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Briefing on the outlook to 2033 for agriculture in the United Kingdom

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[Realigning UK Food Production and Trade for Transition to Healthy and Sustainable Diets](#)



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Near and Medium-term Macroeconomic Outlook

The projections for the macroeconomic variables that are used in the model come from Standard and Poor (S & P). The world FAPRI international outlook used macroeconomic projections from S & P's December forecast. In general they show inflation falling to historical levels after climbing in most countries in 2022 and 2023. Interest rates fall back and in the medium term global growth resumes. For the UK the macroeconomic expectations have changed since December, with growth prospects for 2024 and 2025 notably lower, so the S & P forecasts for April are included here.

Low growth in the near term is likely to negatively impact per capita UK consumption of food, particularly meat and some dairy products. Price movements will also have an impact on consumption, with UK meat prices (in all categories) currently very high. Population is also important, with the UK expected to add around 2 million people by the end of the projection period – which will positively affect aggregate consumption.

Crops

Crop sector developments in the UK will be dominated by the weather in 2024. Wet weather in the planting period has seen the areas of wheat and rapeseed fall. It is expected that barley will pick up some of that area, but yields are likely to be negatively impacted too. In 2025 we assume that a return to average weather will occur and crop areas will recover and return to their normal pattern. Over the longer term developments in world markets (where productivity is expected to outstrip population growth) and exchange rate movements see crop prices fall. After 2025 crop areas fall as a result of this. Yields continue to increase in line with trends and this offsets some of the fall in area.

As meat production rises, demand for animal feed increases and this means consumption of cereals in the UK rises. This means that there is no opportunity to grow exports. Of course, the projections given here are just representative of the average expected under the assumed conditions, and in reality, we would expect there to be volatility within the outlook period, particularly in prices and yields.

Meat and Dairy

Beef prices have been very strong in recent years. Some beef comes from the dairy herd, and as this is expected to shrink there will be further downward pressure on production of beef. However, the strong prices should keep non-dairy cow numbers up. The pig sector has endured several difficult years over which production has fallen significantly. We project that this levels out over the projections, as feed costs fall.

Population growth and falling prices increase the total amount of meat consumed in the UK. It is difficult to project meat consumption 10 years into the future. Changes in tastes play a major role in the evolution of consumption, as has been seen in the dairy sector for butter where a reversal of thinking on the health attributes of butter has resulted in strong growth after years of decline. In addition to this, population demographics are changing, with the population ageing, which could influence consumption patterns.

Trends in UK consumption, production, imports, exports, and prices for relevant commodities are set out below in Tables 1 to 3.

Table 1. Summary of near- and medium-term baseline projections: crops

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2033
Crops						
Prices		(Pounds per tonne)				
Wheat	201	271	190	208	192	183
Barley	163	238	167	164	169	165
Rapeseed	497	644	380	346	381	346
Wheat balance		(Tonne)				
Area	1790	1813	1720	1440	1779	1768
Yield	7.81	8.57	8.13	7.65	8.03	8.28
Production	13988	15540	13980	11010	14279	14632
Imports	2060	1634	1338	2683	1522	2885
Exports	295	864	270	1009	607	787
Consumption	13880	14687	15086	14049	14947	16664
Stocks	3215	4838	4800	3435	3682	4606
Barley balance						
Area	1150	1116	1137	1220	1120	1078
Yield	6.05	6.62	6.13	6.03	6.31	6.61
Production	6961	7385	6963	7360	7073	7131
Imports	123	82	125	74	70	95
Exports	772	898	884	967	637	340
Consumption	6969	6187	6107	6548	6378	6842
Stocks	921	1303	1400	1319	1447	1866
Rapeseed balance						
Area	307	365	391	320	357	409
Yield	3.19	3.73	3.11	3.34	3.24	3.26
Production	981	1361	1216	1070	1155	1333
Imports	975	728	502	536	535	535
Exports	58	33	30	11	118	223
Consumption	1874	2057	1686	1635	1560	1640
Stocks	60	62	60	20	32	106
Per capita non-feed consumption		(Kg per head)				
Wheat	107.1	112.1	123.8	113.8	120.7	132.6
Barley	30.0	31.8	32.7	32.7	32.5	33.3
Potatoes	63.1	52.8	52.6	52.3	56.4	54.5

Table 2. Summary of near- and medium-term projections: meat and fish

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2033
Meat						
Prices		(Pounds per 100kg)				
Cattle	398	432	489	448	448	435
Pork	148	178	257	264	219	206
Poultry	140	148	165	180	169	167
Beef balance		(Tonne)				
Production	910	923	901	891	897	911
Imports	385	297	278	381	369	318
Exports	135	153	125	218	213	166
Consumption	1099	1072	1055	1055	1053	1063
Pork balance						
Production	1035	1041	927	851	809	886
Imports	624	659	679	870	905	865
Exports	211	217	218	225	200	202
Consumption	1506	1559	1492	1495	1513	1548
Poultry balance						
Production	1987	1847	1851	1888	1878	1934
Imports	418	418	422	535	535	521
Exports	334	334	340	459	443	431
Consumption	2071	1931	1934	1963	1970	2023
Per capita consumption		(Kg per head)				
Beef	16.33	15.88	15.57	15.52	15.44	15.25
Pork	22.38	23.09	22.03	22.00	22.20	22.22
Poultry	30.78	28.60	28.54	28.89	28.90	29.04
Fish and shellfish	12.89	12.83	12.32	12.19	12.38	12.36

Table 3. Summary of near- and medium-term projections: dairy

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2033
Dairy						
Prices		(Pounds per 100kg)				
Butter	355	603	440	504	513	516
Cheese	309	447	349	352	353	335
SMP	224	330	224	227	199	180
Butter balance		(Tonne)				
Production	214	209	219	221	222	244
Imports	54	53	48	44	45	53
Exports	52	48	52	48	48	51
Consumption	216	213	215	217	219	247
Cheese balance						
Production	497	512	522	525	538	577
Imports	400	411	412	415	407	426
Exports	154	176	174	175	178	192
Consumption	743	747	760	764	767	811
SMP balance						
Production	99	94	99	93	86	90
Imports	14	12	10	11	12	8
Exports	52	47	50	46	37	37
Consumption	62	59	59	58	60	61
Per capita consumption		(Kg per head)				
Butter	3.22	3.15	3.17	3.19	3.21	3.54
Cheese	11.05	11.07	11.22	11.25	11.26	11.64
SMP	0.92	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.88	0.87