

1 **Global cropland and greenhouse gas impacts of the UK food supply are increasingly**  
2 **located overseas**

3 Henri de Ruiter<sup>1,2</sup>, Jennie I. Macdiarmid<sup>3</sup>, Robin Matthews<sup>1</sup>, Thomas Kastner<sup>4</sup>, and Pete  
4 Smith<sup>2</sup>

5 <sup>1</sup> Information and Computing Sciences Group, The James Hutton Institute, Craigiebuckler,  
6 Aberdeen AB15 8QH, UK, <sup>2</sup> Institute of Biological & Environmental Sciences, University of  
7 Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB24 3UU, UK, <sup>3</sup> Public Health Nutrition Research Group, Rowett  
8 Institute of Nutrition and Health, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB25 2ZD, UK, <sup>4</sup>  
9 Institute of Social Ecology Vienna, Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt, Wien, Graz,  
10 Schottenfeldgasse 29, 1070 Vienna, Austria

11 Correspondence

12 Henri de Ruiter, tel. +44 1224 437156, e-mail: henri.deruiter@hutton.ac.uk

13

14 Keywords,

15 Global environmental impacts, food supply, land use, international trade, self-sufficiency

16 **Abstract**

17 **Producing sufficient, healthy food for a growing world population amid a changing**  
18 **climate is a major challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Agricultural trade could help alleviate**  
19 **this challenge by utilising comparative productivity advantages between countries.**  
20 **However, agricultural trade has implications for national food security and could**  
21 **displace environmental impacts from developed to developing countries. This study**  
22 **illustrates the global effects resulting from the agricultural trade of a single country, by**  
23 **analysing the global cropland and greenhouse gas impacts of the United Kingdom's**  
24 **(UK) food and feed supply. The global cropland footprint associated with the UK food**  
25 **and feed supply increased by 2,022 kha (+23%) from 1986 to 2009. Greenhouse gas**  
26 **emissions (GHGE) associated with fertiliser and manure application, and rice**  
27 **cultivation remained relatively constant at 7.9 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e between 1987 and 2008.**  
28 **Including GHGE from land use change (LUC), however, leads to an increase from 19.1**  
29 **Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 1987 to 21.9 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2008. The UK is currently importing about 50% of**  
30 **its food and feed, while 70% and 64% of the associated cropland and GHGE impacts,**  
31 **respectively, are located abroad. These results imply that the UK is increasingly reliant**  
32 **on external resources and that the environmental impact of its food supply is**  
33 **increasingly displaced overseas.**

34 **Background**

35 Demand for food will be a major driver of global environmental change in the coming  
36 decades [1], through its impact on, among others, land use and greenhouse gas emissions  
37 (GHGE). Globally, agriculture accounts for about 40% of total land area [2] and the  
38 agriculture and forestry sector is responsible for just under a quarter of global anthropogenic  
39 greenhouse gas emissions [3]. In a globalised world, the demand for food is increasingly met  
40 by resources outside a country's own territory [4], and currently almost a quarter of all food  
41 produced for human consumption is traded internationally [5]. As a result, the world has  
42 moved towards an increasing reliance on food trade in order to feed its population and this  
43 has important implications for food security [6,7]. The increasing dependency on trade  
44 reflects the use of natural resources, since more than 20% of the global cropland area is  
45 presently used for exports [8]. In general, international trade flows from high-yield to low-  
46 yield regions, suggesting that it is contributing to a more efficient global food system [8].  
47 However, concerns have been raised over the role of trade in the displacement of  
48 environmental impacts by shifting the burden from developed to developing countries [9].  
49 This displacement has been studied in the context of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, showing that  
50 consumption-based accounts of developed countries' emissions are increasing, while  
51 production-based accounts are stabilizing or even decreasing [10]. This difference between  
52 production-based and consumption-based accounting has important consequences for  
53 effective climate policy and hence the choice of metrics has key implications. Most global  
54 consumption-based accounts on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are estimated from multi-region input-output  
55 analyses (MRIO) and consider CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of the economy as a whole. More recently, the  
56 effects of international trade on other environmental indicators such as land use have also  
57 been included in consumption-based MRIO accounts [11], however there is an ongoing  
58 debate as to whether these MRIO models are suited to examine land-use displacements, or

59 whether biophysical models are better suited [12-14]. A possible reason for these at times  
60 divergent accounts of land-use displacements is the differences in metrics underlying the  
61 accounting. A recent study showed that the choice of monetary, nutritional or resource  
62 metrics could greatly affect conclusions about whether a country is, for instance, a net  
63 importer or net exporter of croplands [15].

64 While global studies give a good indication of the magnitude of the environmental  
65 consequences of trade, analysing the displacement effects of trade for one specific country  
66 provides information about the specifics of the global effects of local consumption [16].

67 Therefore, the aim of this study was to analyse the global environmental impacts over time  
68 associated with the national food supply of a developed country. The UK was used as a case  
69 study for this analysis since it represents a developed, high-income country which is heavily  
70 dependent on food imports.

71 The present analysis considers the environmental impacts related to crops used for food and  
72 feed, as it has been shown that dietary change could achieve a larger reduction in carbon  
73 emissions than supply-side mitigation measures [17] with the potential for co-benefits for  
74 public health [18]. Synergies between health, emissions and land use reduction will be highly  
75 relevant from a policy perspective [18].

76 The complexities of current food supply chains and lack of available data make it very  
77 difficult, in some cases impossible, to trace individual food items back to their place of  
78 production, especially because most bilateral trade data report only the last country in the  
79 supply chain [19,20]. Therefore, for this study, a recently developed biophysical dataset was  
80 used, which allows flows of crop and livestock products to be traced and consistently  
81 allocated to cropland areas in over 200 countries [8]. The use of this dataset overcomes the  
82 problem of bilateral trade data, and thereby gives a better indication of the allocation of crop

83 and livestock products to their cropland area. In the present study, this dataset was used to  
84 calculate the domestic and overseas cropland footprint of the UK food and feed supply for the  
85 period 1986 - 2009. The calculated cropland footprint was subsequently used to analyse the  
86 associated GHGE, comprising synthetic fertiliser, manure application to soils, rice cultivation  
87 and emissions arising from land use change (LUC). This study therefore highlights the effects  
88 of trade on the self-sufficiency of the UK and the displacement of cropland and GHGE  
89 impacts to other countries.

## 90 Methods

91 This study uses data from a recently developed dataset [8], based upon FAOSTAT data [21],  
92 for calculating total trade volumes for the UK and their associated cropland footprint. A brief  
93 overview of this methodology is given here, but for more details see the original study [8].  
94 The accounting system assumes that the domestic production of the UK is either used for  
95 domestic use or for exports (production perspective). The domestic consumption of the UK is  
96 either supplied by domestic production or by imports (consumption perspective). The  
97 resulting values represent the total crop (food and feed) supply at the national level, including  
98 processed products such as bread and pasta, and hence differ from actual food intake or  
99 household food availability due to, for instance, waste along the supply chain. By assuming  
100 that imports and domestic production of a given crop contribute to the country's domestic  
101 consumption and exports in proportional shares, consistent production and consumption  
102 perspectives can be established for 157 crops on a global scale. One hundred and ten of these  
103 crops are included in the current study; crops that do not ultimately contribute to the human  
104 diet were excluded, e.g. cottonseed and tobacco (see Table S1 for details of the crops). At the  
105 time of the analysis, no exports were reported for Cote d'Ivoire, a major supplier of cocoa  
106 beans and coffee for the UK, for the period 1986 – 1996. Therefore, a linear trend was  
107 assumed for the supply of cocoa beans and coffee to the UK, using the period 1997 – 2009 as  
108 a base, and extrapolated to the period 1986 – 1996.

109 Not all crops contribute 100% to human food or animal feed; most notably oil palm fruit.  
110 Therefore, although the analysis is based on food and feed crops, not all of the environmental  
111 impact may be related to food. Experimental statistics show that approximately 0.4% - 1.7%  
112 of total UK arable land was used for biofuel production in the period 2008-2012 [22]. No  
113 data are available for earlier years; it is therefore assumed that crops for fuels played a  
114 negligible role over the study period.

115 All processed products, e.g. soybean oil, were converted and allocated to their primary  
116 commodity, as described by [8], preventing double counting for crop products. Only cropland  
117 is considered in the present study, grasslands were not part of the analysis. Animal products  
118 and feed use are converted to obtain the amount of ‘crops in animal products’ and hence the  
119 associated cropland requirements can be calculated. Cropland requirements were calculated  
120 using country-specific yields for the respective years. Thus, the consumption perspective  
121 shows the shares of 255 countries in the apparent consumption of 110 crops in the UK and  
122 the production perspective shows in which of the 255 countries the UK food production is  
123 consumed.

124 Individual crops were grouped into FAO categories (see Table S1 for an overview) and all  
125 countries were grouped into world regions according to the classification used by [8].

126 Countries included in the EU15+ region were kept the same over the entire period, e.g. the  
127 enlargement of the EU did not affect our composition of the regions, to keep results for the  
128 EU15+ consistent for the studied period (see Table S2). Energy and protein supply were  
129 calculated using FAO nutritional value data [23]. As this study analyses crop supply resulting  
130 from food and feed, calculated energy and protein availabilities represent energy and protein  
131 that are available before they are converted to livestock products. As such, the amount of  
132 protein and energy is higher than the actual availability of protein and energy to the general  
133 population. All data presented in figures and tables are three year averages around the  
134 respective years.

### 135 *Calculation of fertiliser application*

136 Crop-specific synthetic nitrogen fertiliser rates for Europe and the UK were obtained from  
137 Fertilizers Europe [24], and the British Survey of Fertiliser Practice 2010 [25]. Crop-specific  
138 nitrogen application rates for the rest of the world were calculated using crop-specific

139 nitrogen fertiliser consumption data from the International Fertiliser Industry (IFA) for the  
140 year 2010/2011, the most recent version with the largest number of crops and countries  
141 available [26]. Data from Fertilizers Europe and the British Survey of Fertiliser Practice were  
142 obtained for the year 2010 to match IFA figures. IFA consumption figures (for 13 major crop  
143 categories in the 27 main nitrogen fertiliser consuming countries) were converted to crop-  
144 specific application rates by dividing the total nitrogen consumption figures for each crop by  
145 the harvested area for the corresponding crop [27]. To calculate the changes in fertiliser  
146 application rates over the time period, annual total fertiliser consumption in a region was  
147 obtained [27] and the % change in total fertiliser consumption was divided by the % change  
148 in “arable land and permanent crops” in the corresponding year. For example, total fertiliser  
149 consumption in South America in the year 2000 was about 50% of the total fertiliser  
150 consumption in the year 2010, and total “arable land and permanent crops” area in 2000 was  
151 84% of that in the year 2010. Combining these figures leads to a nitrogen application rate in  
152 2000 that represents 60% of the nitrogen application rate in 2010. It was then assumed that  
153 the calculated change in fertiliser application rates over the study period was uniform across  
154 all the different crop categories, i.e. all crop categories from South America in 2000 received  
155 60% of their 2010 nitrogen application rate, and uniform across types of land, because FAO  
156 figures do not distinguish between grasslands and croplands fertiliser consumption. A recent  
157 study suggests that in most countries the share of total N fertiliser applied to grasslands  
158 increased over the period 1986 – 2009, while this share in most European countries decreased  
159 from the year 2000 onwards [28]. In general, the share of N fertiliser applied to grasslands is  
160 much lower than the share for croplands. Thus, our assumption of uniform changes for  
161 grasslands and croplands may slightly overestimate N fertiliser use in the later stages of the  
162 studied period, and slightly underestimate N fertiliser use from the year 2000 onwards for  
163 European countries. For stimulant crops, nitrogen application rates were obtained for specific



164 countries from the FAO database ‘Fertiliser Use by Crop’ ( $n=23$  for coffee;  $n=13$  for tea; and  
165  $n=12$  for cocoa) [29]. If the respective country was not available in this dataset, nitrogen rates  
166 of a neighbouring country were used. Fertiliser figures for stimulant crops were only  
167 available for different years and ranged therefore from 1988 - 2003. In contrast with the  
168 fertiliser application rates of other crops, no changes in fertiliser application were assumed  
169 for stimulant crops, as the data were only available for different years and as stimulant crops  
170 receive a relatively low amount of fertilisers. For cocoa production in Ghana and Ivory Coast,  
171 the two main exporting countries to the UK, no nitrogen use was assumed, as the FAO  
172 reports for Ghana that fertiliser use on cocoa was negligible [30]. For countries that were part  
173 of the ‘rest of the world’ category of the IFA, total crop-specific fertiliser consumption was  
174 divided by the harvested area of all crop areas in the remaining countries.

#### 175 *Calculation of manure application*

176 Nitrogen is also applied on soils by manure, though the nitrogen input by manure is much  
177 smaller on a global scale than synthetic fertiliser nitrogen input [31]. Manure application rates  
178 were calculated using a two-step approach. First, total annual manure nitrogen input to soils  
179 was obtained and divided by total harvested area in the corresponding year (both obtained  
180 from [27]) to give the average manure nitrogen input per hectare for a given country in a  
181 given year (equation 1):

$$182 \text{ Equation 1: } M_{appl_i}(t) = \frac{M_{cons_i}(t)}{Area_i(t)}$$

183 where  $M_{appl_i}(t)$  is the average application rate ( $\text{kg N ha}^{-1}$ ) for manure nitrogen in country  $i$   
184 for the year  $t$ ;  $M_{cons_i}(t)$  is the total manure nitrogen input ( $\text{kg N}$ ) according to the FAO in  
185 country  $i$  for the year  $t$ ; and  $Area_i(t)$  is the total harvested area ( $\text{ha}$ ) according to the FAO in  
186 country  $i$  in the year  $t$ . To account for the different nitrogen requirements of different crops, it

187 was assumed that manure nitrogen is spread in the same proportions as synthetic fertilisers  
188 (equation 2). That is, if vegetables require twice as much nitrogen from synthetic fertiliser as  
189 cereals, we assume that vegetables receive twice as much manure nitrogen as well.

190 Equation 2: 
$$M_{crop_{i,j}}(t) = \frac{F_{crop_{i,j}}(t)}{F_{appl_i}(t)} \times M_{appl_i}(t)$$

191 where  $M_{crop_{i,j}}(t)$  is the calculated manure nitrogen application rate ( $\text{kg N ha}^{-1}$ ) in country  $i$   
192 for crop  $j$  in the year  $t$ ;  $F_{crop_{i,j}}(t)$  is the crop-specific nitrogen application rate ( $\text{kg N ha}^{-1}$ )  
193 for synthetic fertiliser in country  $i$  for crop  $j$  for the year  $t$ ;  $F_{appl_i}(t)$  is the average application  
194 rate ( $\text{kg N ha}^{-1}$ ) for synthetic nitrogen fertiliser in country  $i$  and year  $t$ ; and  $M_{appl_i}(t)$  is the  
195 average application rate ( $\text{kg N ha}^{-1}$ ) for manure nitrogen in country  $i$  in the year  $t$  (equation  
196 1). The crop-specific fertiliser nitrogen application rates ( $F_{crop_{i,j}}$ ) were obtained from the  
197 previous synthetic fertiliser input calculations. The average fertiliser application rates ( $F_{appl_i}$ )  
198 were obtained by dividing total fertiliser consumption in a country [26] by total  
199 harvested area of all crops in the corresponding country, or by using average fertiliser  
200 application rates from Fertilizers Europe [24] and the British Survey of Fertiliser Practice  
201 2010 [25]. Since it was assumed that changes in fertiliser consumption over the study period  
202 were uniform across the crop categories, the factor  $F_{crop_{i,j}} / F_{appl_i}$  was kept constant over  
203 time. This two steps approach gave an average crop-specific manure nitrogen application rate  
204 for each country in each year of the study period. In some regions, fertilisation levels are  
205 limited by legislation. Using the approach described here, in only three countries do  
206 calculated fertilization rates exceed recommended rates (Netherlands, Ireland, and Belgium).  
207 While the current method may overestimate manure application rates for these three  
208 countries, this is unlikely to have a large impact on our overall findings.

209 *GHGE calculation related to fertiliser and manure application, and rice cultivation*

210 Crop-specific nitrogen application rates for synthetic fertiliser and manure were multiplied by  
211 the cropland area associated with the UK supply of the respective crop to give the total  
212 nitrogen input associated with each crop. Both direct GHGE from fertiliser and manure  
213 application, as well as indirect emissions due to leaching and volatisation, were calculated  
214 using the IPCC Tier 1 factors [32]. A global warming potential (GWP) of 298 (100-year time  
215 horizon) was used to convert N<sub>2</sub>O to CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e) [33].

216 To account for methane emissions during rice cultivation, implied emission factors for rice  
217 cultivation [27] were multiplied by the calculated rice cultivation area associated with the UK  
218 crop supply. Methane emissions were converted to CO<sub>2</sub>e by using a factor of 34 (100-year  
219 time horizon) [33].

#### 220 *GHGE associated with LUC*

221 To calculate LUC emissions, a “top-down” approach was used, as described in [34], based on  
222 the consideration that all agricultural commodity markets are global in nature and highly  
223 interconnected. From this perspective, all global LUC emissions should be allocated to  
224 agricultural land itself, not only to recently cleared land, and results in a calculated average  
225 emission of land use change for every hectare in agricultural use [35]. Values obtained from  
226 [35] are used here, which are 5.8 Gt CO<sub>2</sub>e per year for all LUC emissions, and a total global  
227 agricultural area of 4.9 Gha, resulting in average LUC emissions of 1.18 ton of CO<sub>2</sub>e for  
228 every hectare of agricultural land. To compensate for a limitation of this approach, namely  
229 that all crops carry the same burden per hectare, we use normalisation factors for the 25  
230 major global crops based on their relative expansion rates in the period 1990-2010 [36]. For  
231 example, soybeans, where cropland areas have expanded rapidly, receive a normalisation  
232 factor of 1.36, compared to, for instance, a factor of 0.78 for barley, for which cropland areas  
233 have decreased. The same LUC emission factor is used throughout the studied period.

235 **Results**

236 The dependence of the UK on international trade to meet its food needs has increased  
237 substantially over the period 1986 – 2009. Total annual crop-related food and feed supply in  
238 the UK increased from 56 Mt yr<sup>-1</sup> in 1987 to 71 Mt yr<sup>-1</sup> in 2008. Part of this increased  
239 demand can be explained by the increase in population, which grew from 57 million people  
240 in 1987 to 62 million people in 2008. However, the per capita supply still grew from 985 kg  
241 cap<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup> to 1,148 kg cap<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup>. In 2008, 48% of the total UK food and feed was imported  
242 from abroad, compared with 36% in 1987 (Table 1). The same picture emerges for energy  
243 (calories) and protein supply: in 2008 trade imports accounted for about 50% of total supply,  
244 while this percentage was about 40% in 1987 (Table 1). Total energy availability for feed and  
245 food combined increased from 5,522 kcal cap<sup>-1</sup> day<sup>-1</sup> in 1987 to 6,892 kcal cap<sup>-1</sup> day<sup>-1</sup> in  
246 2008; protein availability for feed and food combined increased from 192 g cap<sup>-1</sup> day<sup>-1</sup> to 259  
247 g cap<sup>-1</sup> day<sup>-1</sup>.

248 The main trading region in terms of volume was Europe, responsible for about one fifth of  
249 the total crop supply. The share from North America in the total supply has decreased over  
250 time, while South America's share has increased substantially since 1986. After domestic  
251 food production, European agricultural production is most important for the supply of energy  
252 to the UK, with almost a fifth of all calories coming from the EU in 2008. Most of the protein  
253 is imported from South America due to the large imports of high-protein oil crops such as  
254 sunflower seed and soybeans, which are mainly used for animal feed.

255 The increasing dependence on international trade is reflected in the rising environmental  
256 impact abroad, albeit at a slower pace than total trade volume. The total cropland footprint of  
257 the UK food and feed supply increased from 8,900 kha in 1987 to 10,922 kha in 2008, or  
258 from 1,562 m<sup>2</sup> cap<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup> to 1,774 m<sup>2</sup> cap<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup> in 2008 (+14%). In 1987, about 57% of

259 this cropland footprint associated with UK crop supply was located abroad and this increased  
260 to about 67% in 2008 (Figure 1). The largest increase in cropland footprint is observed in  
261 South America (+ 1,437 kha) followed by the Former Soviet Union (+ 791 kha). Figure 2  
262 shows the change in percentage points of the world regions' contributions to the total UK  
263 cropland footprint from 1986 – 2009. It shows that the importance of North America has  
264 decreased over time (from 14% to 5%), while the importance of particularly South America  
265 has increased (from 10% to 21%). Crops responsible for the decrease in cropland area in  
266 North America are mainly cereals (see Figures S1-S10 for crop category-specific maps),  
267 while the increase for South America is mainly caused by oil crops. Figure 2 also shows the  
268 relative contribution of the different world regions to the total UK footprint in 2008. The  
269 share of domestic cropland in the total cropland footprint is largest (33%), followed by the  
270 share of South America (21%) and EU15+ (14%). Individual countries responsible for the  
271 largest share in the UK's cropland footprint are Argentina and Brazil, both contributing about  
272 9% to the total UK cropland footprint.

### 273 *Contribution of different crops to cropland footprint*

274 In absolute terms, oil crops, cereals and stimulant crops (i.e. cocoa, coffee and tea) are  
275 responsible for the largest increase in the cropland footprint, whereas the contribution of  
276 sugar crops and roots and tubers decreased (Table 2). The cropland footprint associated with  
277 oil crops increased by 1,359 kha (+ 68%), while that associated with stimulant crops  
278 increased by 242 kha (+ 28%), mainly due to an increase in cocoa bean imports. Cropland for  
279 oil crops increased both domestically (+ 238 kha) and abroad (+ 1,121 kha). Cropland area  
280 for domestically supplied cereals decreased (- 183 kha), while total cropland area for cereals  
281 abroad increased by 426 kha. Crops particularly important for human health, such as fruit and  
282 vegetables, are also increasingly sourced from abroad, with an increase from 429 kha in 1987  
283 to 608 kha in 2008, while the domestic cropland footprint of the UK fruit and vegetables

284 supply has steadily decreased over time (from 201 kha in 1987 to 133 kha in 2008). The main  
285 countries abroad for supplying the UK's fruit and vegetables are Spain, China and Italy  
286 Soybean was the commodity responsible for the largest cropland footprint abroad with 1,502  
287 kha (20% of total imported cropland; and 14% of the total land footprint), followed by cocoa  
288 beans with 872 kha (12% and 8%, respectively) and wheat with 787 kha (10% and 7%,  
289 respectively) (Table 3). Ten crops imported into the UK were responsible for about 75% of  
290 the total cropland footprint abroad. The largest absolute increase for individual crops in the  
291 total cropland footprint of the UK supply is observed for soybeans and rapeseed (+461 kha  
292 and +460 kha, respectively).

### 293 *Net displacement of land*

294 Figure 3 shows that the net imported cropland footprint (i.e. domestic cropland plus cropland  
295 abroad minus cropland used for exports, or *consumption perspective* minus *production*  
296 *perspective* in Figure 3) has increased substantially from 1987 to 2008. In 1987, the UK  
297 imported a net cropland area of 3,475 kha and this increased to 6,468 kha in 2008. Total  
298 domestic agricultural cropland area decreased (-216 kha) and the share of domestic cropland  
299 used for exports also decreased from 29% in 1987 to 19% in 2008. The main exports-  
300 receiving region was the EU15+ in both 1987 and 2008, receiving about 12% of all exported  
301 cropland in 1987 and about 11% in 2008. The UK was a net exporter of cropland to the  
302 Former Soviet Union and Northern Africa & Western Asia in 1987; however in 2008 the UK  
303 was a net importer of cropland from all regions.

### 304 *GHGE associated with UK crop supply*

305 Total GHGE, excluding emissions from LUC, remained relatively constant over the studied  
306 period. This, however, masks an underlying trend where the share of synthetic fertiliser in the

307 GHGE declined from 76% to 68%, while the share of rice increased from 10% to 15%. The  
308 decline in GHGE from fertiliser application was mainly caused by decreasing fertiliser  
309 application rates in the two regions responsible for the largest production of the UK crop  
310 supply (UK and EU15+).

311 When GHGE from LUC are included, a clear increase in total GHGE is observed, from 19.1  
312 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 1987 to 21.9 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2008, primarily because of a larger cropland footprint.  
313 LUC emissions represent the largest contributor to total GHGE, with a share of 64% in 2008,  
314 with fertiliser application contributing a further 24%, manure application 6% and rice  
315 cultivation 5%. As a consequence, GHGE are increasingly located abroad. While in 1987  
316 about 50% of the emissions were emitted overseas, this had increased to 62% in 2008 (Figure  
317 1), with most emitted in South America (18%), and the EU (15%).

#### 318 *Contribution of different crops to GHGE*

319 GHGE of most crop categories increased over time, mostly as a consequence of the larger  
320 area associated with each crop (Table 2). GHGE of roots & tubers and sugar crops decreased  
321 over time, as a result of a smaller cropland area and lower fertiliser use. GHGE associated  
322 with cereals remained constant, despite a larger cropland area associated with cereals, which  
323 can be explained by a lower fertiliser use in the UK and EU15+, the main regions supplying  
324 cereals. Wheat was the largest source associated with UK food and feed supply and was  
325 responsible for 25% of all emissions (not shown). Soybeans, barley and rapeseed were the  
326 other major sources of total GHGE. Wheat was the major source of GHGE overseas,  
327 representing 18% of all GHGE abroad, followed by soybeans (17%) and cocoa beans (7%).

#### 328 *Land and GHGE intensities*

329 Table 4 shows the differences in land and GHGE intensities per kilogram of crop supplied (in  
330 ha kg<sup>-1</sup> and CO<sub>2</sub>e kg<sup>-1</sup>, respectively). It shows that, on average, land and GHGE intensities  
331 have decreased over time, with yield improvements being the driving factor. It also shows  
332 that the intensity of the average UK crop supply is higher than the intensities of domestically  
333 produced crops (total UK production, i.e. it includes domestically supplied crops and crops  
334 for exports). Imports to the UK have a higher intensity than UK exports, suggesting a  
335 displacement of environmental impact. However, when analysing UK-EU trade, the opposite  
336 is observed: UK imports from the EU have lower intensities than UK exports to the EU. The  
337 primary reason for this is not necessarily a difference in productivity, but because the UK  
338 imports higher yielding crops from the EU, most notably vegetables.



339 **Discussion**

340 This study shows that the UK is increasingly reliant on international trade to satisfy its food  
341 and feed demand which is accompanied by a shift in the environmental impact beyond its  
342 own territory. This is consistent with previous studies showing the impact on other  
343 environmental indicators, for example, 75% of the water footprint of the UK lies overseas  
344 [37] and approximately 40% the UK's GHGE (associated with all consumption activities) are  
345 emitted abroad [38].

346 This analysis for the UK indicates that domestic cropland for food and feed production has  
347 decreased, as has the amount of cropland used for exports, suggesting that the increase in  
348 cropland imports reflects a real displacement of cropland use to other countries rather than a  
349 generic increase in trade volume (Figure 3). This is different from, for instance, an analysis  
350 for Finland showing both increasing imports and exports of embodied land, resulting in  
351 increasing net displacement of land for food for the period 1991 - 2007 [39].

352 Nevertheless, it is consistent with the wider picture of the EU as a net importer of agricultural  
353 products and displacer of environmental impact to other world regions, despite the fact that  
354 European yields are among the highest in the world [40]. This is different from the global  
355 trend, where on average, agricultural trade flows are from high-yielding regions to low-  
356 yielding regions [8]. Intra-European trade, however, tends to be consistent with the global  
357 picture, where high footprint countries tend to be net exporters of environmental impact [40].

358 This might be explained by the trade-off between scale of consumption and efficiency of  
359 production [40]. European countries have an efficient agricultural system, but also a high  
360 level of consumption. Because imports have a high resource intensity compared to exports,  
361 most European countries become net displacers of environmental impact. However, within  
362 Europe, consumption differences are much smaller and resource intensities are more a result

363 of structural and natural differences. As a result, countries with a lot of resources, such as  
364 France and Spain in the case of land, specialise and become net exporters of land within the  
365 EU [40]. The present analysis confirms this observation, with the UK importing land and  
366 GHGE intensive commodities from the rest of the world, both as a result of lower yields in  
367 other regions (e.g. for cereals) and because of the type of crops (e.g. soybeans). On the other  
368 hand, the UK imports on average low resource intensive products from the EU15+, mainly as  
369 a result of a high import of vegetables, which have a higher average EU15+ yield than  
370 domestically produced vegetables. As such, UK – EU15+ trade suggests a beneficial role of  
371 trade for agricultural efficiency, but trade with the rest of the world displaces environmental  
372 effect (Table 4).

373 The total cropland footprint for UK food supply (10,922 kha or 1,774 m<sup>2</sup> cap<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup>) is  
374 similar to a recent estimate of the German cropland footprint, excluding German cropland for  
375 roughages (14,450 kha or 1,762 m<sup>2</sup> cap<sup>-1</sup> year<sup>-1</sup>) [41]. Germany's land footprint abroad is  
376 dominated by soybeans and cocoa beans, broadly in line with the current UK results. Oil  
377 crops are largely used for feed in the livestock sector, and dietary change is often suggested  
378 as a means to decrease the environmental impact of food consumption and/or dependence on  
379 food imports as the production of animal products is inherently inefficient. If Europe reduced  
380 its livestock production by 50%, the use of imported soybean meal would drop by 75% and  
381 the EU would become a large net exporter of basic food commodities [42]. In addition,  
382 changes in consumption of animal products are also relevant from a public health perspective,  
383 as a lower consumption of animal products could have co-benefits for public health [43,44].  
384 An important consideration here is what would be grown on freed up cropland as a result of  
385 lower animal consumption, and what people would eat instead of animal products. Ideally,  
386 the available cropland would be used to grow crops that would benefit human health and  
387 people would shift towards food items with lower environmental impacts that are also

388 healthy. Theoretically, the UK could achieve full self-sufficiency; however this would imply  
389 drastic shifts in consumption patterns [45], away from stimulant crops, animal products and  
390 many types of fruit and vegetables, which may not be feasible or acceptable.

391 While attention tends to be focused on animal products, the present analysis suggests that the  
392 supply of stimulant crops is increasingly responsible for a large land appropriation abroad  
393 (see also [41,46]), and associated GHGE from LUC. While stimulants are not a necessary  
394 part of a nutritionally balanced diet, they are culturally embedded in the consumption patterns  
395 of many countries. This highlights the multiple and diverse effects of international trade; on  
396 one hand it displaces environmental impact, on the other hand it enables economic  
397 development in developing countries through international trade.

398 This study suggests that the total GHGE associated with the UK food supply have remained  
399 relatively constant over the studied period. However, this overall trend masks some  
400 underlying trends, where fertiliser use on UK and EU croplands has declined, causing GHGE  
401 from fertiliser use to fall, whereas GHGE related to rice imports have increased. When  
402 emissions from LUC are included, an increase in GHGE is seen, with LUC GHGE being the  
403 largest contributor to total GHGE. This highlights the importance of including LUC  
404 emissions in assessing GHG impact of food consumption. In addition, there may be a trade-  
405 off between products that have low associated GHGE with fertiliser use and other sources of  
406 GHGE, but by requiring more land, they are responsible for a larger share in LUC emissions.  
407 This highlights the importance of including LUC GHGE, but also the choice of method for  
408 dealing with GHGE from LUC.

409 The UK's full supply chain emissions from all consumption activities were 1,106 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e  
410 [38]. Agriculture and food production accounted for about 120 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e [47]. Another study,  
411 using LCA analysis for a wide range of foods and processes, estimates the total direct

412 emissions of UK food consumption at 152 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e for the year 2005, with a further 101 Mt  
413 CO<sub>2</sub>e attributable to LUC related to the UK food consumption [34]. The estimated emissions  
414 of 7.9 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e (excluding LUC) and 21.9 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e (including LUC) in this study are lower  
415 because this study does not consider other sources of GHGE such as enteric fermentation  
416 (responsible for 16 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in [34]) or LUC and fertiliser use attributable to grazing areas  
417 (LUC emissions related to grassland area were responsible for more than 50% of total LUC  
418 emissions in [34]).

419 It is not easy to relate FAOSTAT figures to actual household or individual food consumption  
420 [48]. The food supply data used in this study suggest, for instance, that the total amount of  
421 available vegetables per capita doubled over the study period. In contrast, household statistics  
422 suggest that consumption of vegetables decreased slightly over the study period [49]. This  
423 could have several reasons, for instance more vegetables could be wasted along the supply  
424 chain or used for animal feed. Therefore, one should be cautious in using food supply  
425 statistics to assess dietary changes or quality.

#### 426 *Limitations of the study*

427 Currently, there is not an established method of relating emissions from LUC to food, and a  
428 wide range of methods have been suggested (e.g. [50,51]). By using a global average LUC  
429 emission factor for each crop in this study, a comparatively heavy burden is assigned to  
430 established croplands, while LUC emissions from recently cleared croplands are  
431 underestimated. This has been partly counteracted by normalising emissions based on  
432 expansion rates of crops. Still, this approach does not consider differences in crop expansion  
433 rates between regions, or whether a particular crop has primarily expanded into forest or into  
434 other types of land. In addition, using one LUC emission factor based on recent estimates for  
435 global LUC emissions and agricultural area, for the entire period might underestimate LUC

436 emissions in earlier decades as deforestation rates have slowed over the last decades [52].  
437 The current method of dealing with LUC emissions does not provide obvious mitigation  
438 options, and will only favour efficiency and crop yields as strategies for reducing LUC  
439 emissions [50]. However, because the objective of the current study is to highlight historical  
440 changes in the UK's cropland footprint and associated GHGE, rather than suggesting  
441 mitigation options, it is an appropriate method for estimating LUC impacts. In addition, other  
442 methods of dealing with LUC emissions need more spatially aggregated data and information  
443 on the type of land that has been converted, something that is not readily available for every  
444 country in the world.

445 This study considers GHGE from fertiliser application, manure application, rice cultivation  
446 and LUC. It does not consider emissions from other sources, such as emissions from enteric  
447 fermentation or LUC attributable to grazing area, which are both major sources of GHGE  
448 [31,52]. Extending the present analysis by including grasslands and emissions arising from  
449 enteric fermentation will give a more complete picture of the total environmental impact of  
450 the UK food supply. In addition, data on national crop-specific fertiliser application rates is  
451 only available for a limited number of crops and years, and large variations in application  
452 rates exist on a sub-national scale. This study used country level nitrogen application rates, in  
453 order to be consistent with national trade data. Finally, emissions from LUC could potentially  
454 be addressed in a more spatially aggregated way, taking into account the types of land and the  
455 biomes that have been converted to agricultural land.

456 **Conclusions**

457 To conclude, total environmental impact is ultimately driven by consumption, yet  
458 governments mostly focus on low impact per unit of production within national boundaries  
459 and give less consideration to addressing consumption volumes and patterns [20]. The effects  
460 of trade on the displacement of environmental impacts are mostly analysed in a global  
461 context for the sum of all consumption activities. Although such studies provide valuable  
462 insights, analysing specific countries and specific activities such as food consumption will be  
463 needed for policy making as most decisions are still made at a national level.

464 **Authors' contributions**

465 HR, JM, RM and PS initiated and designed the study. TK provided the initial data for the  
466 study and commented on draft versions of the paper. HR carried out most of the analysis, and  
467 wrote the draft and final version of the manuscript. JM, RM and PS supervised the study and  
468 commented on draft versions of the manuscript. All authors gave final approval for  
469 publication.

470

471 **Funding**

472 This work was funded by a University of Aberdeen Environment and Food Security Theme  
473 PhD studentship, and contributes to the Scottish Food Security Alliance-Crops and the  
474 Belmont Forum funded DEVIL project (NERC fund UK contribution: NE/M021327/1). J.M.  
475 and R.M. acknowledge funding from the Rural and Environment Science and Analytical  
476 Services, Scottish Government. T.K. acknowledges funding from the European Research  
477 Council Grant ERC-263522 (LUISE).

478 **References**

- 479 [1] Tilman, D., Fargione, J., Wolff, B., D'Antonio, C., Dobson, A., Howarth, R., Schindler, D.,  
480 Schlesinger, W. H., Simberloff, D. & Swackhamer, D. 2001 Forecasting Agriculturally Driven Global  
481 Environmental Change. *Science*. **292**, 281-284. (doi:10.1126/science.1057544).
- 482 [2] Foley, J. A., Ramankutty, N., Brauman, K. A., Cassidy, E. S., Gerber, J. S., Johnston, M., Mueller,  
483 N. D., O'Connell, C., Ray, D. K., West, P. C., et al. 2011 Solutions for a cultivated planet. *Nature*.  
484 **478**, 337-342. (doi:10.1038/nature10452).
- 485 [3] Smith, P., Bustamante, M., Ahammad, H., Clark, H., Dong, H., Elsiddig, E. A., Haberl, H.,  
486 Harper, R., House, J., Jafari, M., et al. 2014 Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU). In  
487 *Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth*  
488 *Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (eds. O. Edenhofer, R. Pichs-  
489 Madruga, Y. Sokona, E. Farahani, S. Kadner, K. Seyboth, A. Adler, I. Baum, S. Brunner, P.  
490 Eickemeier, B. Kriemann, J. Savolainen, S. Schlömer, C. von Stechow, T. Zwickel & J. & Minx).  
491 Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.
- 492 [4] Lambin, E. F. & Meyfroidt, P. 2011 Global land use change, economic globalization, and the  
493 looming land scarcity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. **108**, 3465-3472.  
494 (doi:10.1073/pnas.1100480108).
- 495 [5] D'Odorico, P., Carr, J. A., Laio, F., Ridolfi, L. & Vandoni, S. 2014 Feeding humanity through  
496 global food trade. *Earth's Future*. **2**, 458-469. (doi:10.1002/2014EF000250).
- 497 [6] Fader, M., Gerten, D., Krause, M., Lucht, W. & Cramer, W. 2013 Spatial decoupling of  
498 agricultural production and consumption: quantifying dependences of countries on food imports due  
499 to domestic land and water constraints. *Environmental Research Letters*. **8**, 014046.  
500 (doi:10.1088/1748-9326/8/1/014046).
- 501 [7] Porkka, M., Kummu, M., Siebert, S. & Varis, O. 2013 From Food Insufficiency towards Trade  
502 Dependency: A Historical Analysis of Global Food Availability. *PLoS ONE*. **8**, e82714.  
503 (doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0082714).
- 504 [8] Kastner, T., Erb, K. H. & Haberl, H. 2014 Rapid growth in agricultural trade: effects on global  
505 area efficiency and the role of management. *Environmental Research Letters*. **9**, 034015.  
506 (doi:10.1088/1748-9326/9/3/034015).
- 507 [9] Meyfroidt, P., Lambin, E. F., Erb, K. & Hertel, T. W. 2013 Globalization of land use: distant  
508 drivers of land change and geographic displacement of land use. *Current Opinion in Environmental*  
509 *Sustainability*. **5**, 438-444. (doi:10.1016/j.cosust.2013.04.003).
- 510 [10] Peters, G. P., Minx, J. C., Weber, C. L. & Edenhofer, O. 2011 Growth in emission transfers via  
511 international trade from 1990 to 2008. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. **108**, 8903--  
512 8908. (doi:10.1073/pnas.1006388108).
- 513 [11] Weinzettel, J., Hertwich, E. G., Peters, G. P., Steen-Olsen, K. & Galli, A. 2013 Affluence drives  
514 the global displacement of land use. *Global Environ. Change*. **23**, 433-438.  
515 (doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2012.12.010).
- 516 [12] Henders, S. & Ostwald, M. 2014 Accounting methods for international land-related leakage and  
517 distant deforestation drivers. *Ecol. Econ*. **99**, 21-28. (doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2014.01.005).



- 518 [13] Kastner, T., Schaffartzik, A., Eisenmenger, N., Erb, K., Haberl, H. & Krausmann, F. 2014  
519 Cropland area embodied in international trade: Contradictory results from different approaches. *Ecol.*  
520 *Econ.* **104**, 140--144. (doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2013.12.003).
- 521 [14] Weinzettel, J., Steen-Olsen, K., Hertwich, E. G., Borucke, M. & Galli, A. 2014 Ecological  
522 footprint of nations: Comparison of process analysis, and standard and hybrid multiregional input–  
523 output analysis. *Ecol. Econ.* **101**, 115-126. (doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2014.02.020).
- 524 [15] MacDonald, G. K., Brauman, K. A., Sun, S., Carlson, K. M., Cassidy, E. S., Gerber, J. S. &  
525 West, P. C. 2015 Rethinking Agricultural Trade Relationships in an Era of Globalization. *Bioscience.*  
526 **65**, 275-289. (doi:10.1093/biosci/biu225).
- 527 [16] Fader, M., Gerten, D., Thammmer, M., Heinke, J., Lotze-Campen, H., Lucht, W. & Cramer, W.  
528 2011 Internal and external green-blue agricultural water footprints of nations, and related water and  
529 land savings through trade. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences.* **15**, 1641-1660. (doi:10.5194/hess-  
530 15-1641-2011).
- 531 [17] Hedenus, F., Wirsenius, S. & Johansson, D. A. 2014 The importance of reduced meat and dairy  
532 consumption for meeting stringent climate change targets. *Clim. Change.* **124**, 79-91.  
533 (doi:10.1007/s10584-014-1104-5).
- 534 [18] Tilman, D. & Clark, M. 2014 Global diets link environmental sustainability and human health.  
535 *Nature.* **515**, 518-522. (doi:10.1038/nature13959).
- 536 [19] Kastner, T., Kastner, M. & Nonhebel, S. 2011 Tracing distant environmental impacts of  
537 agricultural products from a consumer perspective. *Ecol. Econ.* **70**, 1032-1040.  
538 (doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2011.01.012).
- 539 [20] Hoekstra, A. Y. & Wiedmann, T. O. 2014 Humanity's unsustainable environmental footprint.  
540 *Science.* **344**, 1114-1117. (doi:10.1126/science.1248365).
- 541 [21] FAO. 2012 FAOSTAT.
- 542 [22] DEFRA. 2013 Experimental Statistics: Area of Crops Grown For Bioenergy in England and the  
543 UK: 2008-2012.
- 544 [23] FAO. 2001 FOOD BALANCE SHEETS - A Handbook.
- 545 [24] Fertilizers Europe. 2010/2011 <br />Fertilizers Europe forecast of food, farming and fertilizer  
546 use.
- 547 [25] Defra. 2010 The British Survey of Fertiliser Practice: Fertiliser Use on Farm Crops for Crop Year  
548 2010.
- 549 [26] Heffer, P. 2013 Assessment of Fertilizer Use by Crop at the Global Level 2010-2010/11.
- 550 [27] FAOSTAT. 2012 FAO Statistical Database - FAOSTAT **2013**.
- 551 [28] Lassaletta, L., Billen, G., Grizzetti, B., Anglade, J. & Garnier, J. 2014 50 year trends in nitrogen  
552 use efficiency of world cropping systems: the relationship between yield and nitrogen input to  
553 cropland. *Environmental Research Letters.* **9**, 105011. (doi:10.1088/1748-9326/9/10/105011).
- 554 [29] FAO. 2006 Fertilizer use by crop.

- 555 [30] FAO. 2005 *Fertilizer use by crop in Ghana*. Rome: FAO.
- 556 [31] Tubiello, F. N., Salvatore, M., Rossi, S., Ferrara, A., Fitton, N. & Smith, P. 2013 The FAOSTAT  
557 database of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. *Environmental Research Letters*. **8**, 015009.  
558 (doi:10.1088/1748-9326/8/1/015009).
- 559 [32] IPCC. 2006 Chapter 11: N<sub>2</sub>O Emissions from Managed Soils, and CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Lime  
560 and Urea Application. In *2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories, Prepared*  
561 *by the National Greenhouse Gas Inventories Programme* (eds. H. S. Eggleston, L. Buendia, K. Miwa,  
562 T. Ngara & K. Tanabe). Japan: IGES.
- 563 [33] Myhre, G., Shindell, D., Bréon, F. M., Collins, W., Fuglestvedt, J., Huang, J., Koch, D.,  
564 Lamarque, J. F., Lee, D., Mendoza, B., et al. 2013 Anthropogenic and Natural Radiative Forcing. In  
565 *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth*  
566 *Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (eds. T. F. Stocker, D. Qin, G.  
567 -. Plattner, M. Tignor, S. K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels, Y. Xia, V. Bex & P. M. Midgley).  
568 Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press.
- 569 [34] Audsley, E., Brander, M., Chatterton, J., Murphy-Bokern, D., Webster, C. & Williams, A. 2009  
570 How low can we go? An assessment of greenhouse gas emissions from the UK food system and the  
571 scope to reduce them by 2050.
- 572 [35] Vellinga, T. V., Blonk, H., Marinussen, M., Van Zeist, W. & Starman, D. 2013 Methodology  
573 used in feedprint: a tool quantifying greenhouse gas emissions of feed production and utilization.
- 574 [36] Williams, A. G., Dominguez, H. & Leinonen, I. 2014 A simple approach to land use change  
575 emissions for global crop commodities reflecting demand, 8-10.
- 576 [37] Hoekstra, A. Y. & Mekonnen, M. M. 2012 The water footprint of humanity. *Proceedings of the*  
577 *National Academy of Sciences*. **109**, 3232-3237. (doi:10.1073/pnas.1109936109).
- 578 [38] DEFRA. 2013 UK's Carbon Footprint 1997 - 2011, *Statistics Release*.
- 579 [39] Sandström, V., Saikku, L., Antikainen, R., Sokka, L. & Kauppi, P. 2014 Changing impact of  
580 import and export on agricultural land use: The case of Finland 1961–2007. *Agric. , Ecosyst. Environ.*  
581 **188**, 163-168. (doi:10.1016/j.agee.2014.02.009).
- 582 [40] Steen-Olsen, K., Weinzettel, J., Cranston, G., Ercin, A. E. & Hertwich, E. G. 2012 Carbon, Land,  
583 and Water Footprint Accounts for the European Union: Consumption, Production, and Displacements  
584 through International Trade. *Environ. Sci. Technol.* **46**, 10883-10891. (doi:10.1021/es301949t).
- 585 [41] Meier, T., Christen, O., Semler, E., Jahreis, G., Voget-Kleschin, L., Schrode, A. & Artmann, M.  
586 2014 Balancing virtual land imports by a shift in the diet. Using a land balance approach to assess the  
587 sustainability of food consumption. Germany as an example. *Appetite*. **74**, 20-34.  
588 (doi:j.appet.2013.11.006).
- 589 [42] Westhoek, H., Lesschen, J. P., Rood, T., Wagner, S., De Marco, A., Murphy-Bokern, D., Leip,  
590 A., van Grinsven, H., Sutton, M. A. & Oenema, O. 2014 Food choices, health and environment:  
591 Effects of cutting Europe's meat and dairy intake. *Global Environ. Change*. **26**, 196-205.  
592 (doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2014.02.004).

- 593 [43] Friel, S., Dangour, A. D., Garnett, T., Lock, K., Chalabi, Z., Roberts, I., Butler, A., Butler, C. D.,  
594 Waage, J., McMichael, A. J., et al. 2009 Public health benefits of strategies to reduce greenhouse-gas  
595 emissions: food and agriculture. *Lancet*. **374**, 2016-2025. (doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(09)61753-0).
- 596 [44] Tukker, A., Goldbohm, R. A., de Koning, A., Verheijden, M., Kleijn, R., Wolf, O., Pérez-  
597 Domínguez, I. & Rueda-Cantucho, J. M. 2011 Environmental impacts of changes to healthier diets in  
598 Europe. *Ecol. Econ.* **70**, 1776-1788. (doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2011.05.001).
- 599 [45] Cowell, S. J. & Parkinson, S. 2003 Localisation of UK food production: an analysis using land  
600 area and energy as indicators. *Agric. , Ecosyst. Environ.* **94**, 221-236. (doi:10.1016/S0167-  
601 8809(02)00024-5).
- 602 [46] Gerbens-Leenes, P. W. & Nonhebel, S. 2002 Consumption patterns and their effects on land  
603 required for food. *Ecol. Econ.* **42**, 185-199. (doi:10.1016/S0921-8009(02)00049-6).
- 604 [47] Barrett, J., Owen, A. & Sakai, M. 2011 UK Consumption Emissions by Sector and Origin,  
605 *Report to the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by University of Leeds*.
- 606 [48] Del Gobbo, L. C., Khatibzadeh, S., Imamura, F., Micha, R., Shi, P., Smith, M., Myers, S. S. &  
607 Mozaffarian, D. 2015 Assessing global dietary habits: a comparison of national estimates from the  
608 FAO and the Global Dietary Database. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. **101**, 1038-1046.  
609 (doi:10.3945/ajcn.114.087403).
- 610 [49] DEFRA. 2012 UK - household purchases 1974 - 2013. *Family food datasets*.
- 611 [50] van Middelaar, C. E., Cederberg, C., Vellinga, T. V., van der Werf, Hayo MG & de Boer, I. J.  
612 2013 Exploring variability in methods and data sensitivity in carbon footprints of feed ingredients.  
613 *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*. **18**, 768-782. (doi:10.1007/s11367-012-0521-9).
- 614 [51] Hörtenhuber, S., Piringer, G., Zollitsch, W., Lindenthal, T. & Winiwarter, W. 2014 Land use and  
615 land use change in agricultural life cycle assessments and carbon footprints - the case for regionally  
616 specific land use change versus other methods. *J. Clean. Prod.* **73**, 31-39.  
617 (doi:10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.12.027).
- 618 [52] Tubiello, F. N., Salvatore, M., Ferrara, A. F., House, J., Federici, S., Rossi, S., Biancalani, R.,  
619 Condor Golec, R. D., Jacobs, H., Flammini, A., et al. 2015 The Contribution of Agriculture, Forestry  
620 and other Land Use activities to Global Warming, 1990-2012. *Global Change Biol.* **21**, 2655-2660.  
621 (doi:10.1111/gcb.12865).

623 **Table 1. Trends in volume, calories and protein imported into the UK from each world region as**  
624 **percentages of total food and feed supplt. Values are 3-year means around the respective year.**

	Tons (% of total)		Energy (kcal) (% of total)		Protein (% of total)	
	1987	2008	1987	2008	1987	2008
Domestic	64	52	62	51	57	46
North America	5	3	8	3	17	5
Central America	1	1	1	1	0	0
South America	3	10	5	12	8	26
EU 15+	15	19	14	19	12	16
FSU and other Europe	1	3	1	4	1	4
Sub-Saharan Africa	2	2	3	2	1	1
Northern Africa & Western Asia	2	2	1	1	0	0
Eastern Asia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Southern Asia	1	1	1	1	1	1
Southeast Asia	3	5	3	4	1	1
Oceania	1	1	2	1	1	0

625 **Table 2. Impacts of the main crop categories. Values are 3-year means around the respective year. Note**  
626 **that the impacts are the sum of domestic impacts and impacts abroad.**

	Tons (kton)		Land area (kha)		GHGE (excl. LUC) (kton CO <sub>2</sub> e)		GHGE (incl. LUC) (kton CO <sub>2</sub> e)	
	1987	2008	1987	2008	1987	2008	1987	2008
Cereals	20,775	26,925	4,141	4,384	5,681	5,309	10,214	10,203
Roots and Tubers	8,156	7,453	265	193	278	173	589	400
Sugar Crops	10,859	9,838	662	474	514	355	1,256	887
Pulses	689	1,120	272	572	100	156	501	1,000
Nuts	49	69	38	42	9	9	65	70
Oil Crops	5,247	11,161	1,991	3,350	669	1,131	3,641	6,048
Vegetables	5,779	7,362	247	304	271	287	608	693
Fruits	4,074	6,072	382	437	157	219	634	772
Spices	23	56	24	44	13	30	49	96
Stimulants	474	643	877	1,119	252	211	1,546	1,861
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,124</b>	<b>70,699</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>10,922</b>	<b>7,943</b>	<b>7,878</b>	<b>19,101</b>	<b>21,856</b>

627

628 **Table 3. Crops responsible for the largest land appropriation abroad. Values are 3-year means around**  
629 **the respective years.**

	Embodied cropland (kha) (2008)	Percentage of total imports (2008)	Embodied cropland (kha) (1987)	Percentage of total imports (1987)
Soybeans	1,502	20%	1,040	21%
Cocoa beans	872	12%	552	11%
Wheat	787	10%	688	14%
Sunflower seed	524	7%	286	6%
Maize	388	5%	352	7%
Beans, dry	367	5%	90	2%
Rapeseed	345	5%	124	2%
Barley	284	4%	164	3%
Sugar, refined	275	4%	306	6%
Oil Palm Fruit	201	3%	105	2%
<b>Total top 10</b>	<b>5,545</b>	<b>75%</b>		

630

631

632 **Table 4. Land and GHGE intensities of the UK food and feed supply, total UK production, total imports**  
 633 **and exports, and imports and exports to the EU.**

	Land		GHGE <sup>634</sup>	
	(ha kg <sup>-1</sup> )		(kg CO <sub>2e</sub> kg <sup>-1</sup> )	
	1987	2008	1987	2008
Total UK supply	0.16	0.15	0.34	0.31
Total UK production	0.12	0.11	0.34	0.26 <sup>636</sup>
Total imports	0.25	0.22	0.48	0.41
Total exports	0.18	0.15	0.50	0.37 <sup>637</sup>
Total EU imports	0.13	0.11	0.31	0.28 <sup>638</sup>
Total EU exports	0.18	0.15	0.51	0.39

639

640

641 **Figure captions**

642 Figure 1. Overseas impact of UK food and feed supply on cropland use and carbon emissions  
643 as percentage of total impact.

644 Figure 2. Relative contribution of the different world regions to the UK's cropland footprint.  
645 Colours show the change in percentage points of the world regions' contribution to the total  
646 UK cropland from 1986 to 2009. Proportional circles show the relative contribution of the  
647 world regions to the UK's cropland footprint in 2008 (3-year mean).

648 Figure 3. Cropland footprint for the UK calculated from a production and consumption  
649 perspective for 1987 (left) and 2008 (right). The values are 3-year means around the respective  
650 years. NA, North America; CA, Central America and Caribbean; SA, South America; EU,  
651 EU15+; FSU, Former Soviet Union; SSA, Sub-Saharan Africa; NA and WA, North Africa  
652 and Western Asia; E Asia, East Asia; S Asia, Southern Asia; SE Asia, Southeast Asia; OCE,  
653 Oceania.

654







