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Two million hectare shortfall in UK land possible by 2030, study finds

Cambridge-hosted industry platform calls for joint action plan with government

By 2030, the UK could require up to 7 million hectares of additional land to meet a growing population's food, space and renewable energy needs, while increasing the area needed to protect nature and its services, a new report coordinated by the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) warned today. This represents more than 35% of the UK's existing agricultural land, and compares with up to 5 million hectares that might be released from a range of potential supply side initiatives.

The report, *The Best Use of UK Agricultural Land*, was produced by the Cambridge-hosted Natural Capital Leaders Platform in collaboration with Asda, Sainsbury's, Nestlé, BOCM PAULS, AB Agri, Yara, BASF, and Volac, as well as the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Country Land and Business Association. The aim was to understand the amount of additional land needed, and provide a simple, clear vision for UK agricultural land use alongside a set of principles to guide future decision-making.

Andrew Montague-Fuller, Programme Manager at CISL, and author of the report said: "In this initial analysis, we identified a significant gap between additional land demand and potential supply, as well as a worrying lack of clarity about what agricultural land is expected to deliver. It is clear that more research is needed, and that business, government, farmers, and landowners need to work together to ensure we can meet these growing demands, while also protecting the environment."

The report quantifies a number of 'supply-side' measures that could help to meet additional demand, including improving yields and reducing food waste, while highlighting the need to understand how much land can be used for multiple purposes. But it warns that these initiatives may not be sufficient to close the gap, in which case difficult choices will need to be made.

Dr Chris Brown, Sustainable Business Director at Asda said: "Businesses need clarity to inform supply chain choices and guide investment decisions. We would highly recommend this report to industry colleagues, Government departments and key farming organisations and strongly support the further development of its analysis and joint vision of how UK agricultural land needs to be optimised."

Andy Richardson, Head of Corporate Communications at Volac, said: "I hope the vision proposed in this report is a catalyst for greater action and integrated thinking on land use. Lack of leadership in this area has the potential to compromise our future food and energy security. We should take the opportunity to join up thinking between Industry and Government by building on this report's analysis to develop a decision making framework and an action plan."

Dr Andrea Graham, Chief Land Management Adviser at the NFU, said: "While there are complex

trade-offs and tough choices ahead on land use, this report shows that agricultural land will need to be multi-functional, delivering a range of goods and services. We will need the full range of tools to meet future demand, employing the very best technology and innovation to drive efficiency, quality, yields and profitability."

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Contact details

To find out more or to request an embargoed copy of the report, contact: John Pharoah on +44 (0) 1223 768844 or by email at john.pharoah@cisl.cam.ac.uk or Amy Barry of Di:ga Communications on amy@digacommunications.com or +44 (0)7980 664397

Notes

The report will be launched at an event at the British Society on 25th June 2014. It will be available to download from that day at: www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/NatCap

Note on the numbers: the report predicts an increase in demand for UK land of between 2 and 7 million hectares by 2030. It predicts an increase in supply of land of between 1 and 5 million by the same year. The potential 2m-hectare shortfall referred to in the press release headline would occur in the event of the maximum increase in demand and supply. In the event that the demand increased by 7m but the supply only increased by 1m (the max-min scenario), the shortfall would be 6m hectares. In the event that demand only increased by 2m and supply increased by 5m (the min-max scenario) there would be no shortfall at all. See the graph on page 11 of the report for more detail.

The Cambridge Natural Capital Leaders Platform convenes companies wishing to better understand and manage their impacts and dependencies on natural capital. By valuing these, members are able to make better decisions, identify new business opportunities and contribute solutions to natural capital loss and ecosystem degradation. Current Platform members include: Anglian Water, Anglo American, Asda, Grupo Andre Maggi, Ingredion, Kingfisher, Mars, Mondelez, Nestlé, Olam, SAB Miller, Volac.

The University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) brings together business, government and academia to find solutions to critical sustainability challenges. Capitalising on the world-class, multidisciplinary strengths of the University of Cambridge, CISL deepens leaders' insight and understanding through its executive programmes, builds deep, strategic engagement with leadership companies, and creates opportunities for collaborative enquiry and action through its business platforms. HRH The Prince of Wales is the patron of CISL and has inspired and supported many of our initiatives.