National Food Strategy 2040

A land of happy food

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Abstract

This strategy is the result of extensive stakeholder collaboration and sets a shared long-term direction for developing Finland's food system. It is driven by global challenges such as climate change, geopolitical instability and technological transformation. The aim is to build a proactive, sustainable and profitable food system that safeguards security of supply, reduces negative environmental impacts, strengthens biodiversity and promotes public health. The strategy will be carried out through four-year implementation plans.

Finland's goal is to become a leading developer and reformer of sustainable food systems by 2040. Finland will be recognised globally as a food nation. Food will be produced sustainably and profitably both for domestic markets and for export. Global reach and growth in exports will be driven by high value-added products and food technologies.

The strategy includes four goals: profitability and fairness, security of supply, nature's carrying capacity, and food culture and wellbeing. These are supported by five key capabilities: advancing innovation and technology, stronger expertise, investment capacity, collaborative ecosystems, and an enabling role for public administration. Every stakeholder in the food system shares responsibility for achieving these common goals.

Keywords food system, food, agricultural policy, security of supply, profitability, exports, nature's carrying capacity, food culture, wellbeing

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Kansallinen ruokastrategia 2040
Onnellisen ruuan maa

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Tiivistelmä

Strategia on laajan sidosryhmäyhteistyön tulos, joka luo yhteisen suunnan suomalaisen ruokajärjestelmän kehittämiselle pitkällä aikavälillä. Sen taustalla ovat globaalit haasteet, kuten ilmastonmuutos, geopoliittinen epävakaus ja teknologiset murrokset. Strategian tarkoituksena on rakentaa ennakoiva, kestävä ja kannattava ruokajärjestelmä, joka turvaa huoltovarmuuden, vähentää negatiivisia ympäristövaikutuksia, vahvistaa luonnon monimuotoisuutta ja edistää väestön terveyttä. Strategiaa toteutetaan nelivuotisilla toimeenpanosuunnitelmilla.

Tavoitteena on, että vuoteen 2040 mennessä Suomesta tulee johtava kestävien ruokajärjestelmien kehittäjä ja uudistaja. Suomi tunnetaan maailmalla ruokamaana. Suomessa ruokaa tuotetaan kestävästi ja kannattavasti sekä kotimaan markkinoille että vientiin. Kansainvälistyminen ja viennin kasvu perustuvat korkeaan jalostusasteeseen ja ruokateknologioihin.

Strategia sisältää neljä päämäärää: kannattavuus ja reiluus, huoltovarmuus, luonnon kantokyky sekä ruokakulttuuri ja hyvinvointi. Näitä tukevat viisi valmiutta: innovaatioiden ja teknologioiden kehittäminen, osaamisen vahvistaminen, investointikyky, yhteistyöekosysteemit ja hallinnon rooli aktiivisena mahdollistajana. Ruokastrategian toteuttamisessa jokaisella ruokajärjestelmän toimijalla on vastuu yhteisten päämäärien saavuttamiseksi.

Asiasanat Ruokajärjestelmä, ruoka, maatalouspolitiikka, huoltovarmuus, kannattavuus, vienti, luonnon kantokyky, ruokakulttuuri, hyvinvointi, ruokapolitiikka

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Den nationella livsmedelsstrategin 2040
Den lyckliga matens land

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Referat

Strategin är ett resultat av ett omfattande samarbete med intressentgrupper och skapar en gemensam riktning för utvecklingen av det finländska livsmedelssystemet på lång sikt. I bakgrunden finns globala utmaningar, till exempel klimatförändringen, geopolitisk instabilitet och tekniska omvälvningar. Målet med strategin är att bygga upp ett förutseende, hållbart och lönsamt livsmedelssystem som tryggar försörjningsberedskapen, minskar de negativa miljökonsekvenserna, stärker den biologiska mångfalden och främjar befolkningens hälsa. Strategin genomförs genom fyraåriga genomförandeplaner.

Målet är att Finland före 2040 ska bli en ledande aktör när det gäller att utveckla och förnya hållbara livsmedelssystem. Finland är ute i världen känt som ett matland. I Finland produceras mat på ett hållbart och lönsamt sätt både för den inhemska marknaden och för export. Internationaliseringen och exporttillväxten grundar sig på en hög förädlingsgrad och livsmedelsteknologier.

Strategin innehåller fyra strategiska målsättningar: lönsamhet och rättvisa, försörjningsberedskap, naturens bärkraft och matkultur och välbefinnande. Dessa stöds av fem färdigheter: utveckling och utnyttjande av innovationer och tekniker, stärkande av kompetensen, investeringsförmåga, samarbetsekosystemen och förvaltningens roll som en aktiv möjliggörare. Då livsmedelsstrategin genomförs ansvarar varje aktör i livsmedelssystemet för att uppnå de gemensamma målen.

Nyckelord livsmedelssystem, mat, jordbrukspolitik, försörjningsberedskap, lönsamhet, export, natu-rens bärkraft, matkultur, välbefinnande

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Contents

1 Introduction

Food systems are constantly evolving. Historically, major shifts have often followed crises. Finland too has experienced crop failures, wars, and periods of economic growth and recession that have reshaped both production and consumption. Today, global phenomena such as unpredictable extreme weather events, an unstable geopolitical environment and technological advances are influencing food production worldwide.

As we seek solutions to the challenges posed by new crises, we must also hold on to the lessons learned from past ones. Security of supply and food security remain the foundation and framework for developing Finland's food system. Ensuring viability of businesses, fostering innovation and driving renewal across the entire sector are essential. Solutions must be found to cut emissions from the food system, halt biodiversity loss and harness nutrition to improve public health and wellbeing.

To navigate future uncertainties, we must anticipate, prepare and adapt. That is why we need a shared vision and strategy: what we aim for and how we will achieve it. Without a proactive approach, we risk losing the chance to influence the direction of change.

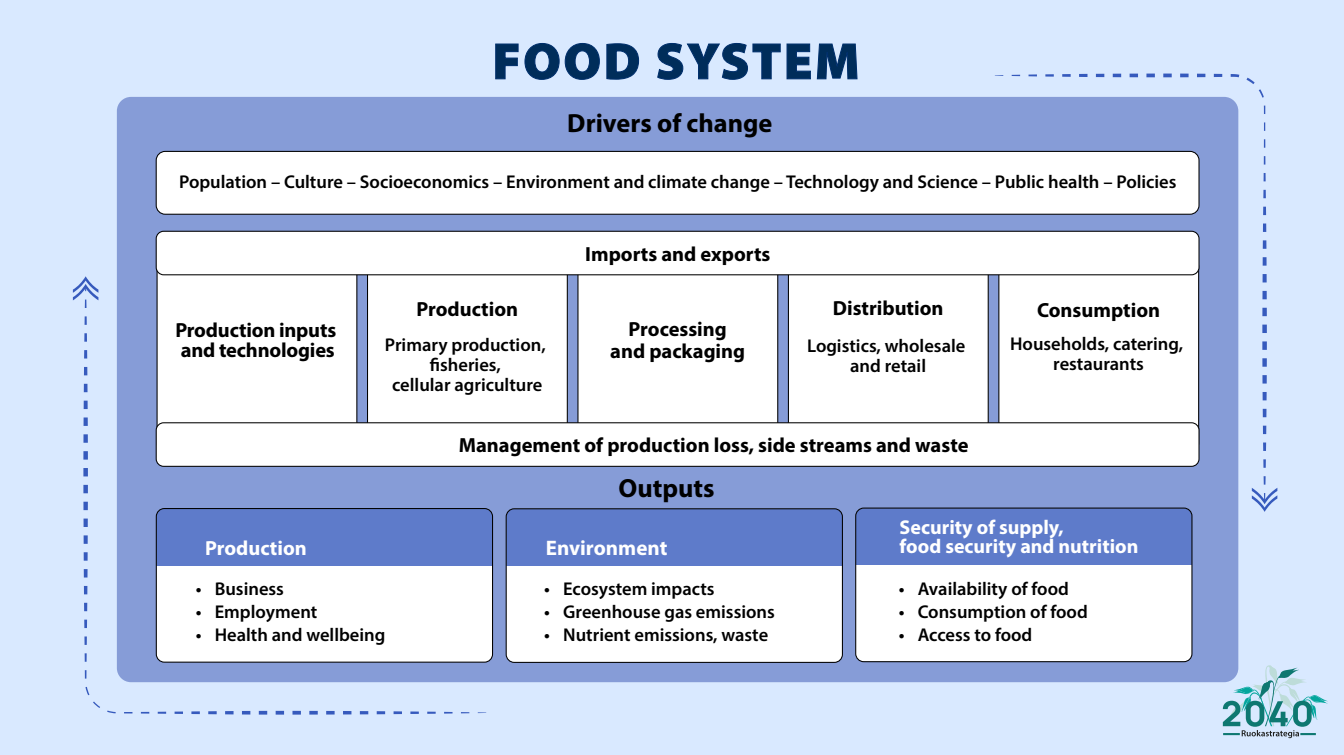
Finland's food system has enormous potential. Finland is a technology leader, and our growing conditions provide a strong basis for building a respected Finnish brand. Food exports strengthen the sector's ability to adapt and open up new avenues for improving profitability.

The National Food Strategy aims to create a shared, guiding and enabling framework for building a sustainable and profitable food system. The strategy sets out a long-term vision, overarching goals and strategic objectives, while more detailed quantitative targets, priorities and resourcing will be specified in separate implementation plans. The first implementation plan will be drawn up after the strategy is published in 2026. It will be updated regularly every four years to ensure the strategy remains relevant and responsive to changing circumstances. This approach provides a clear common direction while enabling agile, adaptive implementation across the food system in a rapidly changing world.

In this strategy, the food system refers to the entire network of actors involved in producing and consuming food. Its core mission is to deliver food security, nutrition and security of supply. It also has both intended and unintended impacts on the economy and the environment.

The actors in the food system interact with each other and with external drivers of change. These drivers include social and cultural factors, environmental and natural resource issues, as well as politics and economics, all of which shape the system.

Figure 1. Food system



Dear Reader,

You, your organisation and your networks have a role and the power to shape the future of our shared food system. This strategy was created in dialogue with over 600 people from across Finland: business owners, consumers, public officials, researchers and civil society representatives. Its drafting has also included parliamentary cooperation with Parliament's Agriculture and Forestry Committee. A report on the strategy will be submitted to Parliament to ensure parliamentary scrutiny of both the strategy and its implementation.

The strategy sets out a long-term vision, overarching goals and strategic objectives, while more detailed quantitative targets, priorities and resourcing will be specified in separate implementation plans. Making this strategy a reality will take commitment from everyone involved in the food system.

We invite you to consider where you can make a difference, especially by working together with others in the sector.

2 Vision: A land of happy food

A land of happy food – Finland becomes a leading developer and reformer of sustainable food systems. A land of happy food benefits people, animals and the environment.

By 2040, Finland will be a leader in sustainable food production and food technologies. Our food system will stop biodiversity loss in agricultural environments and offer solutions for both domestic and global food security. Finnish food culture will be known for its pure ingredients, sustainability, unique flavours and modern approach.

By 2040, Finnish food production will be diverse and based on models of varying scale. These models will be grounded in the circular economy, safeguard security of supply, food culture and sustainable production, and increase the added value of the food sector.

1. Volume-based production that supports the growth of food exports and guarantees the availability of safe and affordable domestic food for everyone
2. Interaction-driven production based on local value chains that enables diverse income sources in rural areas

Regardless of the scale of production, all those working in the sector will contribute to strengthening biodiversity. Soil and water systems will thrive as nutrients are recycled and side streams are used efficiently.

Harnessing new technology, generating innovation and strengthening expertise will be at the heart of a competitive food system. Research, development and commercialisation will form a seamless whole where challenges are solved through innovation and turned into business opportunities. Technology-neutral and predictable regulation will support progress, while open and fair data will build trust and improve efficiency across the sector. Diverse means will be used to enhance Finland's innovation and investment capacity.

Public administration will share risk, encourage diversified business models and act as a bridge to new market-driven solutions such as carbon and nature value markets. Rural areas and diverse food production regions will be vibrant and ensure regional security of supply. Producer networks will foster a sense of community, use and add to the local resources, and promote their sharing.

Consumers will play an active role in the food system. Transparency in the sector and solutions such as digital tools will help people make sustainable and healthy choices. Consumers will be aware of the impact of their choices on the environment, business and food production. Sustainable food will be nutritious, tasty, affordable and easily accessible. Everyday consumer choices will favour local produce, seasonal eating and reducing food waste.

Finland will be recognised globally as a food nation. Global reach and growth in exports will be driven by high productisation levels, food technologies, new innovation and expertise. The Finnish brand will be built on clean nature, public trust and ambitious collaboration.

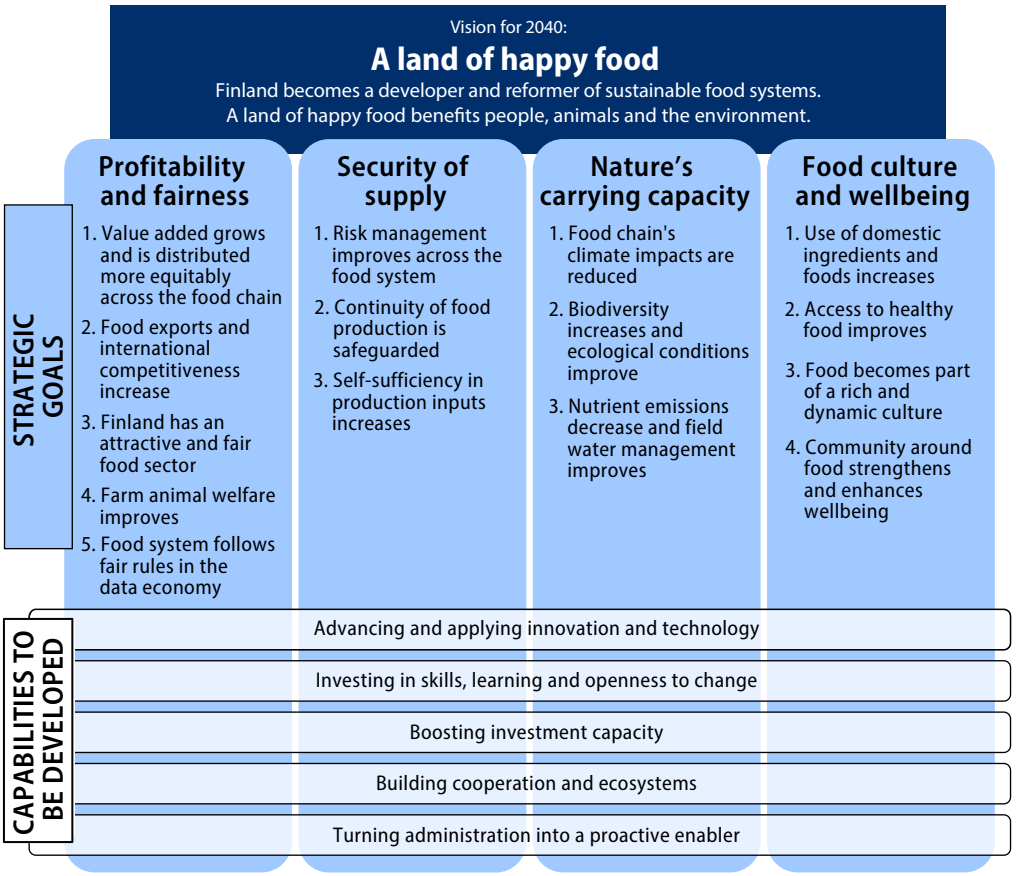
Finland's food system will halt biodiversity loss in agricultural environments, promote biodiversity, and support human wellbeing and profitability of livelihoods. It will create sustainable added value, new business and more export opportunities. Food is more than just nutrition – it brings people together, supports wellbeing, ensures security of supply, shapes the future, and is a source of pride.

A social contract for the food system will have been established in Finland: a framework where the state, businesses and other key players commit to shared goals and jointly agreed actions to renew the system and create sustainable value.

3 Strategy

The National Food Strategy is built around a vision, four strategic goals and their objectives, and the capabilities to be developed. The strategic goals are profitability and fairness, security of supply, nature's carrying capacity, and food culture and wellbeing. In addition, the strategy process has identified five capabilities to be developed that will support the achievement of the goals.

Figure 2. Strategy matrix describing the strategic goals, their objectives and the capabilities to be developed.



3.1 Strategic goal: Profitability and fairness

By 2040, Finland's food system will be both profitable and fair. It will generate value across the entire food chain from primary production to the consumer. The growing appreciation for Finnish food, along with food businesses' increasingly global reach, will have strengthened the sector's vitality and delivered added value to all those involved. Fair distribution of income across the value chain and decent working conditions will have supported the wellbeing of both business owners and employees. Farm animal welfare and managing the risk of animal diseases are at a high level.

3.1.1 Current situation

The food sector is Finland's fourth-largest industry, employing over 300,000 people. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up nearly 98 per cent of all businesses in the industry, yet they account for only 40–50 per cent of its total turnover. Within the industry, the natural products sector remains underutilised. Increasing the food sector's added value is essential, as growth in this area has been slow in recent years, both in the domestic markets and in exports.

Profitability in Finnish primary production has declined over a longer period of time, and producers now receive a smaller share of the retail price of food. Meanwhile, retail and parts of the food industry have benefited from globalisation, sourcing raw materials and consumer products from competitive international markets. Agricultural policy and support payments play a major role in farmers' income formation.

The education level of farmers has risen, especially among younger generations, but at around 54 the average age remains high and continues to increase. Farmers under 35 make up less than 10 per cent of the total.

Finland maintains high standards of animal health by international comparison, with livestock disease levels among the lowest. In recent years, farm animal welfare has developed in many areas, but the species-specific behaviour of animals and the implementation of best practices in healthcare require continuous attention, improvement and monitoring.

3.1.2 Strategic objectives

Strategic objective 1: Value added grows and is distributed more equitably across the food chain

Growth in value added will be based on strengthening the sector's overall profitability, competitiveness and a predictable operating environment. The position of primary producers will be reinforced by increasing their bargaining power and improving contractual practices, ensuring that their share of consumer prices rises. Value chains in fisheries and the natural products sector will develop, and their turnover will increase. Growth in value added will be driven by higher productisation levels, new value chains, fair income distribution and greater collaboration across the sector, safeguarding the vitality of domestic food production. The growth of small and medium-sized enterprises will be supported, and new, diverse value chains will be developed to complement the existing structure. Short supply chains, local markets and producer-led solutions will strengthen regional value creation and food security.

Strategic objective 2: Food exports and international competitiveness increase

Finland will be recognised globally as a food nation known for sustainable production. Businesses will develop new export products and technologies where Finland has a natural competitive advantage. Finnish food sector companies will expand internationally, tripling the value of food exports by 2040. Growth in export value will be driven by high-quality raw materials, by increasing the productisation level of plant-based and healthy foods in particular, and by sustainable production methods. Exports will diversify to include not only value-added products but also technology, such as biotechnologies, equipment and expertise. The sector will invest heavily in export skills, brand building and marketing.

Strategic objective 3: Finland has an attractive and fair food sector

The food sector will offer diverse and meaningful jobs that attract young people and new talent to train and work in the industry. Education and employment will be able to attract and retain them in the sector. Attractiveness will be further improved through profitability, wellbeing at work and respect, as well as by investing in education and training, supporting business succession and promoting ecologically sustainable innovations. Fairness in the sector means just distribution of value added, good working conditions and respect for human rights. Research and development will flourish, with more startups and increased funding. Finland aims to be the most investment-friendly environment for a sustainable food sector in the EU.

Strategic objective 4: Farm animal welfare improves

Farm animal welfare will be recognised as part of a sustainable and fair food system. Decision-making will take into account species-specific behavioural needs, such as opportunities for social interaction, movement, outdoor access and sufficient space. Structural changes in livestock farming, such as increasing farm size, will not compromise animal welfare. The competence and responsibility of food sector actors regarding animal welfare will be strengthened, and practices that support animal welfare will be developed based on research. Consumers' access to product-specific information on animal welfare will be improved. Animal diseases will be effectively controlled, and Finland will maintain its salmonella-free and antibiotic-free status. Animal welfare will also be seen as a competitive advantage that enhances the value of Finnish farming and supports export opportunities.

Strategic objective 5: A fair data economy creates value in the food system

The data economy will create new opportunities and value. Information will flow in multiple directions, from producers to consumers and back, supporting sustainable decision-making. The sector will develop jointly agreed rules on data ownership, cost-sharing for data production and data sharing, ensuring that primary producers and small and medium-sized operators benefit from the data economy. Transparent, reliable information will make the origin and environmental impacts of food visible and comparable for consumers. Price and contract transparency, together with data interoperability, will enable equal access to information and support fair value creation. The data economy will also support research, food security and innovation, and Finland will position itself as a European leader in food sector data economy.

3.2 Strategic goal: Security of supply

By 2040, Finland's food system will be secure, shock resistant and capable of adapting to the impacts of climate change. Risk management across production, processing and distribution chains will have been reinforced. The self-sufficiency of critical inputs will have improved in agriculture. The transformation of the food system will have safeguarded the continuity of domestic primary production and preserved a decentralised production structure. Security of supply will also have been bolstered through new value chains, technologies and diversified food production.

3.2.1 Current situation

Geopolitical tensions are causing instability in global markets and supply chains, affecting Finland's food system. Ensuring its functionality requires robust security of food supply. This includes proactive adaptation and preparedness for extreme weather events caused by climate change. For the comprehensive preparedness of society, both national agricultural production and household-level preparedness play a key role.

Finland's food system is based on a high degree of self-sufficiency in food production and processing: the self-sufficiency rate for food is around 80 per cent by market value. However, domestic food production depends on several critical imported inputs, such as fossil fuels, raw materials for fertilisers, plant protection products, supplementary protein feed, agricultural machinery and spare parts, and seasonal labour from abroad. This reliance on imports makes the food system vulnerable to disruptions, particularly in situations where markets and supply chains are under stress.

3.2.2 Strategic objectives

Strategic objective 1: Risk management improves across the food system

The food system will proactively prepare for crises and extreme weather events. Stakeholders across the food system will recognise their roles in maintaining shock resistance and crisis management, and will promote it systematically. Resilience will be enhanced by maintaining farms of different sizes and types, food sector businesses and essential services across Finland. Decentralised energy production, integrated with agriculture and rural enterprises, will help secure energy supply nationwide. Plant and protein self-sufficiency will be increased by diversifying production, developing domestic protein crop production chains and using new biotechnological solutions in plant breeding and food production. Access to water and energy will be ensured in all conditions, and critical infrastructure will be protected to keep the food system operational even in emergencies. Citizens will become more prepared for crises, both in terms of practical response and material preparedness.

Strategic objective 2: Continuity of food production is safeguarded

The functioning of primary production will improve and its continuity will be secured in all conditions. The industry will remain attractive, and its profitability will improve. Changes of ownership among primary producers will become easier, and new business owners will receive support during the handover phase. Entrepreneur

wellbeing will improve, boosting the industry's economic and social sustainability and appeal. This will also invigorate rural areas and the entire food sector. Finland will leverage and further develop its northern strengths, such as grass-based livestock farming. Climate change adaptation will guide the development of crop species and varieties, cultivation methods and technologies suited to new conditions. Land consolidation will be used to improve production efficiency.

Strategic objective 3: Self-sufficiency in production inputs increases

Dependence on imported inputs in primary production and processing will decrease, and domestic self-sufficiency will grow particularly in nutrients, energy, seeds and supplementary protein feeds. Businesses will expand their own and decentralised production capacity for renewable energy. Circular economy solutions will be promoted and domestic seed production and storage improved. The domestic share of fertilisers, feed components and chemical plant protection products will rise. Increasing biogas production will reduce dependence on fossil fuels and improve nutrient recycling. Growing and bedding peat are strategically important raw materials, and their domestic availability will be secured. To prepare for reduced peat availability and price fluctuations, development of alternative domestic substitutes will continue. Availability of labour from specialist roles to machinery repair will be secured to ensure the food system can operate even during disruptions.

3.3 Strategic goal: Nature's carrying capacity

By 2040, Finland's food system will maintain and enhance the carrying capacity of nature. The entire food system will have succeeded in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Biodiversity will have increased in agricultural and natural environments, and nutrient loads in water bodies will have declined. Food production will support sustainable water management and use natural resources wisely. Invasive species affecting food production will be under control.

3.3.1 Current situation

Globally, food systems often consume more natural resources than ecosystems can regenerate, exceeding ecological limits and threatening both environmental sustainability and food security. Finnish consumption habits also contribute to climate emissions and biodiversity loss beyond national borders.

Most of Finland's food system greenhouse gas emissions come from agriculture, and their share of total national emissions has increased since the early 2000s. Peat fields account for 50–60 per cent of agricultural emissions, despite representing only 10 per cent of the production area. However, peat fields are highly significant for food production, for example during dry periods.

The decline in biodiversity in agricultural habitats is in decline due to developments such as intensified cultivation and reduced grazing. This loss of biodiversity threatens ecosystem services essential for food production, such as pollination, carbon sequestration and nutrient cycling.

Soil degradation in fields is evident in issues such as compaction, reduced humus content, and depletion of soil biota. In varying weather conditions, poor soil structure makes fields more prone to drought and flooding, increasing nutrient runoff that leads to eutrophication and deteriorating water quality.

3.3.2 Strategic objectives

Strategic objective 1: The food system's climate impacts are reduced

Carbon dioxide emissions from agriculture and land use will decrease in line with Finland's carbon neutrality targets for 2040. Indirect carbon dioxide emissions from retail and the food industry will also fall significantly, meaning that emissions from food will be lower by then. Emissions from peat fields will be reduced through solutions carried out fairly and in dialogue with farmers and regional stakeholders.

Strategic objective 2: Biodiversity increases and ecological conditions improve

Finland's food system will support biodiversity and work collaboratively to verify and measure impacts on nature. Biodiversity in agricultural environments will increase through changes in production methods such as organic farming, regenerative agriculture, grazing and nature management. Field soil biota and microbiome will become more diverse, and species diversity will be actively monitored at field level. The area of semi-natural grasslands will expand. The food sector will reduce imports and domestic production of products that research shows contribute to biodiversity loss. Plant protection will focus on prevention, reducing the use of chemical plant protection products.

Strategic objective 3: Nutrient emissions decrease and field water management improves

Nutrient emissions into water bodies will decline as nutrients remain more effectively in circulation. Healthy soil will help retain nutrients, and improve water management and productivity of fields. More efficient nutrient recycling will reduce the use of synthetic imported fertilisers. Risks from drought and flooding will be addressed by improving field water management.

3.4 Strategic goal: Food culture and wellbeing

By 2040, Finland will have a rich and vibrant food culture that promotes health and wellbeing. The use of domestic ingredients and foods will have increased in households, restaurants and public sector catering. Food will have become firmly established as a central part of Finnish culture, and the sense of community around food will have grown stronger. These developments, together with healthier diets, will have improved the overall wellbeing of the population.

3.4.1 Current situation

Finland is one of the northernmost food production regions in the world, and Finnish food culture has evolved within the constraints and opportunities of northern nature. Food culture is shaped by politics, the global economy, media, marketing, and the food trends they generate. Contemporary food cultures blend and broaden the spectrum of flavours.

In Finland, people eat together in schools and workplaces, reflecting a strong communal meal culture. At home, many rely on convenience foods, and quick and easy cooking is the norm. Fewer than 60 per cent of Finns consider shared mealtimes with family and friends important.

Over the long term, Finnish eating habits have generally improved, although individual differences remain significant. At population level, nutritional recommendations have not been fully met. For example, intake of saturated fat and salt remains too high, while fibre consumption falls short of the recommended levels. Unhealthy eating habits are linked to major public health challenges, including cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

3.4.2 Strategic objectives

Strategic objective 1: Use of domestic food increases and understanding of the food system deepens

Consumers will choose local and domestic foods. Information about the origin of food, production methods and their impacts on health, the environment and security of supply becomes more widely available and easy to access. Education will provide children and young people in particular a better understanding of the food system and healthy eating habits. Food education and learning about the food system will be strengthened from early childhood education to universities, including making use of the food service industry as a learning environment. Households, catering services and restaurants will use more and increasingly diverse local and domestic products. Public procurement will promote the use of Finnish foods, supporting security of supply at the same time.

Strategic objective 2: Access to healthy food improves

Diets will better support individual wellbeing and health. Nutrition will be more widely recognised as a key part of preventive healthcare. All population groups will have access to healthy, domestic food, and its consumption will rise significantly. Consumption of vegetables, berries and fruit will increase, and consumers will have even better opportunities to choose plant-based products for their plates. Salt and saturated fat consumption will fall, while intake of fibre-rich foods will rise. More scientific data on the health effects of food will be available. Nutritional health and sustainability will be more strongly integrated into the work of municipalities, wellbeing services counties, civil society organisations and the private sector.

Strategic objective 3: Food forms a part of a rich and dynamic food culture

Finnish food that combines great flavours and new experiences will gain greater appreciation. Understanding of food's cultural significance and heritage, as well as its continuous reinvention, will deepen. The value of local food cultures, such as reindeer husbandry and game hunting, will be highlighted and used more effectively, for example in food tourism. International influences will enrich everyday flavours and culinary traditions. Domestic ingredients and new food innovations will be used in product development and recipes. Restaurant culture will flourish, and food tourism will increase in Finland.

Strategic objective 4: Community around food strengthens and enhances wellbeing

The culture of eating together and the joy of food will grow, with food increasingly fostering community, equality and wellbeing. Mass catering, especially school meals, will gain more recognition and be developed as part of a healthy, accessible and sustainable food culture. Food-related events and shared moments will become more common, bringing together people from different backgrounds and life situations.

4 Capabilities to be developed

The National Food Strategy will set a long-term direction for developing Finland's food system. It will be guided by implementation plans that advance the objectives set for the strategic goals. Alongside these, the strategy work has identified five key capabilities that are essential for achieving the goals. All stakeholders in the food system should also recognise these capabilities as part of their own operations.

The strategic capabilities will be reviewed and advanced through implementation programmes. They cut across all areas of the strategy and include:

Advancing and applying innovation and technology

Investing in skills, learning and openness to change

Boosting investment capacity

Building cooperation and ecosystems

Turning administration into a proactive enabler

Finland's food system is undergoing major transitions that call for smart renewal and sustained development of expertise, cooperation and working practices. Strengthening these strategic capabilities will enhance the food system's ability to adapt and grow. We need innovations, technologies and new operating models that can be scaled swiftly into practice. We also need narratives that highlight possibilities, along with concrete actions that make renewal worthwhile, appealing and valued.

Building up skills, learning and openness to change lays the foundation for sustainable growth and new types of entrepreneurship. Investment capacity must be reinforced through diverse financing solutions that also enable changes in business ownership, attract new entrants and encourage long-term value creation.

The food system must foster tighter, mutually reinforcing networks and ecosystems where trust, collaboration and shared goals drive progress.

The role of administration should evolve from reactive to proactive, requiring regulation, support payments and taxation to be redesigned to help renewal and reward impact.

4.1 Advancing and applying innovation and technology

Developing food and food system innovation is central to our national resilience and competitiveness. Innovation goes beyond technology; it includes new ways of working, digital solutions, social innovation and service innovation.

We need flexible testing environments where solutions can be piloted temporarily outside standard regulatory frameworks. These platforms enable rapid learning, agile experimentation with technologies, and faster uptake of effective solutions. The goal is to scale successful pilots into sustainable business. This calls for determined efforts to develop both innovation activities and the regulatory system. It is vital to ensure that promising solutions do not remain isolated experiments but become embedded in practice and in the everyday workings of the food system.

By strengthening our readiness to adopt innovations quickly, we can safeguard the sustainability of the food system, ensure security of supply and support the growth of export potential.

4.2 Investing in skills, learning and openness to change

Renewing the food system takes more than technology. It needs people with the right skills, the courage to embrace change, and the ability to spot opportunities beyond the familiar. We need strong expertise in foresight, markets, exports, circular economy, new cultivation methods and in making full use of research, from practical application to commercialisation.Developing sustainable food systems requires interdisciplinary research to deliver practical and lasting solutions to complex challenges.

Finland must position itself as an attractive destination for top talent, both domestically and internationally. This calls for clear educational and career pathways, robust research and development partnerships, and structures and incentives that encourage entrepreneurship and support young people.

4.3 Boosting investment capacity

Renewing the food system calls for investment – both flexible early-stage financing and stable capital. Innovation activities can be accelerated through tools such as innovation vouchers, microloans, guarantees and equity financing, alongside reforms to support payments and taxation that promote sustainability and growth. Special attention must be paid to enabling ownership changes and securing investment and financing in agriculture. Access to farm financing must be guaranteed in a situation where bank lending has tightened due to stricter climate and environmental conditions and more stringent financial market regulation. Financial and structural solutions are needed to ease entry for young entrepreneurs and safeguard continuity of expertise and operations.

Finland needs domestic capital that can also attract international investment. Shared infrastructure and collaborative testing platforms make investments more efficient and reduce risk. The aim is to position Finland as an appealing location for companies and experts developing the food system.

4.4 Building cooperation and ecosystems

Renewing the food system requires long-term, trust-based collaboration across government, business and sectoral boundaries. Side streams from the forest industry, energy innovations and data expertise can offer valuable solutions for the food sector, provided that the ecosystems are built to be functional and compatible. Finland cannot be cut off from the rest of the world. We must actively build networks with leading international players and position ourselves as an attractive partner for expertise and investment.

Collaboration should be encouraged in forums where diverse perspectives can meet, conflicts can be addressed and polarisation reduced. Scattered development efforts must be brought together into purposeful and effective initiatives that drive systemic change.

4.5 Turning administration into a proactive enabler

Public administration must act as a proactive enabler, streamlining operations, encouraging renewal and accelerating sustainable development. Regulation should be forward-looking and designed to empower users: joint permit processes, one-stop-shop services, and clear procedures in service provision lay the groundwork for smooth and efficient operations.

The system of agricultural support payments must be reformed to better promote security of supply, resilience and future-oriented solutions. Performance-based support models, such as those that reward resource efficiency, reduced climate impact and diversified operations, can help turn development in a meaningful direction.

Broad, cross-administrative rural policy will help keep rural areas vibrant, ensuring sufficient services for local residents, remote workers and people who spend leisure time in rural areas.

Public administration will act not as an active supporter offering advice, guidance and encouragement. Tax incentives, sustainable procurement criteria in public sector catering, and commitments to investment and R&D are key tools for creating a predictable and attractive operating environment for those driving change in the food system.

5 Glossary

Primary production
Primary production refers to producing raw materials needed for food, such as plants, animals, fish and other natural resources, directly from nature, cultivation or farming.

Value chain
A value chain covers all activities and processes that add value to a product or service on its journey from raw material to the final product or service for the customer.

Data economy
A part of the information economy based on the use of data, where data is utilised to develop services, products and business operations.

Ecosystem services
The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. Ecosystem services describe the instrumental value of biodiversity and are typically divided into provisioning, supporting, regulating and cultural services. Provisioning services include, for example, crop and livestock farming, which depend on a functioning agricultural ecosystem. Supporting and regulating services include soil organisms' regulation of nutrient, carbon and water cycles, essential for agriculture. Cultural services include experiences offered by nature and scientific knowledge.

Geopolitics
Geopolitics refers to the influence of geography on politics and relations between states.

Decentralised production structure
A decentralised production structure means organising food production across multiple units in different areas, such as farms, cities or community gardens. It improves security of supply, local self-sufficiency and adaptability to challenges such as climate or supply chain disruptions. Decentralisation can also include short distribution chains, circular economy solutions and community-based production.

Carbon markets
Carbon markets are systems where operators can buy and sell climate units, such as reductions in carbon dioxide emissions or carbon removals. These are used, for example, to support corporate carbon neutrality claims. Units traded on voluntary carbon markets are not part of official national emission targets but can contribute to climate action. Units are based on certified and verified climate measures, such as afforestation or renewable energy projects.

Security of supply
Security of supply means society's ability to safeguard essential functions under all circumstances, including disruptions and emergencies. It is based on preparedness, continuity management and cooperation between the public, private and third sectors. The aim is to ensure that basic needs, such as food, energy and healthcare, remain available as normally as possible during crises.

Humus
Humus is organic matter in soil formed by the decomposition of plant and animal remains. It improves soil structure, water retention and nutrient availability and is vital for soil fertility in agriculture.

Innovation
An innovation is new knowledge, a method, product, service or other novel combination that is implemented and adopted. Typically, it is also expected to have economic and commercial value.

Innovation voucher
A support service that small and medium-sized enterprises can apply for. It enables companies to purchase external expert services to develop a new product or service idea with international growth potential.

Degree of processing, value added or productisation
Measures how much a product has been refined and indicates the added value created through production and handling.

Fisheries
Fisheries is an industry related to catching, farming, processing and selling fish and other aquatic animals. It is part of primary production and an important industry of the food sector, especially in coastal and inland water areas.

Growing and bedding peat
Materials made from peat used as growing media and animal bedding.

Circular economy
An economic system aimed at maximising resource lifespan, minimising waste and keeping products, materials and raw materials in use for as long as possible. Production and consumption are based on sharing, reuse, repair, recycling and reducing the use of non-renewable natural resources.

Critical infrastructure
Basic structures, services and related functions that are essential for maintaining society's vital functions. These include energy production, transmission and distribution systems, transport and logistics, information and communication systems, and water and waste management.

Critical production inputs
Essential substances and materials, such as fertilisers, feed, energy and seeds, needed to maintain agricultural production. Their availability directly affects the continuity of food production and security of supply.

Nature value markets
Markets where the added value created by improving and preserving biodiversity is bought and sold. They include traditional conservation as well as restoration and nature management. Nature values market creates an economic incentive for nature protection and restoration. These markets create economic incentives based on the idea that ecosystem services provided by nature, such as clean air, water resources and biodiversity, have economic value that markets can recognise and price.

Nature's carrying capacity
The threshold measuring how much stress an ecosystem or environment can withstand before suffering permanent damage. Exceeding this capacity leads to severe environmental consequences, such as destruction that affects human wellbeing and the economy.

Biodiversity loss
The reduction of biological diversity due to human activity, resulting in depleted genetic diversity and species extinction.

Natural products sector
An industry and production activity that uses wild or cultivated natural products, such as berries, mushrooms, herbs, sap, wood and game, for food, wellness products or industrial raw materials.

Agriculture
An industry involving crop cultivation and livestock farming to provide food, feed, fibres and other goods for human and animal needs.

Agricultural environment
Various habitats of managed farmland where organisms live.

Microloan
A small loan intended for companies employing fewer than 10 people to promote growth, productivity and competitiveness.

Self-sufficiency
The ability to produce and obtain essential goods, such as food and energy, domestically without significant dependence on imports. In the food system, self-sufficiency refers to the share of domestic production in consumption.

Ownership change
The process of transferring ownership from one person to another.

Risk management
Systematic action to limit risks so that they are proportionate to the cost of mitigation while achieving organisational objectives. Steps include risk analysis, choosing a risk management method, deciding whether to eliminate, reduce or retain risks, and organising risk management.

Food sector
Includes all people and operating environments involved in food: its production, processing, distribution, sale and serving.

Food system
A system covering all stages and stakeholders involved in food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management. It is closely linked to the surrounding world and influenced by ecological, economic, social and cultural factors.

Catering services; food service industry
Organised provision of meals outside the home provided by the public sector and private catering companies. Public catering services cover early education settings, schools, workplaces, military bases, hospitals and other institutions offering meals.

Food education
Teaching, advice, guidance and communication related to food and eating.

Food sector (industry)
Covers all industries and actors involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and consumption.

Food technology
Technological methods and processes related to food production, handling, preservation and distribution.

Food security
A state where all people have physical, social and economic access to enough safe and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and enables an active and healthy life.

Salmonella
An intestinal bacterium transmitted through food or water contaminated by animal or human faeces, causing food poisoning. Salmonella is a major public health issue in many countries, but not in Finland or Finnish food products, where control is at a high level.

Side stream
Secondary materials generated during the production process of the main product. They cannot be prevented and do not end up in the main product but can be further utilised.

Synthetic fertiliser
An industrially manufactured fertiliser produced through artificial synthesis, containing precisely defined nutrients in a rapidly soluble form.

RDI
Stands for research, development and innovation.

Producer network
A group of individuals representing the same sector or interest who collaborate to advance their own or shared goals.

Supplementary protein feed
A protein-rich feed mix used in animal nutrition, which may include ingredients such as soy, rapeseed, peas and broad beans (Vicia faba).

New value chains and technology
Can create value in new ways; more sustainably, efficiently and innovatively than traditional value chains. New technologies include fields such as artificial intelligence, automation and robotics.

Essential services
Services that are critical for the functioning and safety of society and wellbeing of the population. They are services without which society cannot operate normally and whose continuity must be ensured even in crises.

References

Events, reports and strategies related to the drafting of the Food Strategy

Vision drafting events:
The work on the vision work laid the foundation for the actual strategy process. These events gathered views from key stakeholders for the strategy's vision.

20 May 2024: Kick-off event for shaping the vision
3–5 July 2024: Farmari Agricultural Show – collecting views from farmers
15 September–31 October 2024: Draft vision published for public comment on otakantaa.fi
11–25 September 2024: Online survey for young food sector students
26–28 September 2024: Rural Parliament
26 October 2024: Youth Environmental Summit

Stakeholder events for the strategy:
These events collected insights and background information from key stakeholders to inform the strategy.

21 January 2025: Workshop with SLC Board and the Association of Rural Advisory Centres
11 February 2025: Workshop with Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners Rural Youth
25 February 2025: Discussion with Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners Board
3 April 2025: Discussion at the Finnish Grocery Trade Association meeting
29 April 2025: Discussion with students at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
23 May 2025: Presentation of the draft strategy in Parliament
28 May 2025: Workshop at the AgriVentures event
30 May 2025: Roundtable discussion for the retail sector
9 June 2025: Discussion with the Finnish Food and Drink Industries' Federation committee

Regional tour events for the strategy:
The regional tour engaged a wide range of stakeholders across the food chain: primary producers and businesses, industry, trade, researchers, advisory organisations, trade associations, the restaurant sector and public administration.

12 March 2025 Pori
18 March 2025 Kuopio
19 March 2025 Kuopio
26 March 2025 Rovaniemi
27 March 2025 Oulu
24 April 2025 Helsinki

Strategy survey: An open survey on the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry website, 13 March–27 April (3,769 respondents)

Strackathon, 11–12 June 2026
At the Strategy Hackathon, the strategy was developed in teams representing six stakeholder groups: retail and industry, primary producers, public officials, researchers and product developers, and exporters. The teams also proposed practical measures to help implement the strategy.

Workshops of the strategy steering group and working group:
3 December 2024: Kick-off workshop for the strategy process
18 June 2025: Workshop on the strategy's content, objectives and priorities

Background sources:

Background sources were used to prepare strategy workshops and structure the strategy.

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Finland Future Research Centre at the University of Turku, Jyväskylä University School of Business and Economics and E2 Research (2024): The project examined the vulnerabilities of the current food system and two alternative systems, and explored ways to eliminate those vulnerabilities.
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