skilled dairy roles; and up to 48% of low skilled roles in meat processing”, and that EU workers account for “as much as 99%” of seasonal labour recruited by labour providers for the edible horticulture sector.⁵ The skills mix of the food and drink manufacturing sector is fairly evenly split between low-skilled, semi-skilled, and skilled or highly skilled employees according to a 2017 report by Grant Thornton.⁶

3. A domestic food supply chain contributes to food security and plays an important economic role, both for the rural economy and as an important contributor to UK GDP. The Food and Drink Federation (FDF) observed that “the UK food chain as a whole contributes over £120 billion to the economy annually, employs 14% of the total UK workforce, and has over four million employees working in businesses across every constituency of the UK”.⁷ In 2019 the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector contributed £12.95 billion to the UK economy (0.66% of total UK economic output), while the food, beverage and tobacco manufacturing sector contributed £30.81 billion to the UK economy (1.56% of total UK economic output).⁸ The FDF noted that “food and drink is the largest manufacturing sector in the UK (accounting for 19% of the total manufacturing sector)”⁹—“bigger than automotive and aerospace combined”.¹⁰

4. While the food supply chain includes food wholesalers and retailers, this inquiry focused on the growing, and processing and manufacture of food. Given the important role of migrant labour in the food supply chain and the significant changes that the new immigration policy will make, the Committee launched an inquiry in March 2020 asking:

- a) What impact will the Government’s proposed points-based immigration system have on labour in the food supply chain? Which sectors will be most affected by a reduced ability to recruit from abroad?
- b) Will investment in staff retention, productivity, technology and innovation compensate for the Government not implementing an immigration route for “lower skilled workers”?
- c) What impact has the Seasonal Workers pilot scheme had on agriculture and horticulture? What should be the future of the scheme, including whether it should cover more, or different, agricultural and horticultural sectors?
- d) How many seasonal workers are required in agriculture and horticulture each year, and how can this demand be reasonably met from 2021?¹¹

We received over fifty pieces of written evidence from both organisations and individuals and held three evidence sessions, hearing from the National Farmers Union and the Association of Labour Providers, the British Veterinarian Association, FDF and British Poultry Council, before taking evidence from Ministers at Defra and the Home Office. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this inquiry.

5 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([LFS0033](#)) para 1.1.3

6 Grant Thornton, [FDF Economic contribution and growth opportunities](#) (June 2017), p33

7 Food and Drink Federation ([LFS0034](#)) para 2

8 House of Commons Library

9 Food and Drink Federation ([LFS0034](#)) para 1

10 Food and Drink Sector Council, [Preparing for a changing workforce: A food and drink supply chain approach to skills](#) (October 2019), p3, section 1.1

11 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, [Labour in the food supply chain inquiry launched](#), 13 March 2020

2 The new immigration policy

Background

5. The new immigration policy was set out in a policy statement published in February 2020, followed by a “Further Details” document in July.¹² The new policy was broadly similar to the 2018 Immigration White Paper, published under the previous Prime Minister, which it superseded.¹³ However, the White Paper proposed (initially, at least) an uncapped immigration route for temporary short-term workers because of “particular difficulties in recruiting staff in certain parts of the UK, particularly more rural and remote areas and regions” and as some sectors had developed a “reliance” on lower skilled workers from the EEA.¹⁴

6. Provision for the Government’s immigration policy is made in the *Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Act 2020*—which legislated for the end of freedom of movement for EEA nationals in the UK—and the October 2020 version of the Immigration Rules.¹⁵ However, key elements of the immigration regime are still to be decided: as Kevin Foster MP, Minister for Future Borders and Immigration at the Home Office, told us, “the immigration rules that talk about the ability to have a seasonal workers scheme do not set a cap number”.¹⁶

7. There are three distinct strands to the immigration policy of particular relevance to the food supply chain:

- skilled (and highly skilled);
- low skilled and unskilled; and
- seasonal.¹⁷

Skilled immigrant workers will be subject to the new points-based system (PBS), the key elements of which are the need to have:

- a qualification of RQF3/SCQF6¹⁸ (equivalent to A-levels, Scottish Highers or similar) or higher; and
- an annual salary of £25,600 (or the specific salary threshold for their occupation, known as the “going rate”, if this is higher).¹⁹

A job offer from an approved sponsor and a command of verbal English to an acceptable standard are also required.²⁰

12 HM Government, [The UK’s Points-Based Immigration System: Policy Statement](#) (February 2020); HM Government, [The UK’s Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020)

13 HM Government, [The UK’s future skills-based immigration system](#) (December 2018)

14 HM Government, [The UK’s future skills-based immigration system](#) (December 2018), p52, para 6.42

15 [Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination \(EU Withdrawal\) Act 2020](#); GOV.UK, [Statement of changes to the Immigration Rules](#) (22 October 2020), HC 813 2019–21,

16 [Q126](#)

17 Additional routes include the “Global Talent”, “Start-up”, “Innovator”, student and graduate routes.

18 RQF: Regulated Qualifications Framework in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCQF: Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework in Scotland. Both allow different types of qualification to be compared.

19 HM Government, [The UK’s Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020), p17, paras 37 and 39

20 HM Government, [The UK’s Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020), p17, para 37

8. A minimum salary of £20,480 or 80% of the “going rate” for the profession concerned (whichever is higher) can be accepted, but only if the post concerned is on the Migration Advisory Committee’s (MAC) Shortage Occupation List (SOL), or if the applicant has a PhD in a science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subject relevant to the job.²¹ For “new entrants”, a lower minimum salary of £20,480 or 70% of the “going rate” for the profession concerned (whichever is higher) can be accepted.²² Visas for “highly skilled workers”, which the Government has yet to define, will also fall within the PBS, but they will not require a job offer.²³

9. For workers who do not achieve enough points to qualify under the PBS, there will be no immigration route, except for some seasonal workers (see Chapters 4 and 5). Previously under the Single European Market’s freedom of movement arrangements, there was no restriction on EEA nationals coming to the UK to take these “low-skilled” jobs. The Government stated in February 2020 that:

We will not introduce a general low-skilled or temporary work route. We need to shift the focus of our economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe and instead concentrate on investment in technology and automation. Employers will need to adjust.²⁴

10. There will be an exception for those who would not attain enough points to qualify under the PBS but who undertake seasonal agricultural labour through the Seasonal Workers Pilot (SWP).²⁵ The Government has announced that the SWP will be extended for a third year into 2021, although to date no details of next year’s scheme have been published.²⁶

11. A PBS for non-EEA migrants has been in place since 2008, so the new immigration policy will most affect EEA nationals (a comprehensive summary of the changes is set out in the table in Appendix A). However, EEA nationals already resident in the UK by 31 December 2020 will be able to apply by 30 June 2021 for either:

- EU Settled Status, which grants a person permanent permission to stay and unrestricted rights to work in the UK; or
- EU Pre-Settled Status, which provides permission to stay for five years of continuous residence, after which they can apply for EU Settled Status.²⁷

21 If the role is not on the Shortage Occupation List and the PhD is not in a STEM subject relevant to the job, then the minimum income is either £23,040 or at least 90% of the going rate for the profession (whichever is higher).

22 Someone is classified as a new entrant if they are: switching from the Student or Graduate route to the Skilled Worker route; or under the age of 26 on the date of their application; or working towards recognised professional qualifications or moving directly into post-doctoral positions (HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020), p25, para 56)

23 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020), p17, para 41

24 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Policy Statement](#) (February 2020), pp3–4

25 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020), p59, para 140

26 Home Affairs Committee, [Work of the Minister for Future Borders and Immigration](#), HC 919 2019–21, 4 November 2020, Q125

27 GOV.UK, [Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme \(settled and pre-settled status\)](#), webpage. Where “continuous residence” requires being resident in the UK for at least six months in any 12-month period.

Kevin Foster said that “we are still seeing thousands of applications every day to the EU settlement scheme, with 4.2 million applications already and 3.9 million statuses granted”, and added that “the flow we have seen has actually been positive [...] We welcome them and wish for them to stay”.²⁸

Impact on food prices and food security

12. Our July 2020 report on covid-19 and food supply looked at the issues of food prices and food security, and highlighted the concerns that the pandemic had highlighted and the potential impacts of the end of the Brexit transition period.²⁹ Tom Bradshaw, Vice President of the National Farmers Union (NFU), said that, in the event of a shortage of seasonal workers, there would be less food grown and harvested in the UK, and increased imports.³⁰ The NFU raised concerns that the lack of clarity on the number of visas for seasonal agricultural workers, for example, meant that “food security is being placed at risk”.³¹

13. Predicting the impact on prices in the supermarket and shops of such a switch from domestic-grown food would, Tom Bradshaw said, be “very difficult, because you have to look at whether we are comparing the same production systems overseas”, for example in terms of wages, employment benefits, and environmental protection.³² He added that such imported produce might not necessarily cost more “but it might not be produced to the same standard”.³³ Richard Griffiths, Chief Executive of the British Poultry Council, said that if his industry does not have access to EEA labour, then “ultimately what it leads to is whether we have food security and affordable food”.³⁴

14. The pressures on profit margins in the food supply chain was noted by Defra: “the agri-food chain faces particular workforce challenges driven by pressures to keep product prices low for consumers in a highly competitive sector with low returns for businesses”, and that, as a result, “in recent years these industries have relied heavily on low-wage migrant labour”.³⁵ Kevin Foster also highlighted retailers’ pressure on suppliers to keep their prices low as a reason for why they had to come to rely on migrant labour:

It would also be complacent not to reflect on whether migration should be the alternative to offering fair terms, conditions and packages. Should we be playing up to [...] the impact of some major buyers and supermarkets looking to push prices down based on the ability to access this type of labour via the migration system? Is that where we should be or should we say, “No, your first stop is the domestic labour market”? You work with Defra and the DWP [Department for Work and Pensions] to recruit. If you cannot, after those sorts of efforts, you can eventually turn to migration.³⁶

28 [Qq155, 160](#)

29 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, First Report of Session 2019–21, [COVID-19 and food supply](#), HC 263, Chapter 2

30 [Q21](#)

31 National Farmers Union ([LF50037](#)) p2

32 [Q28](#)

33 [Q28](#)

34 [Q53](#)

35 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([LF50033](#)) para 1.1.2

36 [Q130](#)

15. In order to secure the labour it requires to maintain production levels under the new immigration policy, the food supply chain will have to attract more resident staff. Although it must be recognised there are significant structural barriers preventing many domestic workers from substantial engagement in seasonal harvest work and this is not a new feature of the UK labour market. Additionally, as we explore in the following chapters, it should be recognised that it is not just a question of better pay, but also of improved conditions that will attract more UK workers to businesses in the food supply chain. While there are benefits to improving the attractiveness of the food supply chain as a place to work in terms of securing a more stable and predictable workforce, there is a risk that this may come at the cost of higher consumer food prices or a loss of market share to imports potentially produced to lower standards. This would impact on the UK's food security and on the ability of some families to afford enough healthy nutritious food. As we made clear in our report on covid-19 and food supply there are already concerns about both. *The Government should pay particular attention to food prices in the period after the introduction of the new immigration policy—if prices rise, due to a shortage of labour, it should stand ready to make appropriate policy adjustments.*

3 Skilled workers

16. While the new immigration policy will, according to the Government, mean that a “wide pool of skilled workers will be able to come to the UK from anywhere in the world”, as Kevin Foster said:

We can give migration routes, but we also have to be conscious in the back of our minds that we are in a competitive global market for highly trained and highly qualified people. They can go elsewhere.³⁷

Skill and salary levels

17. Applications under the new immigration policy for the “Skilled Worker” visa opened on 1 December 2020 (so replacing the “Tier 2” visa of the previous immigration system).³⁸ Compared to the previous equivalent visa requirements for skilled non-EEA workers, the proposed salary and skills levels of the replacement Skilled Worker visa (applicable for both EEA and non-EEA skilled workers) are lower: the salary requirement will be £25,600 (compared to £30,000 under the Tier 2 visa), and the skill level will be RQF3/SCQF6—equivalent to A-levels or Scottish Highers or similar (whereas the Tier 2 visa requirement was the equivalent of bachelor degree level).³⁹ These changes were welcomed by the NFU who described it as “movement in the right direction, with the potential for flexibility on salary created by tradeable points being welcome”, a view shared by the FDF.⁴⁰ However, the NFU stated that “it is a disappointing characteristic of the PBS that it devalues vocational skills, which often provide a far more tangible and economically valuable business contribution to Agriculture and Horticulture businesses”.⁴¹

18. Kevin Foster said that under the new immigration system “we are going from a very academically focused level of skilled worker, graduate level, to school leaver level. It is broadening into a much greater range of genuine skills that people find in the workplace”.⁴²

Bureaucracy and fees

19. The immigration policy will mean that the same administrative processes and fees will apply to EEA skilled workers as to those from the rest of the world:⁴³

- employers will need to hold a sponsor licence (except for recruiting Irish citizens)—which costs £1,476 (£536 for smaller companies and charities) and runs for four years;
- the upfront Immigration Skills Charge payable for each skilled migrant worker employed through the Skilled Worker (or Intra-company Transfer) route based

37 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Policy Statement](#) (February 2020), p5, para 5; [Q191](#)

38 Points-based immigration system opens, [GOV.UK press release](#), 1 December 2020

39 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Policy Statement](#) (February 2020), p5, paras 4–5

40 National Farmers Union ([LF50013](#)) para 7; Food and Drink Federation ([LF50034](#)) para 12

41 National Farmers Union ([LF50013](#)) para 13

42 [Q190](#)

43 Under freedom of movement, skilled workers from the EEA could work in the UK without the need for a visa or the payment of any fees. Non-EEA skilled workers coming to the UK before 1 January 2021 were already subject to visa-related paperwork and fees.

on the length of the worker's visa: £1,000 for the first 12 months, and £500 for each subsequent 6 month period (reduced to £364 and £182 respectively for either small businesses or charitable sponsors);⁴⁴

- charges for the applicant:
 - for those applying from outside the UK, the application fee is £610 or £1,220 per person depending on whether the period in the UK will be less or more than three years respectively;
 - when applying within the UK to extend, switch or update a Skilled Worker visa, the fees are £704 or £1,408 per person, again depending on whether the period in the UK will be less or more than three years respectively.⁴⁵
 - successful applicants have to pay the annual health surcharge which is usually £624 per year.⁴⁶

20. Tim Rycroft, Chief Operating Officer, FDF, said that while there was no reason the PBS should “disadvantage the UK against its competitors” in principle, “because of the additional costs relative to our competitors and the additional bureaucracy, it does disadvantage us”.⁴⁷ NFU Scotland stated that it was “concerned that the cost of sponsorship is prohibitively expensive in terms of both financial and administrative burden”.⁴⁸

21. In comparing the new Skilled Worker visa to the previous arrangements for Tier 2 visas (applicable to skilled workers from outside the EEA), Kevin Foster highlighted that the Government was “removing the resident labour market test, which is quite burdensome”, and also “suspending the cap in terms of the skilled worker visa, which will make it slightly simpler for those going through the recruitment process”.⁴⁹ The effect of these two changes alone, he said, would be to “drop the time to bring a skilled worker into the UK by eight weeks”.⁵⁰ Other changes highlighted included allowing applications to be made via a smartphone app, rather than having to visit a visa application centre, as part of the Government's drive to “reform and simplify the sponsorship process”.⁵¹

The role of the Migration Advisory Committee

22. If a skilled worker can demonstrate that they have a job offer in an occupation listed in the Shortage Occupation List, then the immigration policy permits a salary lower than the minimum salary threshold of £25,600 to be paid (but no less than £20,480, or 80% of the going rate for the occupation, whichever is higher).⁵² The inclusion of an occupation on the SOL is subject to a recommendation of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) being accepted by the Government. The MAC will recommend adding an occupation to

44 HM Government, [The UK's points-based immigration system: An introduction for employers](#) (November 2020), pp3, 10 and 12,

45 For occupations listed on the SOL, the rates are reduced to £464 for stays of up to three years or £928 for stays of more than three years. In addition, for all the application fee rates, citizens of the EU and certain other countries qualify for a £55 reduction.

46 GOV.UK, '[Skilled Worker visa: How much it costs](#)', accessed 14 December 2020

47 [Q107](#)

48 NFU Scotland ([LFS0003](#)) para 20

49 [Q165](#)

50 [Q165](#)

51 [Q165](#)

52 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Further Details](#) (July 2020), p18, Table 1

the SOL “where employers find it problematic to secure adequate numbers of workers with the required skills to fill their vacancies and where we judge that migration is a sensible response to that shortage”.⁵³

23. The MAC also determines the skill level required for an occupation, “based on the length of time it would take to train a new entrant to become fully competent in the performance of the tasks associated with a job”—skill levels “refer to the occupation rather than the person employed in that occupation”.⁵⁴ As such, the MAC will make a recommendation on which occupations it determines have a skill level of RQF3/SCQF6 and therefore can be open to applications from migrant workers through the Skilled Worker visa route.

24. In September 2020, the MAC published its latest review of the SOL and recommended the addition of “around 70 entire occupations, or job titles within them [...] for inclusion on the SOL, either at a UK-wide or Devolved Nation level”, including veterinary nurses, meat hygiene inspectors, jobs in the fishing industry, and butchers. It also called for two roles in the food supply chain (vent chick sexers, and deckhands on large fishing vessels) to be classified at RQF level 3 and therefore eligible for the Skilled Worker visa.⁵⁵ However, the Government did not implement the changes, instead preferring to “pause” and assess changes in the UK labour market develops particularly in the light of how quickly the economy recovers from the covid-19 pandemic and the commencement of the new immigration policy.⁵⁶

25. The UK is competing globally for skilled labour, the availability of which is vital to the ongoing success of the UK food supply chain. It is important therefore that bureaucracy and fees are minimised, and their impact kept under review. We are concerned that many potential candidates from EEA countries may prefer to work in other countries within the European Single Market exercising their rights of freedom of movement. We welcome measures taken by the Government to reduce both the skill and salary level for the Skilled Worker visa, compared to the Tier 2 visa, as more food supply chain roles will now be eligible. However, we are disappointed that the Government decided not to implement the Migration Advisory Committee’s latest review of the Shortage Occupation List prior to the start of the new immigration policy. *Defra and the Home Office should consult food supply chain businesses during the first half of 2021 on the impact of the PBS and associated paperwork and fees to ensure that they are able to recruit sufficient staff from overseas where this is necessary so to do. They should provide the Committee with the outcomes of those consultations before the summer recess. The Government should reconsider its decision not to implement the Migration Advisory Committee’s latest Shortage Occupation List review to help ensure that food supply chain businesses can secure the labour they need.*

53 Migration Advisory Committee, [Review of the Shortage Occupation List: 2020](#) (September 2020), pp12–13

54 Migration Advisory Committee, [Review of the Shortage Occupation List: 2020](#) (September 2020), p17

55 Migration Advisory Committee, [Review of the Shortage Occupation List: 2020](#) (September 2020), p17, pp638–641, Table 9.1, p644, para 9.17

56 Home Office, [Home Secretary letter to the MAC in response to the shortage occupation lists report](#) (23 October 2020)

The veterinarian sector

26. The British Veterinary Association (BVA) highlighted the work in abattoirs of Official Veterinarians (OV), vets who work on behalf of the Government to “both certify and supervise the import and export of animals and animal products to and from third countries”.⁵⁷ It describes their role as “vital” to protecting public health, food safety, animal health and animal welfare.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the end of the Brexit transition period was likely to lead to a marked increase in the workload of OVs, as they would be required to provide Export Health Certificates for all exports of products of animal origin to the EU.⁵⁹ Simon Doherty, then Senior Vice President of the BVA, told us that “roughly 95% of vets working in abattoirs and meat plants are EEA-qualified nationals”.⁶⁰ He highlighted the working conditions of OVs as a factor: “the vast majority of us apply to go and study in veterinary school to come out and go into general practice and work as clinicians. It is a select part of the profession that would choose to get up at 4 o’clock or 5 o’clock in the morning and go and stand at the meat plant. It is a different type of work”.⁶¹ The benefit for vets from the EEA was that OV work may lead to clinical practice work, although he questioned under the new immigration policy “how easy it would be for them to change jobs—change roles”.⁶²

27. Simon Doherty said that from the current position of “already having a shortage, we are then looking at significant problems if we have anything that will affect the supply of vets coming in from the EEA to work in the UK”.⁶³ The BVA’s particular concerns were that:

Any additional barriers to the movement of EEA-qualified vets to the UK have significant consequences for animal health, animal welfare, public health, and trade [...] A visa-based system will place significant administrative and financial burdens on veterinary businesses, who will be required to sponsor recruits from outside of the UK. Furthermore, if the UK establishes additional barriers this could make other countries within the EEA more attractive for EEA vets.⁶⁴

In addition, Simon Doherty said that the “complete lack of clarity about how many vets we will need to do export health certification” was making him “not very confident at all that we can adequately plan our workforce”.⁶⁵

28. Victoria Prentis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Defra, told us that Defra had “provided funding for training for vets to become OVs” which had helped increase the number of OVs from “around 600 people [...] less than two years ago to double that now” and that “the number of vets in the country is something we need to

57 British Veterinary Association ([LFS0031](#)) para 9

58 British Veterinary Association ([LFS0031](#)) para 9

59 The BVA notes that “The final details of the UK’s future relationship with the EU, including the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol, are unknown. However, it appears likely that these requirements for goods moving from Great Britain to the EU Single Market will apply to goods entering Northern Ireland. Therefore, EHCs would likely be required (British Veterinary Association ([LFS0031](#)) para 20).

60 [Q51](#)

61 [Q65](#)

62 [Q98](#)

63 [Q51](#)

64 British Veterinary Association ([LFS0031](#)) paras 24–26

65 [Q91](#)

keep a close eye on”.⁶⁶ Kevin Foster said that “immigration should be about where you cannot recruit. For example, technical vets are one of the things regularly talked about in the sector of food production where we do not train enough here in the UK. That is something we need to resolve to get more people into those types of careers”. He added: “I accept that that is a five or six-year training course. Even if everyone wanted to be a vet today, they could not start doing that job for a number of years”.⁶⁷ The Government had also taken steps to reduce the workload of vets, such as introducing paraprofessionals such as Certification Support Officers in order to reduce the burden of work for OVs.⁶⁸

29. The example of the veterinarian sector highlights the important role that overseas-trained employees undertake in the food supply chain, in this case working in abattoirs that are unattractive to UK-trained vets. In addition, these Official Veterinarians face an increase in their workload due to increased checks on exports as a result of Brexit. These factors, combined with the fact it takes several years to train vets, risk creating a situation where there is insufficient veterinary labour, without which animal products cannot be cleared for export.

30. For those employing skilled workers, it is important to ensure that pay and conditions reflect the nature of the work in order to help attract more UK workers into the food supply chain. For example, the Government’s work to increase the number of Official Veterinarians and introduce Certification Support Officers is welcome although questions remain about whether they go far enough to meet the increased workload after the end of the transition period. *Both Government and business have a role to play in ensuring that skilled work in the food supply chain is an attractive career option in order to address some sub-sectors’ reliance on migrant staff. However, in the short to medium-term the Government, in designing its policy, must also be more conscious of the time and investment it takes to train new skilled workers, especially professionals such as vets. This is particularly important when the industry faces substantial uncertainty such as new rules on trade and the impact of the pandemic. It should closely monitor the impact of the new immigration policy on the supply of skilled workers in the food supply chain and make immediate adjustments if bottlenecks emerge.*

66 [Q191](#)

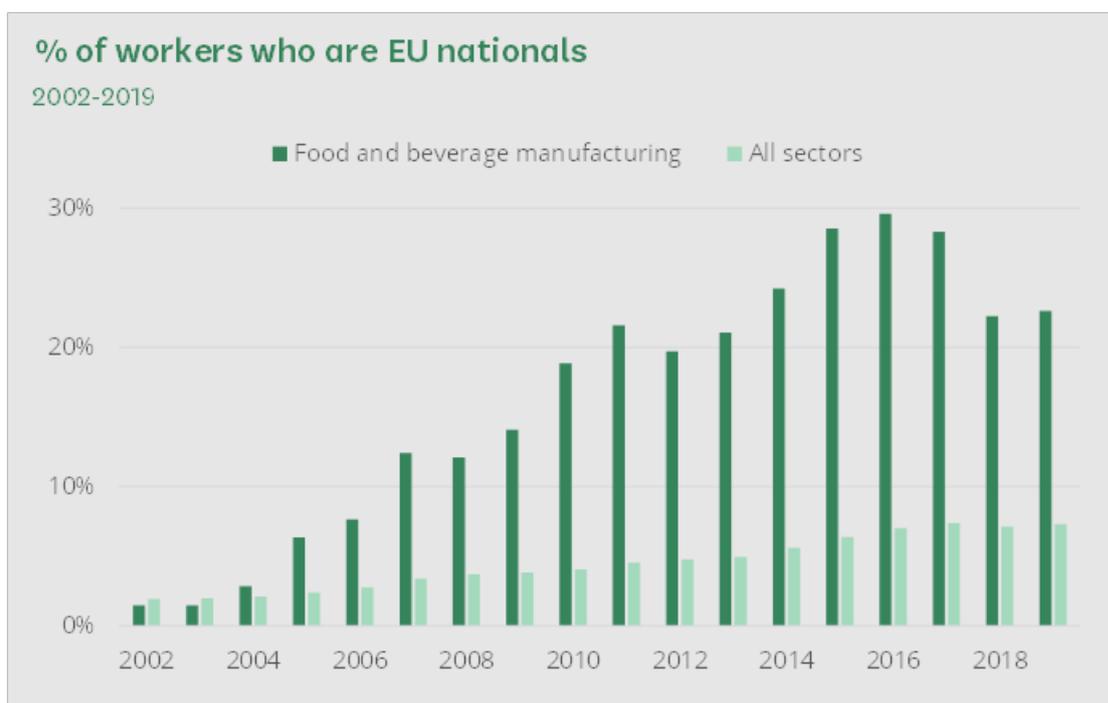
67 [Q112](#)

68 British Veterinary Association ([LFS0031](#)) paras 36–37

4 Low-skilled migrants

31. The new immigration policy does not include a route for either workers who score insufficient points on the Government's immigration scoring system (and therefore might be classed as "low-skilled") or for temporary workers (with the notable exception of seasonal agricultural workers, see Chapter 5). At present there is a significant reliance on EU nationals to fill posts in the food and beverage manufacturing sector—the chart below demonstrates that this is a relatively recent development.

Figure 2: EU migrant labour in the food and beverage manufacturing sector⁶⁹



32. In explaining this approach, the Government's policy statement said "we need to shift the focus of our economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe".⁷⁰ However, a recurring feature of Defra's sector-by-sector analysis of the food supply chain, including for the beef, egg, meat processing, pig, poultry and sheep sectors, was that while "work is often classed as unskilled or low-skilled, there is a level of tacit knowledge, gained through experience in the industry".⁷¹

33. Concerns were raised with us that the definition of "skilled labour" in the new immigration policy did not fully recognise the requirements of certain roles in the food supply chain, or the on-the-job training that is often provided. Tim Rycroft from the FDF said that "some of the jobs that these people are doing are things that are difficult, that take time to learn, that have to be done with a degree of care and attention but that are not currently defined as skilled", and spoke of the need to "develop a more workable definition of skilled".⁷² Richard Griffiths, Chief Executive of the British Poultry Council, told us that "quite a lot of EEA workers who come into our industry are in that sort of lower-skill area

69 House of Commons Library

70 HM Government, [The UK's Points-Based Immigration System: Policy Statement](#) (February 2020), pp3–4

71 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([LFS0033](#)) paras 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8–1.10

72 [Q58](#)

[...] The jobs they do need skills, but we are very happy to train people to achieve those skills”.⁷³ He added that he was “very concerned about the access to the people at the lower skill levels”, a view shared by the British Meat Processors Association (BMPA).⁷⁴

34. NFU Scotland disputed “the equation of occupations deemed to be ‘low skilled’ as ones that utilise ‘cheap labour’”.⁷⁵ Richard Griffiths disagreed with the notion that food manufacturers were attracted to overseas labour by low wages: he noted that the expansion of the EU during the 2000s increased the pool of available labour, while at the same time “there was a combination of lack of availability of a domestic workforce and [...] [a] lack of willingness” of them to seek employment in the food supply chain and, he said, the poultry sector in particular. Therefore, “it is not about wages and it is not about pay; it is about getting the labour”.⁷⁶ Furthermore, David Camp, Chief Executive, Association of Labour Providers (ALP), noted that the covid-19 pandemic had “shown us the importance and social value of many jobs that are paid at or around minimum wage”.⁷⁷

35. The ALP conducted a survey in March 2020 which found that “over 90% of Food Growers and Manufacturers and over 95% of Labour Providers” disagreed with the absence of a low-skilled immigration route, and described the measure as “the biggest labour threat to the UK food industry and consequently UK food security and resilience” since the ALP’s formation in 2004.⁷⁸ The BMPA noted that “across the UK 62% of workers in the industry are EU nationals”,⁷⁹ and said that “the majority of businesses in the meat processing industry will struggle to get experienced workers through the new points-based system”.⁸⁰ The NFU said that “the majority of businesses in Agriculture and Horticulture will be unable to get experienced workers through the new points-based system”.⁸¹ David Camp also highlighted the danger that “if there are no resident workers [...] the only way to access those [workers] [...] is from undocumented workers or from unrecognised sources”.⁸²

36. The British Poultry Council told us that “in order to create good jobs that attract UK labour and roll out technological advancements, the poultry meat industry needs a period of three to five years to transition into this new phase of growth”.⁸³ Arla Foods UK similarly said that “imposing the new [immigration] regime from 1 January 2021 risks causing serious disruption” and that it “did not leave enough time for new colleagues to be recruited and trained”.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the impact of the covid-19 pandemic had “significantly reduced” the time to prepare, and it called for a “transitional period or transitional arrangements before the new regime takes full effect”.⁸⁵

37. Defra acknowledged that “many low and unskilled roles in the food supply chain will not meet the criteria set out in this policy in either their salary or skill level”, citing

73 [Q57](#)

74 [Q100](#); British Meat Processors Association ([LFS0006](#)) p1

75 NFU Scotland ([LFS0003](#)) para 7

76 [Q63](#)

77 [Q8](#)

78 Association of Labour Providers ([LFS0017](#)) paras 1.1 and 1.4

79 British Meat Processors Association ([LFS0043](#)) p1

80 British Meat Processors Association ([LFS0022](#)) p1

81 National Farmers Union ([LFS0013](#)) para 9

82 [Qq15, 23](#)

83 British Poultry Council ([LFS0032](#)) para 11

84 Arla Foods UK ([LFS0014](#)) para 15

85 Arla Foods UK ([LFS0014](#)) para 15

the relatively low median wages in the agricultural, food manufacturing and drink manufacturing sector.⁸⁶ Kevin Foster said “we expect that the food supply sector and others would, for more general recruitment, look in the first instance towards the domestic UK labour market including [...] those who have status under the European settlement scheme”, adding “we have that pool of labour” within the UK.⁸⁷ He stated that:

[Employers’] first priority should be to recruit in the domestic market, not least because of some of the sad figures we are seeing on unemployment [...] If we have jobs that the sectors say pay reasonably, we should not view migration policy as an alternative to offering reasonable packages [...] Immigration should be about where you cannot recruit.⁸⁸

Retraining can help facilitate the movement of labour into the food supply chain: we raised with Victoria Prentis the possible continuation and promotion of the Union Learning Fund (ULF) as one method of encouraging people to seek a career in the food supply chain. The ULF is managed and administered by the Trade Union Congress’s “unionlearn” organisation under an agreement with the Department for Education (DfE), which directs the level and type of learning activity that should be supported by the Fund,⁸⁹ although this funding will cease in March 2021.⁹⁰

38. As noted in Chapter 3, the Skilled Worker visa route under the new immigration system has set a lower skill level (compared to the Tier 2 visa it replaces) that is equivalent to A-levels or Scottish Highers: Kevin Foster noted that this meant “people like butchers qualify”.⁹¹ He added that “there is a much broader sense” of what constitute skills under the new immigration rules, “rather than our current [at that time] rest of the world [Tier 2 skilled visa] rules, which are very academically focused. Inherently they say ‘graduates’, so that inherently focuses much more academically”.⁹²

39. By focusing on academic qualifications, the new immigration policy takes a narrow focus on skills, although we welcome the Government’s decision to reduce the threshold to the equivalent of A-levels or Scottish Highers (RQF3/SCQF6). We are concerned that this policy will pose challenges for food manufacturers and others in the food supply chain who use lower skilled or lower paid staff, especially because of the limited time to prepare, exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic, and the absence of a transition period (as proposed in the superseded 2018 White Paper). However, the anticipated rise in UK unemployment next year might provide opportunities for the sector to encourage people to change careers—the food supply chain can do more to encourage this by making itself more attractive to potential employees. The Government can also take steps to support the sector to encourage UK workers and the unemployed to consider roles in food production and to re-train or re-skill. The Union Learning Fund—for which Government funding will cease in 2021—has been brought up as an example of how this could be achieved. As data for the food and drink manufacturing sector demonstrates, businesses were able to source almost all their workers domestically prior to the eastern expansion of the EU in 2004. It must also

86 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([LFS0033](#)) para 1.1.5

87 [Q110](#)

88 [Q112](#)

89 Unionlearn, ‘[Introduction to the ULF](#)’, accessed 14 December 2020

90 “[Union Learning Fund to be scrapped from March 2021](#)”, TES, 7 October 2020

91 [Q160](#)

92 [Qq152, 160](#)

be accepted, however, that edible horticulture, and especially soft fruit, has enjoyed very significant growth since 2004 as a direct consequence of access to migrant EEA seasonal labour and we want the sector to grow further.

40. *Food supply chain businesses should seek to attract the unemployed who may previously have worked in other sectors of the UK economy through better pay and conditions and offering training opportunities. The Government should also play a role in supporting the retraining of labour through engagement with employers and unions, and given its decision to terminate the Union Learning Fund should ensure there is an effective replacement for the valuable work that the Committee recognises it has done.*

41. *The lack of a transition period for the introduction of the new immigration policy creates risks and therefore Defra, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions must work together to closely monitor the food supply chain to monitor the impact of the absence of a low skilled immigration route, and be prepared to take action that will swiftly alleviate any labour supply problems as the food supply chain adjusts to the new immigration policy.*

5 Seasonal agricultural workers

42. Farming is unusual compared to many other areas of the economy as the short periods in which crops can be harvested creates very short-term and localised spikes in demand for labour. Seasonal workers, therefore, usually travel from one farm to another to harvest different types of crop.⁹³ Possibly uniquely within the UK economy, the edible horticulture harvesting workforce is estimated to be almost entirely (99%) overseas labour, predominantly from eastern EU countries.⁹⁴ However, the UK is by no means unusual in this regard; Tom Bradshaw, Vice President of the National Farmers Union, said that “just about all developed economies around the world rely on a migrant workforce to provide this seasonal labour”.⁹⁵

43. A shortage of seasonal workers could lead to production of some crops moving overseas. G’s Fresh—a large edible horticultural company—noted that UK labour supply for the 2021 season was “increasingly uncertain at a time when production decisions are being taken” and therefore “plans are being made to transfer production overseas”.⁹⁶ Richard Griffiths cautioned that “once you start to lose capacity, it is very difficult for it come back”, adding “it is difficult to get new farms and new slaughterhouses”.⁹⁷ The NFU noted the lack of certainty around size of the seasonal workforce for 2021, combined with “the still relatively small proportion of UK nationals participating in the workforce this year, and the lack of further ready to market labour-saving automation”. As a result, the NFU said that there was “real concern amongst growers that they simply will not be able to secure the workforce they need for next years’ harvest. This concern is particularly acute for members whose season begins in January”.⁹⁸

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme—history

44. A Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) was first introduced shortly after the Second World War: the MAC noted while there were changes in the “eligibility rules, quota size and operation of the scheme” it remained “essentially the same” during its operation up to 2014, enabling “workers (usually students) to come to the UK for short periods, specifically to live and work on farms during peak seasons”.⁹⁹

45. The UK’s membership of the European Union gave it access to a vast and growing pool of labour, most notably in 2004 when eight eastern European countries acceded to the Union (known as the “A8”), and further in 2007 when Bulgaria and Romania (the “A2”) also joined.¹⁰⁰ Since 2008, the SAWS closed to non-EEA applicants and became exclusively a route for Bulgarian and Romanian workers while the UK exercised transitional measures for the first seven years of the A2’s membership.¹⁰¹ The SAWS closed in 2014 when these restrictions ended.¹⁰²

93 [Q30](#)

94 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs ([LFS0033](#)) para 1.1.3

95 [Q11](#)

96 G’s Fresh ([LFS0048](#)) p7

97 [Q93](#)

98 National Farmers Union ([LFS0037](#)) p2

99 Migration Advisory Committee, [Migrant Seasonal Workers](#) (May 2013), pp47–48, paras 3.6, 3.8

100 The full list of A8 countries is: Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Poland; Slovakia; and Slovenia. Cyprus and Malta also acceded to the EU in 2004.

101 Migration Advisory Committee, [Migrant Seasonal Workers](#) (May 2013), p9, para 2

102 Defra and Home Office, [Seasonal Workers Pilot request for information](#), 21 February 2020

The number of seasonal agricultural workers required

46. In its April 2017 report, *Feeding the nation: labour constraints*, our predecessor Committee said that the Government's statistics "for measuring supply of, and demand for, seasonal labour must be reviewed by the end of 2017 to give the sector confidence in the adequacy of the official data on which employment and immigration policies will be based for the period after the UK leaves the EU".¹⁰³ In its response, the Government acknowledged that its statistics on the agricultural workforce "are not designed to measure seasonal labour" but said that it "remain[ed] closely engaged with the various food and farming stakeholders, including the major labour providers, to ensure that we are informed of their latest intelligence on labour demand".¹⁰⁴

47. Three years on, and differences remain. The National Farmers Union told us that "industry data identifies that 70,000 workers are needed to fill 80,000 seasonal horticultural roles",¹⁰⁵ while Victoria Prentis said the Government's figure was "about 40,000" based on ONS and HM Revenue and Customs data.¹⁰⁶ Tom Bradshaw of the NFU said that it was important to have one single, agreed, estimate of the number of seasonal agricultural workers in order for Defra to "believe that that number is the right number so that they can really fight our corner".¹⁰⁷

48. **It is a matter of concern that there continues to be no single, agreed figure for the aggregate number and the breakdown by nationality of seasonal agricultural workers, given the importance of this data for the formulation of policy. The Government, employers and representative bodies must work together to develop a common methodology for measuring the aggregate number and the breakdown by nationality of seasonal workers in the food supply chain. In order that Defra's data commands confidence with stakeholders and within Government it should seek to ensure that these statistics are designated as "National Statistics" by the independent Office for Statistics Regulation.**¹⁰⁸

The new pilot

49. The Government has confirmed that the Seasonal Workers Pilot (SWP) scheme will operate in 2021 for a third year.¹⁰⁹ At the time of writing, it has yet to announce the details of the scheme including any cap on the number of workers. The Government has explained that the pilot is intended to "test the effectiveness of our immigration system at helping to alleviate seasonal labour shortages during peak production periods, whilst maintaining robust immigration control and ensuring there are minimal impacts on local communities and public services".¹¹⁰ In 2019, it allowed fruit and vegetable farmers to employ up to 2,500 non-EEA migrant seasonal workers for up to 6 months; increasing to 10,000 in 2020. The full quota was not taken up in 2020 (only 6,500 visas were issued); Kevin

103 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Seventh Report of Session 2016–17, [Feeding the nation: labour constraints](#), HC 1009, p6, para 12

104 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, Third Special Report of Session 2017–19, [Feeding the nation: labour constraints: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report of Session 2016–17](#), HC 446, p2

105 National Farmers Union ([LF50013](#)) p1

106 [Q181](#)

107 [Q29](#)

108 Office for Statistics Regulation, '[National Statistics](#)', accessed 3 December 2020

109 Home Affairs Committee, [Work of the Minister for Future Borders and Immigration](#), HC 919 2019–21, 4 November 2020, Q125

110 GOV.UK, 'Seasonal workers pilot opens', [news story](#), 6 March 2019

Foster cited the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on travel restrictions as one reason, but also acknowledged that because the pilot was running alongside freedom of movement, farmers could continue to find the labour they needed from the EEA without having to use the pilot.¹¹¹ The first two years of the SWP were limited to non-EEA immigrants working in the edible horticulture sector. The Cornwall Area Bulb Growers Association and a number of businesses in the ornamental sector have told us that they will not have sufficient employees for the daffodil harvesting season which starts in January 2021.¹¹² Seasonal workers in the food manufacturing sector have also been excluded by the SWP to date, including sheep shearing and poultry production at Christmas; the British Meat Processors Association estimated a need for “approximately 10,000–15,000 seasonal workers”.¹¹³

Seasonal workers and the Government’s settlement scheme

50. EEA seasonal workers who have already been working in the UK have been able to apply for EU Settled Status or Pre-Settled Status. The NFU reported while its members were “encouraging seasonal workers in this years’ workforce to apply for the EU settlement scheme”, it was concerned that there was “no certainty on how many seasonal workers will apply and/or go on to utilise this status by returning to UK horticultural businesses next year”.¹¹⁴ Pro Force, a labour provider, said that there was “a high level of nervousness from our client[s] and a low expectation that the EU settlement scheme will provide enough labour for the industry”.¹¹⁵ It said that although Settled and Pre-Settled Status applications for Pro-Force workers were “going well”, it “anticipated that even if all of our workers were granted pre-settled or settled status, we would have an average of 50% of the labour we need when taking in to account the annual returnee rate”.¹¹⁶

51. Victoria Prentis said that “most of the migrant labour picking daffodils in Cornwall, for example, are people with settled or pre-settled status” and that the Government was anticipating this group “will form the labour force in the early part of next year for the ornamentals and for the daffodil sector in particular”.¹¹⁷ She noted that Defra had assisted G’s Fresh in their efforts to ensure that its migrant workforce secured EU Settled Status or Pre-Settled Status.¹¹⁸

52. Overall, Victoria Prentis said that “we have about 20,000 people who may have started their lives in eastern Europe but now have settled status or pre-settled status [...] They now have the perfect legal right to stay in the UK and to pick whatever they like, as required”.¹¹⁹ She added that the size of the SWP for 2021 needed to be in the “range” of 20,000—the difference between Defra’s estimate of the total number of seasonal workers required and those it estimated already had a right to work in the UK—although she conceded that this was a “conservative figure”.¹²⁰

111 [Qq121, 168](#)

112 Cornwall Area Bulb Growers Association ([LFS0046](#)). See also National Farmers Union ([LFS0037](#)), Maurice Crouch (Growers) Ltd ([LFS0042](#)), Fentongollan Farms ([FLS0045](#)), [Q188](#)

113 British Meat Processors Association ([LFS0022](#)) p3

114 National Farmers Union ([LFS0037](#)) p2

115 Pro-Force Ltd ([LFS0040](#)) p2

116 Pro-Force Ltd ([LFS0040](#)) p2

117 [Q131](#)

118 [Q115](#)

119 [Qq115, 182](#)

120 [Qq183, 185](#)

Attracting domestic workers and lessons from Pick for Britain

Figure 3: Average hourly wages in the EU and UK in 2019¹²¹



53. Several reasons were cited by witnesses as to why domestic workers are not attracted to seasonal agricultural jobs. G’s Fresh noted that “competition for labour has driven the need to attract and retain the most talented colleagues who typically earn £13/hr [hour]”, and said that seasonal workers cannot therefore be categorised as “cheap’ labour”.¹²² Riviera Produce said that it paid its staff piecework “and most achieve rates of pay from £12 to £20/hour”.¹²³ These wage rates compare favourably to the National Living Wage (for those aged 25 and over) of £8.72 per hour, and especially favourably to wages in

121 House of Commons Library; data for Romania is for 2017

122 G’s Fresh ([LFS0048](#)) p3

123 Riviera Produce Ltd ([LFS0041](#)) p1

eastern Europe (see figure 3). Kevin Foster told us that seasonal agricultural work “is not low paid—I would not want to put it in that category; you can do very well if you are a productive, active worker”, while Victoria Prentis said that “it is a bit of a seller’s market”, highlighting the negotiating power that some seasonal workers have.¹²⁴

54. David Camp explained that there were a number of reasons why UK workers were not attracted to seasonal agricultural work:

First, it is in rural locations. Secondly, it requires living near or on the farm, which puts many off. Thirdly, there is an irregular nature to the work, in that the crops ripen when they ripen, and the weather is as the weather is. Some days you are working many, many hours or longer hours; other days there is less work. It does not stop at weekends. By the nature of the work—being outdoors, being irregular, being across seven days a week—that dissuades many as well. There are other options to earn the same amount of money, such as working in a coffee shop.¹²⁵

55. Victoria Prentis’s view was that “it is not the hard work that is putting them off. It is the impermanence of the job [...] The other reason is the geography of where these farms are” but added “neither of those is necessarily insuperable”.¹²⁶ She explained that she was working with the DWP on the introduction of special buses to allow people to get to farms more easily, but conceded that “I would not want to pretend that we have all the answers at the moment, because we do not, but we are open to looking at many models”.¹²⁷ However, G’s Fresh contended it wasn’t merely a matter of policy change but of a different “societal and industry culture” which would take years to change.¹²⁸

56. The travel restrictions caused by the covid-19 pandemic created concerns that immigrant seasonal agricultural workers would not be able to travel to the UK to harvest crops this year.¹²⁹ In response, several initiatives were launched to attract workers based in the UK into seasonal agricultural roles, including the Government’s “Pick for Britain” campaign.¹³⁰

57. Victoria Prentis said that, at its peak, the Pick for Britain website “had about 2 million hits as a website, which is useful. We had 27 growers at the busiest time advertising their roles on there”, adding “we know there was a lot of interest in those roles”.¹³¹ However, the large number of website hits did not translate into large-scale recruitment. Pro-Force reported that, of 15,000 domestic applications, only 3% were successfully placed (but noted some farmers might have recruited people directly).¹³² Victoria Prentis told us that the Government estimated that during 2020 “we think we have gone from about 1% to about 11% native Brit” working in seasonal agricultural roles.¹³³ Monthly figures compiled by NFU showed an average of 5.5% of all seasonal agricultural workers were British during the period March to August 2020 (see table 1).¹³⁴

124 [Qq123](#), [132](#)

125 [Q9](#)

126 [Q133](#)

127 [Q146](#)

128 G’s Fresh ([LF50048](#)) p2

129 [Q142](#)

130 National Farmers Union ([LF50037](#)) p1

131 [Q141](#)

132 Pro-Force Ltd ([LF50040](#)) p1

133 [Q114](#)

134 National Farmers Union ([LF50037](#)) p1

58. However, there were questions about how long domestic workers stayed in role. Pro-Force reported that “of the 450 UK based workers (this includes British and EU workers living in the UK) we placed with our clients less than 4% remained on the assignment at the end of the season”.¹³⁵ In terms of these new workers’ productivity, Place UK, a fruit producer, reported the average performance of its UK workers was only around half that of its EU staff.¹³⁶ Tom Bradshaw highlighted that returning workers “are always the most productive workers”.¹³⁷ G’s Fresh said that, in their experience, “in the first full week the British crews’ productivity levels were comparable to any other new crew”; however “this was not sustained over subsequent weeks [and] productivity levels dropped by up to 50% of their comparable EU and SWP colleagues”.¹³⁸

Table 1: UK nationals as a percentage of total seasonal agricultural workers recruited in 2020¹³⁹

	Figure for month	Figure for year to date
March	0.6	0.6
April	3	1.5
May	14.6	9.1
June	0.9	6.5
July	1.2	6.0
August	1.1	5.5

59. One consideration may be concerns from potential seasonal workers about the impact of taking non-permanent work while in receipt of welfare benefits. Universal Credit (UC) is more flexible than Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) (which it is replacing) in this regard: unlike JSA which stopped when someone worked more than 16 hours a week, recipients of UC can accept full-time seasonal work for up to 6 months without needing to close their claim.¹⁴⁰ This means that if someone makes a reclaim or has their award reinstated (it having been stopped due to the level of their earnings from seasonal agricultural work), they should be paid UC on the same day of the month as previously.¹⁴¹ Additionally, during the covid-19 pandemic, the Government permitted furloughed employees to take up seasonal agricultural work if their contract of employment allowed them to do other work.¹⁴²

60. Victoria Prentis said that “given that we had to stand it up really quickly”, Pick for Britain “was a success and it filled a bit of the gap”.¹⁴³ She said that the failure to recruit more local people “is not a fault of Pick for Britain; this is a fault of a workforce that has not been here in the past and that we need to educate and help to fill the roles we need

135 Pro-Force Ltd (LFS0040) p2

136 Place UK (LFS0039) p3

137 Q39

138 G’s Fresh (LFS0048) p4

139 National Farmers Union (LFS0037) p1

140 Department for Work and Pensions, [Universal Credit: different earning patterns and your payments \(payment cycles\)](#), updated 13 March 2019 and Department for Work and Pensions, ‘[Universal Credit and employers: 2. How Universal Credit helps employers](#)’, accessed 14 December 2020. The 16 hours limit applies to all types of Jobseekers’ Allowance, see GOV.UK, ‘[Jobseeker’s Allowance \(JSA\): Eligibility](#)’, accessed 14 December 2020.

141 House of Commons Library

142 GOV.UK, ‘[Guidance: Seasonal work on farms: guidance for workers](#)’, 29 April 2020

143 Q145

in the picking sector”.¹⁴⁴ Kevin Foster said that Pick for Britain “shows the sector itself wanting to turn to the domestic market first and to immigration second for where it could not fill the need”.¹⁴⁵

61. While we commend Defra for standing up the Pick for Britain scheme so quickly and for promoting it successfully, this cannot hide the fact that it did not achieve what it hoped to do: attract a significant number of British workers to pick crops. Given the favourable conditions in which it operated this year, i.e. the pandemic causing significant slack in the labour market coupled with significant media coverage of the need for seasonal labour, it is clear that structural changes are required if seasonal jobs are to appeal to UK workers. While the flexibilities under Universal Credit highlight the support that the Government can give through bringing forward targeted policies, the onus is on businesses to improve the pay and conditions they offer. These changes cannot be achieved overnight, especially when the industry is also facing significant uncertainties caused by the pandemic and the end of the transition period. But more fundamentally, the UK has required migrant seasonal workers since the end of the Second World War, highlighting that UK workers are not attracted to such work—it is simply not realistic to expect UK workers to return to harvesting roles in significant numbers in the short to medium-term, if ever. If there is insufficient seasonal labour, there is a danger that some agricultural companies and others in the food supply chain that rely on it may relocate abroad.

62. *We therefore recommend that the Seasonal Workers Pilot for 2021 should be expanded to include other food supply chain and agricultural sectors beyond edible horticulture, and have a sufficiently generous cap that allows all businesses to recruit the labour they need. Given that farmers need to ensure that the crops they plant will be harvested, it is essential the Government publishes the cap for 2021 immediately. This policy should be kept under review—particularly in the first half of 2021—by a joint Defra and Home Office group with a specific remit to monitor and forecast the levels of demand and supply of seasonal workers in the food supply chain to ensure that there is sufficient labour to harvest our crops.*

144 [Q147](#)

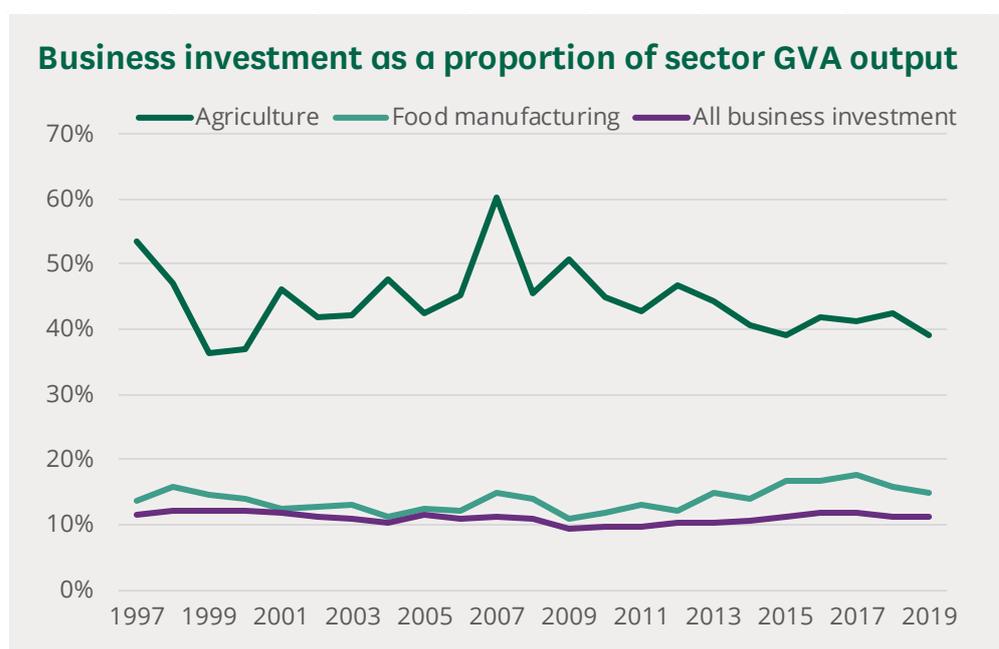
145 [Q142](#)

6 The role of technology

63. In its February 2020 immigration policy statement, the Government said that, across the whole economy, “we need to shift the focus of our economy away from a reliance on cheap labour from Europe and instead concentrate on investment in technology and automation”.¹⁴⁶

64. As the chart below shows, business investment by the agricultural sector has regularly exceeded 40% of its Gross Value Added (GVA), or around £5bn a year since 2000, compared to about 10% for the economy as a whole. For food manufacturing it has been around 15%.

Figure 4: Business investment within the agricultural, and food manufacturing sectors¹⁴⁷



65. The Recruitment and Employment Confederation said that the food supply chain employers it had spoken to “have automated a great deal already and have specific challenges to automating their business any further, especially in the short term”.¹⁴⁸ G’s Fresh told us that they had invested over £10m in developing mechanisation and automation of the harvest process, resulting in productivity improvements of 20%.¹⁴⁹ However it explained that “the resulting technology is still in its infancy and we remain heavily reliant on skilled harvest labour”, adding that “ours is a low margin industry and this inevitably limits the level of overall innovation investment which can be sustained”.¹⁵⁰ Other companies highlighted that they had also invested in technology.¹⁵¹

146 HM Government, [The UK’s Points-Based Immigration System: Policy Statement](#) (February 2020), p3

147 House of Commons Library

148 Recruitment and Employment Confederation ([LFS0015](#)) p3

149 G’s Fresh ([LFS0048](#)) p1

150 G’s Fresh ([LFS0048](#)) pp1, 7

151 For example: British Poultry Council ([LFS0032](#)) para 10; British Egg Industry Council ([LFS0012](#)) p1; Arla Foods UK ([LFS0014](#)) para 9

66. Victoria Prentis said “I would not like to pretend [technology] is the solution to our labour shortages at the moment because it is not, but it will be in the future”.¹⁵² Asked about the role for Government in encouraging research and development, and facilitating the often significant investment required, she responded:

We have a lot of work to do, but we are really excited about it. We have a transforming food production [TFP] fund that is providing up to £90 million for industry-led collaborative R&D projects. This is split between four strands: the future food production system, science and technology into practice, and other international collaboration and investor partnerships. We have already allocated a good sum of £7.6 million to currently live TFP automation projects.¹⁵³

On 30 November 2020, Defra published “The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024” highlighting the “Farming Investment Fund” as part of the Government’s wider plans. It will consist of the “Farming Equipment and Technology Fund” and the “Farming Transformation Fund”.¹⁵⁴ Further announcements on it and the Innovation Research and Development Scheme will follow next year.¹⁵⁵

67. While the agricultural and food manufacturing sectors have a good record on investing, one way of meeting the challenges of the new immigration policy is for the food supply chain, assisted by innovative and well-designed Government schemes, to become more capital intensive and both drive forward and exploit technological opportunities. However, this will take time to have an impact, and it is likely that many roles throughout the food supply chain will be difficult to affordably mechanise for many years, especially for smaller businesses. This further points to the difficulties the industry faces with the sudden changes to the availability of labour as a result of the Government’s new immigration policy.

68. We welcome the announcement in November of additional Government funding for new technology, and call upon Defra to publish a strategy within 6 months setting out how it will work with technology providers and the food supply chain to ensure our farming and food production sectors can help develop and take advantage of the latest technological advancements. The Government should monitor the speed at which the mechanisation of roles currently done by seasonal labour becomes economic for all farmers, including small farmers, and this should be reflected in the setting of the cap on the Seasonal Workers Pilot.

152 [Q199](#)

153 [Q198](#)

154 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [The Path to Sustainable Farming: An Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024](#) (November 2020), pp51–52

155 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, [Farming is Changing](#) (November 2020), p19

Appendix 1: Summary of changes to skilled worker and other visa schemes

Previous immigration policy	New immigration policy
Applicability	
Non-EEA/Swiss nationals	All migrant workers
Lower skilled or low salary	
No general visa category for jobs with lower skill/salary levels. Demand to be met from the resident labour force and supply of workers from EU.	New points-based immigration system No general visa category for jobs with lower skill/salary level. Alongside the availability of resident workers with unrestricted work rights, employers are advised to invest in staff retention, productivity, and technology.
Skilled workers	
<p>“Tier 2 (General)” visa for graduate level jobs (RQF level 6) or above.</p> <p>Allows a maximum of six years’ stay in the UK (potential to acquire permanent permission to stay after five years, subject to eligibility criteria including a salary threshold of £35,800).</p>	<p>“Skilled Worker” visa for school leaver level jobs (RQF level 3) or above.</p> <p>Allows unlimited length of stay in the UK (potential to acquire permanent permission to stay after five years, subject to a salary threshold of £25,600).</p>
<p>An annual limit of 20,700 new visas available (subject to exemptions), broken down into monthly allocations. Priority given to shortage occupation list and higher-salary jobs.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria include:</p> <p>Resident labour market test: available for vacancies that the employer has already advertised to the resident labour market, or which are on the shortage occupation list or have a salary over £159,600.</p> <p>Sponsorship: the visa applicant must have a confirmed job offer from an employer licensed by the Home Office to sponsor migrant workers.</p> <p>Salary: For most workers the salary must be at least £30,000 per year or the ‘going rate’ for the job if higher.</p>	<p>No annual limit on number of visas available.</p> <p>Eligibility criteria include:</p> <p>Genuine vacancy requirement: resident labour market test requirement abolished in favour of a requirement to demonstrate a ‘genuine’ vacancy.</p> <p>Sponsorship: unchanged from Tier 2 (General)</p> <p>Salary requirement: For most workers the salary must be at least £25,600 or the ‘going rate’ for the job if higher. Applicants with a job offer with a lower salary (minimum £20,480) may still be eligible for a visa if they have other points-scoring attributes (e.g. a PhD level qualification or are filling a shortage occupation) against their lower salary.</p>

Previous immigration policy	New immigration policy
<p>English language and available maintenance funds requirements: The applicant must have intermediate knowledge of English (CEFR level B1) and available maintenance funds (£945).</p> <p>Sponsorship and visa fees and charges: the employer must pay the fees for obtaining a licence to sponsor migrant workers and the Immigration Skills Charge. The employer/worker must pay the visa application fee and associated visa processing costs, and the Immigration Health Surcharge.</p>	<p>English language and maintenance funds requirements: As per Tier 2 (General); maintenance funds requirement increased to £1,270.</p> <p>Sponsorship and visa fees and charges: same as Tier 2 (General).</p>
<p>Other relevant visa routes:</p>	
<p>Tier 5—Seasonal worker pilot</p> <p>For people coming to take up a job offer as a seasonal worker on fruit and vegetable farms. Allows up to six months' stay in the UK. Originally 'capped' at 2,500 places, and increased to 10,000 places for 2020.</p>	<p>Other relevant visa routes:</p> <p>Seasonal Worker visa: details to be confirmed.</p> <p>Post-Study work visa</p> <p>For international graduates who began studies in the UK in 2020/21</p> <p>Will enable international graduates who began studies in the UK in 2020/21 to stay in the UK after graduation and work at any skill level and 'switch' into the Skilled Worker visa route if they secure eligible employment in the UK.</p>

Source: House of Commons Library

Conclusions and recommendations

The new immigration policy

1. In order to secure the labour it requires to maintain production levels under the new immigration policy, the food supply chain will have to attract more resident staff. Although it must be recognised there are significant structural barriers preventing many domestic workers from substantial engagement in seasonal harvest work and this is not a new feature of the UK labour market. Additionally, as we explore in the following chapters, it should be recognised that it is not just a question of better pay, but also of improved conditions that will attract more UK workers to businesses in the food supply chain. While there are benefits to improving the attractiveness of the food supply chain as a place to work in terms of securing a more stable and predictable workforce, there is a risk that this may come at the cost of higher consumer food prices or a loss of market share to imports potentially produced to lower standards. This would impact on the UK's food security and on the ability of some families to afford enough healthy nutritious food. As we made clear in our report on covid-19 and food supply there are already concerns about both. *The Government should pay particular attention to food prices in the period after the introduction of the new immigration policy—if prices rise, due to a shortage of labour, it should stand ready to make appropriate policy adjustments.* (Paragraph 15)

Skilled workers

2. The UK is competing globally for skilled labour, the availability of which is vital to the ongoing success of the UK food supply chain. It is important therefore that bureaucracy and fees are minimised, and their impact kept under review. We are concerned that many potential candidates from EEA countries may prefer to work in other countries within the European Single Market exercising their rights of freedom of movement. We welcome measures taken by the Government to reduce both the skill and salary level for the Skilled Worker visa, compared to the Tier 2 visa, as more food supply chain roles will now be eligible. However, we are disappointed that the Government decided not to implement the Migration Advisory Committee's latest review of the Shortage Occupation List prior to the start of the new immigration policy. *Defra and the Home Office should consult food supply chain businesses during the first half of 2021 on the impact of the PBS and associated paperwork and fees to ensure that they are able to recruit sufficient staff from overseas where this is necessary so to do. They should provide the Committee with the outcomes of those consultations before the summer recess. The Government should reconsider its decision not to implement the Migration Advisory Committee's latest Shortage Occupation List review to help ensure that food supply chain businesses can secure the labour they need.* (Paragraph 25)
3. The example of the veterinarian sector highlights the important role that overseas-trained employees undertake in the food supply chain, in this case working in abattoirs that are unattractive to UK-trained vets. In addition, these Official Veterinarians face an increase in their workload due to increased checks on exports

as a result of Brexit. These factors, combined with the fact it takes several years to train vets, risk creating a situation where there is insufficient veterinary labour, without which animal products cannot be cleared for export. (Paragraph 29)

4. For those employing skilled workers, it is important to ensure that pay and conditions reflect the nature of the work in order to help attract more UK workers into the food supply chain. For example, the Government's work to increase the number of Official Veterinarians and introduce Certification Support Officers is welcome although questions remain about whether they go far enough to meet the increased workload after the end of the transition period. *Both Government and business have a role to play in ensuring that skilled work in the food supply chain is an attractive career option in order to address some sub-sectors' reliance on migrant staff. However, in the short to medium-term the Government, in designing its policy, must also be more conscious of the time and investment it takes to train new skilled workers, especially professionals such as vets. This is particularly important when the industry faces substantial uncertainty such as new rules on trade and the impact of the pandemic. It should closely monitor the impact of the new immigration policy on the supply of skilled workers in the food supply chain and make immediate adjustments if bottlenecks emerge.* (Paragraph 30)

Low-skilled migrants

5. By focusing on academic qualifications, the new immigration policy takes a narrow focus on skills, although we welcome the Government's decision to reduce the threshold to the equivalent of A-levels or Scottish Highers (RQF3/SCQF6). We are concerned that this policy will pose challenges for food manufacturers and others in the food supply chain who use lower skilled or lower paid staff, especially because of the limited time to prepare, exacerbated by the covid-19 pandemic, and the absence of a transition period (as proposed in the superseded 2018 White Paper). However, the anticipated rise in UK unemployment next year might provide opportunities for the sector to encourage people to change careers—the food supply chain can do more to encourage this by making itself more attractive to potential employees. The Government can also take steps to support the sector to encourage UK workers and the unemployed to consider roles in food production and to re-train or re-skill. The Union Learning Fund—for which Government funding will cease in 2021—has been brought up as an example of how this could be achieved. As data for the food and drink manufacturing sector demonstrates, businesses were able to source almost all their workers domestically prior to the eastern expansion of the EU in 2004. It must also be accepted, however, that edible horticulture, and especially soft fruit, has enjoyed very significant growth since 2004 as a direct consequence of access to migrant EEA seasonal labour and we want the sector to grow further. (Paragraph 39)
6. *Food supply chain businesses should seek to attract the unemployed who may previously have worked in other sectors of the UK economy through better pay and conditions and offering training opportunities. The Government should also play a role in supporting the retraining of labour through engagement with employers and unions, and given its decision to terminate the Union Learning Fund should ensure there is an effective replacement for the valuable work that the Committee recognises it has done.* (Paragraph 40)

7. *The lack of a transition period for the introduction of the new immigration policy creates risks and therefore Defra, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions must work together to closely monitor the food supply chain to monitor the impact of the absence of a low skilled immigration route, and be prepared to take action that will swiftly alleviate any labour supply problems as the food supply chain adjusts to the new immigration policy.* (Paragraph 41)

Seasonal agricultural workers

8. It is a matter of concern that there continues to be no single, agreed figure for the aggregate number and the breakdown by nationality of seasonal agricultural workers, given the importance of this data for the formulation of policy. *The Government, employers and representative bodies must work together to develop a common methodology for measuring the aggregate number and the breakdown by nationality of seasonal workers in the food supply chain. In order that Defra's data commands confidence with stakeholders and within Government it should seek to ensure that these statistics are designated as "National Statistics" by the independent Office for Statistics Regulation.* (Paragraph 48)
9. While we commend Defra for standing up the Pick for Britain scheme so quickly and for promoting it successfully, this cannot hide the fact that it did not achieve what it hoped to do: attract a significant number of British workers to pick crops. Given the favourable conditions in which it operated this year, i.e. the pandemic causing significant slack in the labour market coupled with significant media coverage of the need for seasonal labour, it is clear that structural changes are required if seasonal jobs are to appeal to UK workers. While the flexibilities under Universal Credit highlight the support that the Government can give through bringing forward targeted policies, the onus is on businesses to improve the pay and conditions they offer. These changes cannot be achieved overnight, especially when the industry is also facing significant uncertainties caused by the pandemic and the end of the transition period. But more fundamentally, the UK has required migrant seasonal workers since the end of the Second World War, highlighting that UK workers are not attracted to such work—it is simply not realistic to expect UK workers to return to harvesting roles in significant numbers in the short to medium-term, if ever. If there is insufficient seasonal labour, there is a danger that some agricultural companies and others in the food supply chain that rely on it may relocate abroad. (Paragraph 61)
10. *We therefore recommend that the Seasonal Workers Pilot for 2021 should be expanded to include other food supply chain and agricultural sectors beyond edible horticulture, and have a sufficiently generous cap that allows all businesses to recruit the labour they need. Given that farmers need to ensure that the crops they plant will be harvested, it is essential the Government publishes the cap for 2021 immediately. This policy should be kept under review—particularly in the first half of 2021—by a joint Defra and Home Office group with a specific remit to monitor and forecast the levels of demand and supply of seasonal workers in the food supply chain to ensure that there is sufficient labour to harvest our crops.* (Paragraph 62)

The role of technology

11. While the agricultural and food manufacturing sectors have a good record on investing, one way of meeting the challenges of the new immigration policy is for the food supply chain, assisted by innovative and well-designed Government schemes, to become more capital intensive and both drive forward and exploit technological opportunities. However, this will take time to have an impact, and it is likely that many roles throughout the food supply chain will be difficult to affordably mechanise for many years, especially for smaller businesses. This further points to the difficulties the industry faces with the sudden changes to the availability of labour as a result of the Government's new immigration policy. (Paragraph 67)
12. *We welcome the announcement in November of additional Government funding for new technology, and call upon Defra to publish a strategy within 6 months setting out how it will work with technology providers and the food supply chain to ensure our farming and food production sectors can help develop and take advantage of the latest technological advancements. The Government should monitor the speed at which the mechanisation of roles currently done by seasonal labour becomes economic for all farmers, including small farmers, and this should be reflected in the setting of the cap on the Seasonal Workers Pilot.* (Paragraph 68)

Formal minutes

THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER 2020

Hybrid meeting

Members present:

Neil Parish, in the Chair

Ian Byrne	Dr Neil Hudson
Geraint Davies	Robbie Moore
Dave Doogan	Mrs Sheryll Murray
Barry Gardiner	

Labour in food supply chain

Draft Report (*The UK's new immigration policy and the food supply chain*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 68, figures 1 to 4, and table 1, read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

A paper was attached to the Report as Appendix 1

Resolved, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

[Adjourned until Tuesday 12 January 2021 at 1.45 p.m.]

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 07 July 2020

Tom Bradshaw, Vice President, National Farmers Union (NFU); **Mr David Camp**, Chief Executive, Association of Labour Providers

[Q1–49](#)

Tuesday 15 September 2020

Tim Rycroft, Chief Operating Officer, Food and Drink Federation; **Simon Doherty**, Senior Vice President, British Veterinary Association (BVA); **Richard Griffiths**, Chief Executive, British Poultry Council

[Q50–108](#)

Tuesday 17 November 2020

Victoria Prentis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; **Kevin Foster MP**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Home Office; **Tim Mordan**, Head of Farming - Innovation, Productivity and Science, Defra; **Philippa Rouse**, Director, Future Border & Immigration System Directorate, Home Office

[Q109–202](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

LFS numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 AG Recruitment and Management Ltd ([LFS0049](#))
- 2 Allen, Mr Nick (Chief Executive, British Meat Processors Association) ([LFS0006](#))
- 3 Association of Labour Providers ([LFS0038](#))
- 4 British, The Impact of Government Proposed Points-Based Immigration System on the Food Industry ([LFS0001](#))
- 5 Brassica Growers Association ([LFS0025](#))
- 6 British Growers Association ([LFS0047](#))
- 7 British Growers Association ([LFS0021](#))
- 8 British Herb Trade Association ([LFS0028](#))
- 9 British Meat Processors Association ([LFS0043](#))
- 10 British Meat Processors Association ([LFS0022](#))
- 11 British Poultry Council ([LFS0050](#))
- 12 British Poultry Council ([LFS0032](#))
- 13 British Veterinary Association (BVA) ([LFS0031](#))
- 14 Camp, Mr David (Chief Executive, Association of Labour Providers) ([LFS0017](#))
- 15 Chambers, Mrs Rachel (Policy Adviser (Skills and Employment), National Farmers Union) ([LFS0013](#))
- 16 Concordia ([LFS0019](#))
- 17 Cornwall Area Bulb Growers Association (CABCA) ([LFS0046](#))
- 18 Cotton, Helena (Public Affairs Manager, British Veterinary Association (BVA)) ([LFS0035](#))
- 19 Cucumber Growers Association ([LFS0023](#))
- 20 Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs ([LFS0033](#))
- 21 Devine, Mr Gavin (Acting Head of Public Affairs, Arla Foods UK) ([LFS0014](#))
- 22 Dixon, Miss Beverly (Group HR Director, G's) ([LFS0004](#))
- 23 Emmett, Mr Martin (Chair of Education and Employment Subgroup, Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group) ([LFS0009](#))
- 24 Fentongollan Farms ([LFS0045](#))
- 25 Food and Drink Federation (FDF) ([LFS0034](#))
- 26 Fresh Produce Consortium ([LFS0051](#))
- 27 G's Fresh Ltd ([LFS0048](#))
- 28 G's Fresh Ltd ([LFS0020](#))
- 29 Greater Lincolnshire LEP ([LFS0027](#))
- 30 Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership ([LFS0052](#))
- 31 Hardman, John ([LFS0036](#))

- 32 HOPS Labour Solutions ([LFS0054](#))
- 33 Kay, Miss Eleanor (Policy Adviser (Agriculture), Scottish Land & Estates) ([LFS0018](#))
- 34 Knight, Mr Matthew (Managing Director, Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers) ([LFS0011](#))
- 35 Legge, Mr James (Head of Political, Countryside Alliance) ([LFS0007](#))
- 36 Lerigo-Stephens, Hannah (Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager, Rights Lab, University of Nottingham) ([LFS0016](#))
- 37 Maurice Crouch (Growers) Ltd ([LFS0042](#))
- 38 National Farmers Union (NFU) ([LFS0053](#))
- 39 National Farmers Union (NFU) ([LFS0037](#))
- 40 National Farmers Union of Scotland ([LFS0044](#))
- 41 Professor Simon Pearson (Director the Lincoln Institute of Agri-Food Technology, The University of Lincoln); and Dr Dave Ross (Chief Executive Officer, Agri-Epi) ([LFS0029](#))
- 42 Pepper, Ms Deb ([LFS0030](#))
- 43 Piotrowicz, Professor Ryszard ([LFS0002](#))
- 44 Place UK ([LFS0039](#))
- 45 Pro-Force Ltd ([LFS0040](#))
- 46 Rodda MBE, Mr David (Economic Growth Manager, Cornwall Council) ([LFS0010](#))
- 47 Riviera Produce Ltd ([LFS0041](#))
- 48 Riviera Produce Ltd ([LFS0024](#))
- 49 Russell, Mr Chris (Policy Adviser, Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC)) ([LFS0015](#))
- 50 Slipper, Ms Clare (Political Affairs Manager, National Farmers Union of Scotland (NFU Scotland)) ([LFS0003](#))
- 51 Thomas, Mrs Sian (Communication Manager, Fresh Produce Consortium) ([LFS0008](#))
- 52 UK Mushroom Growers Association ([LFS0026](#))
- 53 Williams, Mr Mark (Chief Executive, British Egg Industry Council) ([LFS0012](#))
- 54 Wood, Ellie (Public Affairs Manager, CLA) ([LFS0005](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	COVID-19 and food supply	HC 263
1st Special	COVID-19 and food supply: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 841
2nd	Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair Designate of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP)	HC 1042
3rd	The UK's new immigration policy and the food supply chain	HC 231