

GROWING THROUGH CLIMATE CHANGE

NEW RESEARCH ON SUSTAINING LOCAL FOOD SECURITY

With adaptive cultivation and different crops, Dorset producers and consumers can meet the climate challenge

Climate change is already impacting food supplies, and is forecast to create much greater disruption in the years ahead. **Growing Through Climate Change** is a new report on how local food economies in Dorset and the region can increase food security: reliable access to enough affordable, healthy food. The report covers four main topics:

- ➔ Which locally grown foods are most at risk in the future from climate change
- ➔ What adaptive cultivation practices could help, for anyone from an allotment holder to a large-scale farmer
- ➔ How vulnerable crops, or substitutes, could be grown in South-West England
- ➔ Ways for consumers to adapt, including support for local producers, diet changes, and community initiatives

This research is funded by **Seeding our Future**, a non-profit project directed by Alan Heeks, whose work includes pilot programmes on food security for Bridport. See more at www.futurescanning.org.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- A range of adaptive cultivation practices will be needed, e.g. rainwater capture, intercropping
- Changes in crops and varieties can enable local producers to adapt
- Some of the more resilient crops are lower-yielding, e.g. heritage varieties, or need more labour-intensive methods
- Local-scale storage or processing of some crops will be desirable
- In general, more resilience is achievable, but involves extra costs which need funding

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION AROUND BRIDPORT

We can be active citizens and as consumers aim to strengthen linkages with producers. In the Bridport area, food producers large and small are adopting climate-friendly production methods. There are many small-scale producers - such as **Fivepenny, Haypenny, Trill Farm Gardens** and **Tamarisk Farms** - which sell their produce at the market, to restaurants and to local retailers.

Farm shop outlets including **Washingpool, Felicity's** and **Modbury**, and many of the area's independent retailers source much of their stock directly from the producers. The **Bridport Local Food Group (BLFG)** champions local producers and retailers at the Bridport Food Festival and through its Bridport Food Guide. During the current lockdown the festival is cancelled and BLFG is promoting ways of continuing to source local food through shops adapted for social-distancing and delivery service.



Photo: Haypenny Farm

SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

- In CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) or box schemes, consumers commit to a weekly payment for a share of produce from a local grower. Several already exist in this area. There is scope for creating pilot Climate Adaptive Box schemes: consumers would pay a premium over current prices so that imported produce vulnerable to climate change would be grown locally, with protection against future price rises for imports, and adaptive methods would be trialled.
- Fivepenny Farm hosts a Co-operative for processing meat, dairy, cider and preserves. Tamarisk Farm processes grains and pulses. Other local initiatives for processing and storing food could be considered.
- We could support plans by the locally-based Landworkers Alliance (a network of ecological producers, which also offers producer and policy resources) to establish an agro-ecological training and research centre in the area which could develop capacities for climate change resilience.
- As consumers, we can understand which foods are most vulnerable to climate change, explore substitutes and changes to our diet, as well as support local suppliers.
- Households with a vegetable garden or allotment can apply many of the suggestions in this report, e.g. new varieties, new crops, and adaptive cultivation methods.





Seeding Our Future, a Bridport-based non-profit initiative, is hosting a number of food security events in the coming months, and working with BLFG and others to explore the opportunities above. The report was written by researcher and food producer Elise Wach and drew on the experiences and perspectives of research colleagues, fellow gardeners and farmers.

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- * [Book](#) for our online briefing and discussion about the research: Thursday 21st May, 7:00 - 8:30pm