



# 2024 CSR Report



# About Us

Agrial Fresh Produce, including our sites in Wigan and Lichfield, Axgro, and Agrial Fresh Farms fall into the UK arm of Agrial's vegetable division - one of France's leading agricultural and food-processing cooperative groups.

As an agricultural and agri-food co-operative, Agrial is created and owned by 12,500 farmers, who are its members.



## Our Commitments

Since 2018 Agrial has been a signatory of the United Nations Global Compact & its 10 principles covering human rights, standards in the workplace, the environment & fighting corruption.

As well as the Global Compact, our policies & action plans are designed to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

## Our key commitments for 2035:

- ▼ **To halve our direct greenhouse gas emissions**  
(transport, energy, packaging, waste)
- ▼ **To reduce our carbon footprint by 35%**  
(by reducing our direct and indirect emissions)

Our emission reduction targets have been developed in alignment with the Paris Climate Agreement goals, and verified by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).



SCIENCE  
BASED  
TARGETS

DRIVING AMBITIOUS CORPORATE CLIMATE ACTION

# Our CSR Strategy

As part of the Agrial group, Agrial Fresh Produce Ltd's CSR strategy is shaped around the co-operatives commitment to People, Earth & Food.

We endeavour to positively impact the environment in which we operate and with the people and organisations we engage with as a business, by striving for excellence across these six key areas of responsibility.



Each year we review our progress against these pillars and develop new focus areas and targets for the year ahead.

This report will highlight some of our key achievements from the last year, including our progress in reducing our direct emissions, and provides a summary of the work undertaken for each pillar.

# 2024 Highlights

## Our Direct Emissions - 2024 State of Play

We have been working hard to reduce the greenhouse emissions produced through our operations, and are on track to reduce our direct emissions (from energy, packaging, transport and waste) in line with our 2035 target.



### Energy

32% reduction since 2019



### Waste

38% reduction since 2019



### Transport

22% reduction since 2022



### Packaging

37% reduction since 2019\*

\*Data for 2019-2023 as 2024 data not available at time of writing



We retained our Gold EcoVadis rating with a score in top 5% of rated companies!



We won a Gold Award for the 2nd year running for the support given to Grocery Aid in 2024.

**We donated 61,000 bags to Fareshare, equivalent to...**



**13**

tonnes of food

**32,000**

meals

**16**

tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e

supporting

**786**

charities



# Our Environment

## EcoVadis Accreditation

In June we retained our Gold EcoVadis Accreditation, with a score of 73 out of 100 putting us in the top 5% of all rated companies, and in the top 2% of companies rated by EcoVadis within our industry - the processing and preserving of fruit & vegetables.

EcoVadis is a globally recognised and trusted business sustainability rating which assesses an organisation on four areas, including procurement practices, labour and human rights standards, ethics, and the environment.

All assessments are externally verified by EcoVadis' sustainability experts, and an overall score is provided to highlight the organisations sustainability position for industry benchmarking.



## Theme score comparison

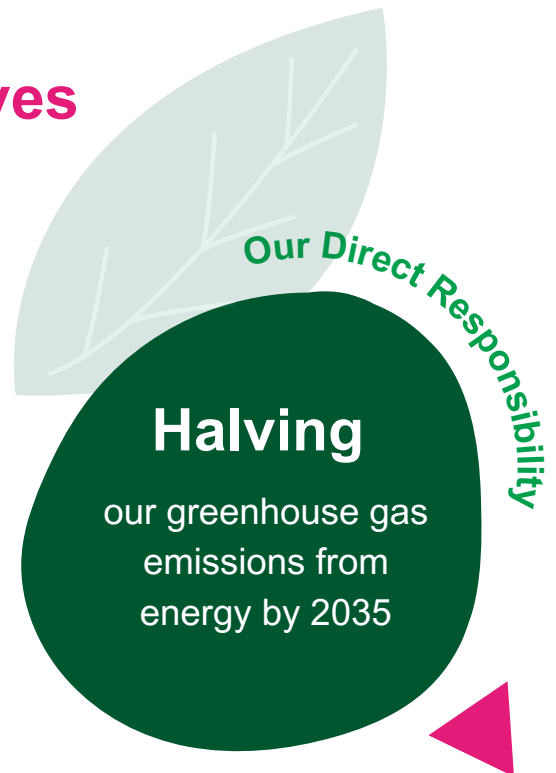


# Carbon Reduction Initiatives

## ► Energy & Water Usage

We are always reviewing ways to implement more energy efficient practices across our sites.

As well as ongoing actions, including switching lighting to efficient alternatives and installing equipment to reduce our energy use, we work with the wider Agrial group to implement larger projects.



### Some notable projects include:

- **Voltage optimisation was installed across all of our manufacturing sites and our NDC** in 2023 - offering an annual reduction of up to 1857 MWh of electricity
- In 2024 we commenced a project to **upgrade the air compressors** at Lichfield - offering an annual reduction of up to 438 MWh of electricity
- Going forwards we are considering projects to **reduce our use of nitrogen and the associated emissions**, including generating all of our own nitrogen at Wigan

We have a *Clean Dry Safe* program at all manufacturing sites to ensure a safe working environment and reduce both product and water loss by working in a lean, effective way. Opportunities to reduce water use are explored on an ongoing basis, including refabricating equipment to reduce leaks and water losses.

Water, gas and electricity usage is monitored at our manufacturing sites on a weekly basis, with updates provided as part of staff wide updates. This includes highlighting unexpected spikes in usage, and reminding staff to be vigilant. All capex projects are evaluated to consider the carbon impact of the project or equipment being installed, allowing us to identify and consider more efficient alternatives.

## Transport



### Investing in fuel-efficient vehicles

In 2023, we received our first fully electric HGV unit, becoming the first fresh produce supplier to use an electric HGV to deliver prepared salad to McDonald's from our site in Wigan. Following this success, in 2024 we received delivery of our second electric unit which is being used for supply out of our Lichfield site.

**Approximately 8% of our deliveries are now being completed with an electric truck!**



We received a new fleet of HGVs in 2024, with a Volvo 3rd Generation engine that has **provided a 13% reduction in fuel use through a more efficient engine.**

We have also installed electric points on the HGV bays at our NDC, allowing electricity to be used to refrigerate our trailers during loading rather than diesel.

### Route planning and optimisation

To further reduce our CO2 emissions from transport, we have introduced Microlise, a transport route planning and journey optimisation tool, and minimise empty lorries by collecting raw materials on the way back from delivering to our customers.

## Supporting employees with more efficient commutes

At our Lichfield site, we offer a complementary minibus service to facilitate our employees journeys to and from work, encourage the use of public transport, and reduce the number of single occupancy cars coming to site.

Going forwards we will continue to investigate and trial alternative transport options, including hydrogen trucks and in 2025 we will be trialling a gas truck which offers a much lower emissions output compared to conventional diesel vehicles.

## Farming & Biodiversity

### ▶ Extending the UK Growing Season

**We invest in innovation in UK agriculture to extend the summer growing season and reduce our need for imports, at our own farm:**

- From 2025, all whole head growing areas will be located in Suffolk, which has more favourable climate/ soil conditions for a longer growing season
- To support this, in 2024 our vacuum coolers moved from Colchester to Suffolk to reduce the distance our produce has to be transported
- We are working on varietal development with seed houses to reduce risks of disease and improve maturity
- Our tunnel plastic is being replaced to increase the light levels reaching our crops, helping to maintain healthy growth and enhance quality, as well as extending the growing season of lambs lettuce & spinach
- We are also investigating ways to keep the plastic clean in order to extend it's life and ensure an ongoing enhanced level of productivity





## ► Accreditations

Our farm in Colchester is accredited by LEAF Marque - a leading global assurance system that recognises more sustainably farmed products and requires demonstration of ongoing improvement, as well as accreditation including Red Tractor, GRASP, and GlobalGap.



## ► Biodiversity & Conservation



In 2021 we developed a 5-year Landscape and Nature Conservation and Enhancement Plan. This involved a number of ongoing actions, as well as specific targets for each year, to enhance biodiversity and support nature.

As part of the plan development, key species of local wildlife were identified for protection and encouragement, including Sky Larks, Pipistrelle Bats, Butterflies & Bees.

- Outdoor field margins, hedge lines and grassy banks being left uncropped to supply food and shelter, providing a habitat for wildlife
- Six bat nesting boxes and a number of bee houses have been placed throughout the farm to support local populations
- Each year we take part in the Big Farmland Bird Count which evidences great numbers of a variety of bird species, including some lesser spotted breeds in the UK
- Nectar rich wildflowers have been planted to increase insects that will help control pests, leading to the reduction in the usage of pesticides
- We keep local beekeepers informed via the BeeConnected website

# Our Suppliers



## Farmer Owned

Agrial Fresh Produce is part of a cooperative therefore 50% of the farmers who grow our tasty salad are stakeholders within our business. As a result, we benefit from;

- Investment in the future and longevity of our business
- A stable financial background
- A community feel within our company
- Flexibility within our supply chain



## Supplier Relationships

### ► Certifications



We work closely with our growers and have long established relationships. Being a member of LEAF we work to support sustainable food, agriculture and farming. All primary suppliers are SEDEX registered, as well as most of our tier 2 and 3 growers.

As a company we have a robust supplier approval process to ensure our supplier's ethical stance is aligned with ours. We audit compliance against our code of practice which are in line with the Global Gap standards and Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange).

We only work with **raw material suppliers accredited by Global GAP or Red Tractor**, and all of our key suppliers commit to Agrial's Responsible Purchasing Charter. We require all leafy salad growers, as well as our UK growers, to be accredited by LEAF Marque and are starting to implement requirements for growers in high risk countries for water security to obtain a third party water certification.



Working in partnership with the GLAA (Gangmasters Labour Abuse Authority), ALP (Association of Labour Providers) and Stronger Together helps us support our growers and employees throughout our supply chain to minimise the risk of exploitation and risk of modern slavery.



## **Reducing Emissions**

As outlined above we have been investing in innovation in UK Agriculture to reduce our amounts of import outside of the summer season. We are also working with suppliers who also adopt techniques to extend the UK supply season, including growing crops undercover and moving to geographic locations with more favourable soil and climate conditions. By increasing the UK Growing Season we can reduce our reliance on imported European crop, lowering the delivery miles and the associated carbon emissions.

In order to further reduce our CO2 emissions we also minimise empty lorries by collecting raw materials on the way back from delivering to our customers.

# Our Employees

## Safety in the Workplace



Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, our business has a responsibility not to injure its workers whilst they are at work. Equally, employees have a responsibility to co-operate with safety measures and not to do anything that will cause themselves or their colleagues harm.

**As part of our ongoing commitment to health and safety we have a number of initiatives in place, including:**

- Visibility of Safety targets to all stakeholders
- Safety calendar with monthly themes
- Health & safety inspections, audits and risk assessments
- Safety Starts With Me (SSWM)
- Health & Safety induction, Training & Standard Operating Procedures
- Safety Matters Committee and Employee representatives
- TOP standards (Together on Prevention) to drive H & S improvement
- Health & Safety Engagement – SSWM awards and Annual Safety Week



The sites run a 'Safety Starts with Me' program which allows employees to raise safety issues. This helps to identify behaviours which could be dangerous and also gives employees the opportunity to suggest improvements as well as recognises positive actions and behaviours.

# Employee Wellbeing



## ► Employment Policies

We want to ensure our employees have the optimum health & wellbeing to bring their best self to work. By focusing on key areas we offer a great place to work, building inclusivity into everything we do.

Our employment policies focus on equality and are designed to attract and retain high-calibre people, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability, nationality or sexual orientation. The Company is committed to make the workplace safe for everyone and to take reasonable steps to tackle any form of discrimination, including sexual harassment in the workplace.

Our objective is to have a workplace which is free from harassment and bullying, to ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect. We want to embrace neurodiversity to allow individuals to thrive at work.

## ► Employee Forums & Feedback

We have Mental Health First Aiders and Wellbeing Committees on site which the MHFA's are an active part of, driving the site's wellbeing agenda.

We believe that effective employee communication and consultation is particularly important in achieving our business objectives.

We value employees' opinions and seek to actively involve them in the decision making process. Employee forums are held monthly with the aim of gathering employee feedback and putting forward suggestions to make our company an even better place to work. We use various methods and multiple platforms to gain employee feedback, for example, Employee Surveys, Stay interviews, new starter interviews and regular one to ones.





## ► Employee Forums & Feedback

We provide a range of benefits to enhance our employee's wellbeing, including:

- 24 hour online GP support
- Healthcare cash plan
- Regular wellbeing promotions at all sites
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Accessible Occupational Health & Physio
- Health Surveillance
- Flexible working hours to suit the needs of individual employees to help them achieve a better work-life balance
- Retailer & Leisure discounts available through a discounted shopping platform – myepicrewards
- Benefits to encourage healthy lifestyle: cycle to work scheme and discounted gym membership scheme
- Volunteering days - opportunity to volunteer a day a year paid for a charity
- Partnering with GroceryAid to offer financial, emotional and practical support to employees and their families



## ► Development & Recognition

Our employees are recognised for their potential and contribution. It is our policy to invest in our people and provide training and career development so they can grow and progress within the company. We develop both our operational teams, utilising apprenticeships and on the job training, and our leader population to make sure we are ready for the future.

Recognition schemes are in place throughout the business to ensure we recognise great examples of employees going the extra mile, alongside recognising individuals' length of service.

## ► Fundraising & Challenges

We encourage our employees to get involved in fundraising and charitable activities throughout the year, particularly those that promote a healthy and active lifestyle.

### AFP's 2024 mile challenge for GroceryAid



Each year we have regular Miles Challenges where our team run, walk, cycle or even swim to hit a personal target whilst fundraising for a nominated charity. In 2024 the team completed over 8000 miles, raising £1200 miles for GroceryAid.

We also have a company Strava group to help motivate staff to exercise, and sponsor the Fradley 10k, with a number of staff taking part themselves each year.

## Modern Slavery

We take a holistic approach to human rights. Addressing modern slavery and people trafficking is part of a wider focus on safeguarding human rights within our business and supply chains.

A copy of our Modern Slavery statement can be found on our website [here](#).

The policy clarifies our position on diversity, freedom of association, workplace health, safety and security, working hours, wages and benefits, child labour and modern slavery. It also prohibits the use of all forms of forced labour including prison labour, indentured labour, bonded labour, military labour, slave labour and any form of human trafficking.

# Our Customers



## Customers Charity Partners

We are open and committed to working with our customers charity partners!

- Working with a key customer we have sponsored a local primary school in Wigan as part of their Breakfast club program to help school children have a nutritious start to their school day
- We partner with our customers and organisations including FareShare, Company Shop and the Trussel Trust to support food banks and reduce food waste



REDUCE  
RE-USE  
RECYCLE

## Reducing Waste

- Where possible we use re-usable crates to transport our products to our customers, reducing the amount of waste produced in the production and consumption of our products
- We partner with customers to work on reducing plastic packaging, with reductions in bowl and bag size as well as the thickness of plastic packaging

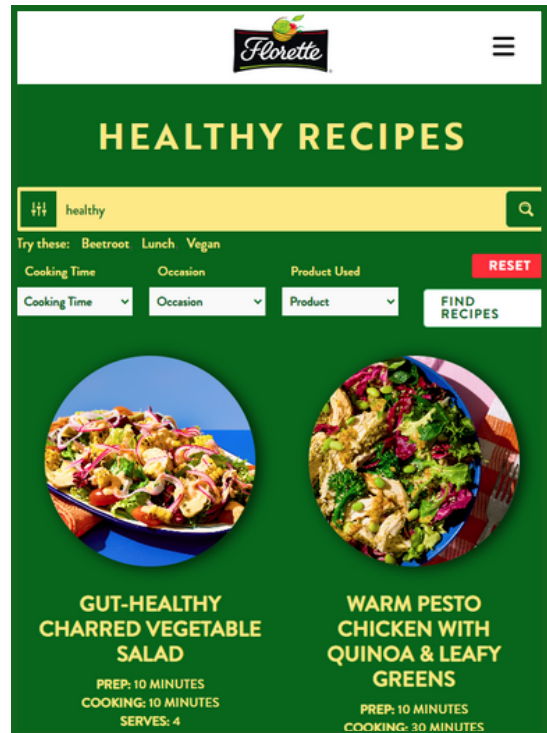
# Our Consumers



## Supporting a Healthy Lifestyle

We deliver healthy, great tasting food to help our consumers lead a healthy lifestyle!

- We are committed to providing healthy, nutritious food & providing products with added health benefits where possible
- Healthy, delicious recipe inspiration is available for all of our products on our consumer website and social channels to inspire our consumers to try (and love!) healthy food
- Innovative partnerships with other brands helps up to encourage healthy eating, with salad identified as a great option for side of plate



## Highest Quality Standards

To ensure our products always meet the highest quality standards, we;

- Enforce demanding procedures and adopt high food safety standards
- Conduct daily taste and quality panels to ensure our products are always fresh, appetising and tasty throughout their life-cycle
- Offer a freshness guarantee - as part of a farmer owned business we can source the very best quality leaves and at Florette, we believe our products should always be fresh! That's why we are offering consumers the chance to claim their money back if they are dissatisfied with the freshness of their Florette product





## Reducing Waste & Encouraging Recycling

- All Florette products contain clear recycling instructions to encourage our consumers to recycle our packaging
- To support this we post on social media throughout National Recycling Week and have added a recycling locator to our website to make it as easy as possible for consumers to find a collection point for our soft plastic salad bags
- Our recipes include inspiration to use up our products in a variety of quick and innovative ways to reduce food waste, including smoothies, soups, and sandwiches
- We have identified the optimum pack weights for consumers to reduce the amount of food waste produced at home



## Promoting our CSR focus

**Building a richer consumer connection & engagement with Florette based on its environmental and sustainability credentials.**



- We partner with exciting brands to encourage our consumers to adopt more sustainable practices in their everyday life - from giving away Beevive revival kits and hotels, to creating education pieces and providing tips for wildflower planting with Gardeners World
- Using social media platforms we look to inspire our consumers to make a difference at home, with tips on engaging with national campaigns such as No Mow May and National Recycling Week



# Our Community



## Supporting Charities

We aim to make a positive contribution to our local communities by getting involved in local events, providing jobs for local people and supporting neighbouring businesses, organisations, and charities. All of our employees are also entitled to volunteering days to support relevant charities.



- Our Wigan site sponsors a local school in partnership with a supplier to ensure every child gets the opportunity of a breakfast each day
- Our Lichfield site supports the Fradley 10k, a popular run in the local community
- In Wigan we work closely with Fur Clement Community Project to reduce food poverty, both through donations and volunteering
- We have a longstanding partnership with St Giles Hospice in Lichfield, with supporting including food donations, volunteering and fundraising



In 2024, members of the team knitted, crocheted, and sewed a collection of amazing elephants to raise funds St Giles Hospice.

The special herd went up for auction, allowing staff across the organisation to make bids - **with the sale of the 26 elephants raising just under £450 for hospice care!**

- As a Company we support FareShare, Trussell Trust & Company Shop to redistribute surplus food to front line charities, both through excess product and also volunteering

- We are recognised as a Leading Food Partner with FareShare, and since the partnership started in 2019 we have donated 365 pallets of food, equivalent to 117,000 meals and supporting 1,785 charities

- Each site has a charity fund where individuals can ask for donations or sponsorship - encouraging fundraising for local communities & charities
- We partner with Grocery Aid who offer our employees financial, emotional and practical support and fundraise for them throughout the year as a way of giving back for the support they give us



## Encouraging New Talent

By developing links with Universities, Colleges, Apprentice Providers and Schools, we are a promoter of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing) based careers and also employ a significant number of local people in the areas in which our businesses operate.

We offer a range of programmes, with career pathways in place for those looking to develop their career including;

- Apprenticeships, including Engineering
- Work experience

We have hosted an educational day in partnership with LEAF, a dedicated fun and interactive event for young adults to encourage them to chose our industry as a career choice.

# Moving Forwards

We have made great progress this year, including obtaining our second electric HGV, retaining our Gold EcoVadis award and continuing to implement our Nature Enhancement and Conservation plan at the Farm. As we move closer to 2035 we know we are on a journey and are committed to continue reducing our emissions in line with our Group climate targets:

## Our key commitments for 2035:

### Halve our direct GHG emissions

(transport, energy, packaging, waste)

### Reduce our carbon footprint by 35%

(by reducing our direct and indirect emissions)

Report produced for Agrial Fresh Produce Ltd and verified by Managing Director Doug Robertson - January 2025.

