

Farming and Food Partnership Board summary meeting minutes: 19 May 2026

Date: 19 May 2026

Format: Hybrid

Chair: Secretary of State

Deputy Chair: Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs

Attendees

- Tom Bradshaw, National Farmers' Union (NFU) President
- Robert Sheasby, Chief Executive of the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)
- Sarah Bradbury, Chief Executive of the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD)
- Kate Nicholls, Chair of UK Hospitality (UKH)
- Emily Norton, Chair of the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB)
- Andrew Opie, Director of Food & Sustainability at the British Retail Consortium (BRC)
- Karen Betts Chief Executive of the Food & Drink Federation (FDF)
- Ranjit Singh, CEO, 2 Sisters Food Group

Defra

- Secretary of State Emma Reynolds
- Minister Angela Eagle
- Paul Kissack, Permanent Secretary
- Emily Miles, Director General, Farming, Food and Biosecurity
- Mike Rowe, Director, Farming Directorate
- Adnan Obaidullah, Deputy Director, Farming Partnership and Growth
- Farming and Partnership Board Secretariat (online)

Introduction

The Farming and Food Partnership Board held its second meeting on Tuesday 19 May 2026. The board will operate with a small core membership to facilitate action-oriented discussions, while drawing from specialist leaders in the sector to drive forward priority workstreams.

To this end, the board was pleased to host the founder of 2 Sisters Food Group, Ranjit Boparan, to lend his expertise to the commissioning of the Poultry Sector Growth Plan.

Strategic direction and priorities

The board reaffirmed that Sector Growth Plans (SGPs) are the primary mechanism for driving productivity, profitability and resilience across the food and farming system. Members agreed that a targeted and prioritised approach is required to ensure delivery.

There was clear consensus that it is not appropriate to develop SGPs for all sectors simultaneously so that they could make tangible progress in a couple of areas, rather than little progress in many.

The board agreed to:

- continue development of horticulture and poultry SGPs
- pause commissioning of additional full SGPs at this stage and revisit this decision towards the end of the year, when the horticulture and poultry plans had made some progress
- focus also on identifying and addressing cross-cutting barriers affecting multiple sectors, such as planning

Members emphasised the importance of demonstrating early progress through practical, high-impact actions and maintaining momentum.

Horticulture Sector Growth Plan

The board reviewed progress on the Horticulture Sector Growth Plan and welcomed the structured approach to engagement and development.

Discussion highlighted:

- the need to strengthen demand-side analysis, including better understanding of likely retail, hospitality and manufacturing demand over the next few years
- the importance of addressing structural cost pressures, particularly energy costs
- the role of horticulture in contributing to food production, environmental outcomes and land use change

Members noted that the plan must reflect a balance between multiple objectives, including:

- increasing domestic production and resilience
- maintaining competitiveness and affordability
- supporting growth opportunities across different markets including exports
- securing a fair price for growers

The board agreed that further work is needed to incorporate supply chain perspectives and ensure that objectives and trade-offs are clearly articulated.

Poultry Sector Growth Plan

The board considered early development of the Poultry Sector Growth Plan.

Members noted strong and growing demand for UK poultry products, alongside clear constraints on domestic supply. The board identified that the key barriers to growth are structural and cross-cutting, including:

- planning and regulatory processes
- waste management and infrastructure capacity

There was broad agreement that the poultry sector has strong growth potential if these issues can be addressed. Members highlighted the need for a whole-system approach, including coordination across feed supply, production, processing and waste management.