



What do we mean by ‘sustainable food’?

The Somerset Food Trail is organised by [Sustainable Food Somerset](#) and celebrates the people in our dynamic local food culture who are leading the transition to a new more regenerative and environmentally friendly approach to farming and food production (encompassing organic, biodynamic, permaculture and other forms of agroecological farming).

We recognise that people are at different stages of the sustainability journey, and everyone has to start somewhere. The Trail is a way of bringing the public and fellow producers on the journey with you, so they understand and are invested in the important changes you’re making.

Definitions of what is sustainable can vary in the detail, but broadly sustainable food refers to food that is produced, processed, distributed, and consumed in ways that protect and enhance the environment, promote public health, ensure fair treatment of workers, and support local economies without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Key principles of sustainable food

1. Environmental Stewardship:

- **Eco-friendly/sustainable farming practices***: Implementing methods such as organic farming, regenerative agriculture, and permaculture to maintain soil health, conserve water, and reduce pollution. [More on this below]
- **Biodiversity preservation**: Encouraging diverse crop rotations and the use of native plant species to support ecosystem resilience.

2. Ethical sourcing and animal welfare:

- **Humane treatment**: Ensuring livestock are raised in conditions that allow natural behaviours and minimise stress.
- **Sustainable fisheries**: Procuring seafood from sources that do not over exploit marine populations, thus maintaining ecological balance.

3. Local and seasonal procurement:

- **Reducing 'food miles'**: Sourcing ingredients from local producers to decrease transportation-related emissions and support local economies, whilst increasing market resilience.
- **Seasonal menus**: Designing dishes around seasonal produce to ensure maximum nutritional value, freshness and reduction of energy-intensive storage or imports.

4. Resource efficiency:

- **Energy and water conservation**: Adopting technologies and practices that minimise energy and water usage in food production and preparation

- **Waste reduction:** Implementing strategies to minimise food waste through careful planning, portion control, composting or re-distributing
5. **Social responsibility:**
- **Fair treatment of workers and working conditions:** Ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and respect for workers' rights throughout the food supply chain.
 - **Community engagement:** Collaborating with diverse local communities to support food education, accessibility, and cultural food traditions

Participating in the Somerset Food Trail Festival offers an excellent opportunity to showcase your commitment to these principles and meet the growing consumer demand for environmentally and socially responsible food choices.

* Examples of eco-friendly sustainable farming practices

Sustainable farming is an umbrella term for a variety of eco-friendly practices. We see sustainable farming practices as those that:

- Improve soil over time, leading to more nutrient-dense crops and healthier animals
- Diversify and rotate crops to improve resilience and reduce dependency on chemical inputs
- Avoid or reduce negative environmental impacts such as soil erosion or waterway pollution
- Produce more nutritious food, leading to better health outcomes
- Restore biodiversity, preferably by gradually reducing and eliminating artificial/chemical inputs (which can lead to greater profitability for farm businesses)
- Aim for a minimal carbon footprint and maximise opportunities for carbon sequestration within the productive landscape
- Avoid damaging or wasting natural resources or contributing to climate change
- Apply circular economy and cooperative principles where possible to save money and limit carbon footprint
- Promotes supply chain resilience and local economic resilience, for example, via localisation of supply chains, diversity of suppliers and crops
- Contribute to thriving local economies and sustainable livelihoods
- Provide social benefits, such as good quality food, safe and healthy products, and educational opportunities.

Who can take part

The Food Trail Festival features local farmers, growers and artisan food producers and the 'ecosystem' of chefs, bakers, independent food retailers, markets, caterers and hospitality businesses that support them. We especially welcome participation by community food growers and community cafes, smallholders, allotment groups, gleaners, foragers – anyone

who can demonstrate that it's possible to eat nutritious, fresh local/sustainable food on a limited budget.

Examples of sustainability in action

Restaurants/retail/pop-ups

- Selling/ serving food which is:
 - Sourced from local sustainable producers to ensure transparency and freshness
 - Produced to higher environmental, social or animal welfare standards such as [organic](#), [Rainforest Alliance](#), [RSPO certified palm oil](#), [MSC certified fish and seafood](#), [Fairtrade](#). Eggs should be free range or organic, meat should ideally be grassfed*, [Pasture for Life](#), [RSPCA Assured](#), [Fair to Nature](#), or similar.
- Offering a selection of appealing, pesticide-free, plant-based options, as plant-based diets generally have a lower environmental impact, and eating a wide variety of (sustainably grown) vegetables is good for health
- Actively working to reduce food and packaging waste and compost or redistribute surplus food to the community
- Training staff on sustainability principles to ensure cohesive implementation and to educate customers.
- Supporting the local community through, for example, being Living Wage accredited, supporting local causes, serving healthy options and buying from other sustainability-focused local businesses

By embracing sustainable food practices, we collectively contribute to a healthier planet, support vibrant, resilient communities, and provide nutritious, ethically produced food for all.

Ready to apply to take part? Apply via the form on the front page of our website, www.somersetfoodtrail.org, to tell us about your business and where you are on the sustainability journey. We will then be in touch to discuss how you can take part.

The deadline for applying to take part is **15 May 2025**.

Further reading/links

- sustainablebusiness toolkit.com
- bda.uk.com
- [The science behind the UK's Sustainable Farming initiative](#)