



Movement Listening Update 2026



Overview

Farming the Future continues to act as a philanthropic intermediary dedicated to resourcing the UK's agroecological movement in a way that shares power and centres the needs of the movement.

By specifically funding the capacity to collaborate, our goal is to grow, strengthen, and connect the agroecology sector while creating the enabling conditions for systemic change.

How We Listened

To understand the current needs of the movement, we analysed partner surveys, thematic application reviews, funded partner reflections, and workshop notes.

These personal testimonies have shown how trust-based funding enables essential work to evolve through relationship building, knowledge sharing, and co-creation in areas as diverse as migrant solidarity, seed sovereignty, land matching, and networks of supply. To ensure our analysis remained objective and free from our own bias, we double-checked our manual and instinctual findings using AI.

Key Themes and Levers for Change

From this extensive listening, three broad areas of need have clearly emerged from our funded partner network of 150 organisations working across agroecology and food sovereignty:



- 1** Resourcing movement infrastructure for knowledge exchange and collective action;
- 2** Pushing for systemic policy reform through collaborative advocacy.
- 3** Focusing on social justice in farming, particularly regarding land access and burnout.



Diving deeper into these areas, six thematic insights have emerged.

We will use these to inform our funding and movement building efforts.

We are also sharing them publicly to help other funders draw on them to flow more and better resources into longer-term systems change in UK food and farming.



1

Strengthening Shared Movement Infrastructure

A primary need across the movement is the strengthening of shared infrastructure to build collective capacity.



- **Common Assets & Governance:** The movement requires investment in common assets like communication channels, advocacy, and data sharing, as well as new democratic governance and power-sharing models that benefit all organisations.
- **Fostering Connection:** Rather than continuously funding new projects, partners are asking for resources that foster coordination, connection, and relationship-building among existing initiatives.
- **Collective Care & Time:** Supporting relational infrastructure means creating dedicated spaces for collective care to address severe burnout (including amongst landworkers), facilitating conflict resolution, and providing individuals with the funded time and space to dream, plan, and build trust.

2

Fostering JEDI and Just Pathways to Land

There is an urgent need to move Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) work from being a peripheral container into a foundational part of the movement's strategy.

- **Dismantling Barriers:** This involves actively dismantling systemic barriers and centring the lived experiences of landworkers and change seekers- including BPOC, queer, migrant, and working-class people.
- **Secure Access to Land:** A critical enabling condition for marginalised groups is facilitating secure and just access to land. Collaborative funding can be used to develop community land ownership models, provide legal advice for contracts, and offer targeted business mentorship for marginalised new entrants facing structural inequalities.



3

Developing Alternative Economic Infrastructure

For a new farming system to be viable, the movement must rebuild the economic infrastructure sitting between production and consumption.

- **The "Middle" of the Supply Chain:** There is a distinct lack of support and investment for the work of relocating supply chains – including regional food hubs, mid-scale processing equipment, local abattoirs, and co-operative business models.
- **Public Procurement:** Getting agroecological food into schools and hospitals through public procurement is a powerful lever for systems change that can unlock regional markets and pressure government policy.



4

Collaborative Policy Advocacy and Reform

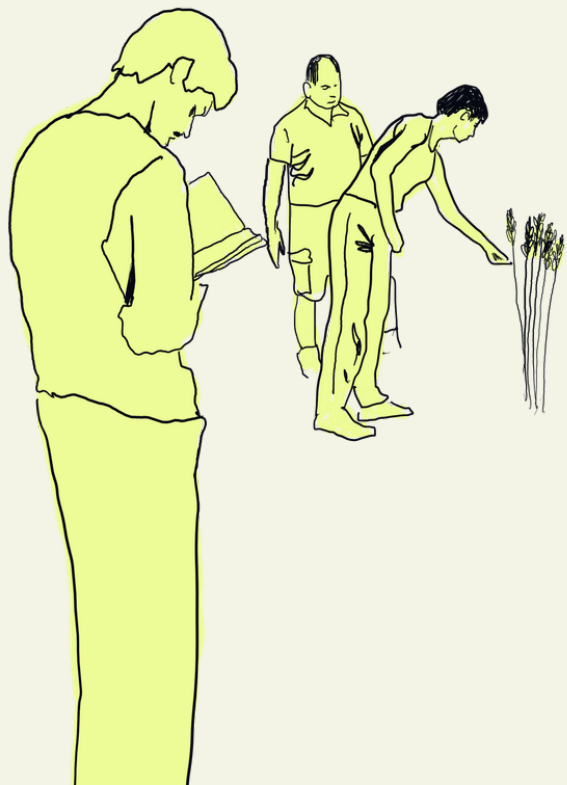
Funding is needed to support structured alliances that can engage with policymakers to push for systemic reform at local, devolved, and national levels.

By resourcing collaborative advocacy, the movement can shape agricultural, food and procurement policies, influence international trade standards, and maintain direct lines of communication between grassroots practitioners and parliamentarians with a unified voice.



5

Shifting the Narrative through Creative Storytelling



The movement has highlighted that the case for agroecology is not yet being heard, necessitating a more compelling, shared narrative to build confidence among the public and policymakers.

- **Creative Formats over Academic Research:** Instead of commissioning new academic research, partners need support to consolidate existing evidence into highly accessible, creative formats—such as documentaries, community arts, and photography—that connect emotionally and culturally.
- **Proving Viability:** Collective storytelling is vital for delegitimising extractive Big Ag models while spreading the message that alternative agroecological structures are viable and directly linked to human health and climate resilience.

6

Providing Trust-Based, Patient, and Unconditional Finance

To support these areas relationally, the movement is calling for a radical shift in how funding is distributed.

- **Patient Capital:** There is a strong demand for long-term, patient capital and unrestricted core funding to sustain existing good work, rather than forcing organisations to invent new pilots just to secure grants.
- **Radical Funding Models:** To build trust and combat economic precarity and burnout, models such as tiered trust-based grants, funding unconditional periods of rest, and a 'Basic Income for Farmers' could provide practitioners with the financial security needed to transition their systems.

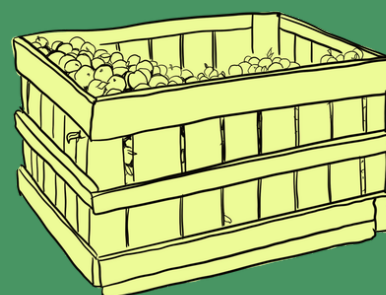




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