

THE THYMES

A brighter future

We reflect on a tough year full of challenges, and how we're feeling optimistic nonetheless

Nature has the answer

Join us for a whistle-stop tour of our farmers who work with nature to ensure a greener future

Healthy meal planner

Make a healthy habit of organic food. It's easy-breezy with our handy mix and match meal planner



In a year of upheaval and uncertainty, we've been working hard to continue putting food you can trust on your table. Read on to get to know the committed people that make it happen, and how a brighter future lies ahead.

A brighter future

The pandemic has really turned our organic world upside down. Where possible, folks have been moved out of Veg HQ to work from home, and our packers are working in smaller teams to ensure social distancing. New measures have been introduced, keeping them safe as they fill more boxes with organic food than ever before.

Our Customer Services team has grown bigger, in record time too. Over the last few months,

"we've grown to be an even closer, more empathetic team, confident in handling whatever the future brings,"

gushes manager Dan proudly. If you were in good hands before, you're in extremely good hands now.

Our visits to the farmers, makers and bakers we work with have had to stop for the time being as well. Things certainly haven't been easy for any of them. Caws Cenarth, a family run cheesemonger in the heart of West Wales, saw their business drop by a crippling 65-80%. But, like us, they adapted. Getting creative, they turned to social media, and sold out all their cheese in a record time of three days. Now, they're slowly but surely getting back on track.

As are we. In mid-August, we were able to bring back the 'Dislikes' option for our Fruit & Veg Boxes. As our Managing Director Hannah resolutely says,

"we're working hard to keep your organic deliveries arriving every week, no matter what happens next."

Even with that uncertainty hanging in the air, our spirits have been buoyed by your constant stream of kind words. We pass them around our virtual HQ every day. And all those snaps of your furry friends are met with plenty of smiles too.

By trusting in us to deliver your organic shop every week, you've continued to support all the independent farmers, makers and bakers we work with. If not for you, we wouldn't be in the position we're in now. One that ensures a brighter, more optimistic future, fuelled by brilliant organic food.



A day in the life

"The alarm goes at quarter to five," Denise Walton tells us. Among other things, she steers the charcuterie side of things at Peelham Farm, a 650-acre patch of land close to the Berwickshire Coast in the southern Scottish borders. The farm is organic and Pasture for Life certified - *"the gold standard"*, as Denise puts it. The cattle and sheep are 100% grass-fed, enjoying breath-taking views as they munch away, while the pigs, in their own enclosure, trot and snuffle about eating their grains.

Since taking on the rather worn out, arable farmland in 1989, the Walton family have transformed it into an organic haven, planting woods and hedgerows, and even building ponds. By restoring the habitat, wildlife is now thriving. There have been sightings of the rare corn bunting in the area, and even of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly, which was thought to have been extinct.

After her alarm comes *"a really important part of my day"*, says Denise: her early morning meditation. She follows it with some organic Darjeeling tea, while catching up on admin - and Denise has quite a few irons in the fire. As members

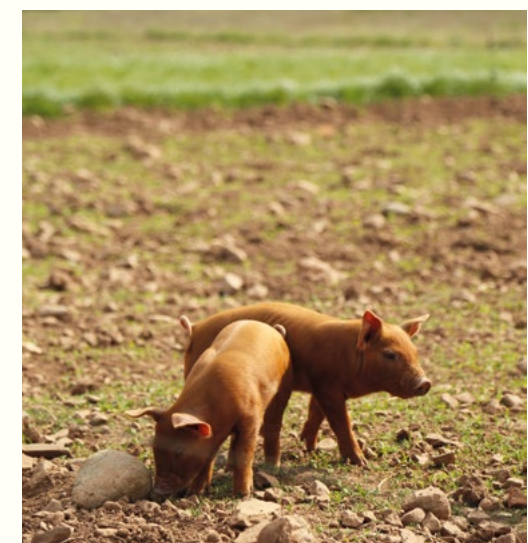
of the Scottish Organic Strategy Group, Peelham Farm work directly with Scottish policymakers to raise the profile of organic within Scotland. They're also members of the Nature Farming Friendly Network, an emerging organisation that's bringing farmers together to address the need for viable habitats.

On top of that, she keeps our Ilyas up to date with any exciting new ideas, like her pork and garlic sausages. After arranging for samples to be sent, it's time for her quarter-mile walk up to the organic butchery with her trusty pooch, Jasper, a sandy-coloured Lurcher, at her side. She catches up with the team to discuss the day's agenda, and then leaves them to expertly carry out their work.

Peelham work very closely and intimately with all their livestock, which includes caring for any orphaned calves they may have. Denise heads over to the paddock, and feeds the little 'uns colostrum-rich milk from other mothering cows in the herd. At around 4 in the afternoon, there'll be a spot of lunch, after which Denise will still find the time to stop by and help with the pigs, and to herd the cattle too, if needed.

Supper's then ready on the table at around 8, once all the day's tasks have been seen to. There's still a smidge of time after, for Denise and her family to put their feet up and wind down, before her alarm goes off in the wee hours once again.

Head to: abelandcole.co.uk/peelhamfarm and pick up Peelham Farm's fantastic charcuterie.



We caught up with Ilyas, our Dairy & Delicatessen Buyer, to see just how those pork and garlic sausages from Peelham went down...

What does your day consist of mostly?

As Dairy & Delicatessen Buyer, I'm in regular contact with our many cheesemakers and charcutiers, keeping them up to date on how their products are doing, if we need more stock, and if there's anything new we could try from them.

You recently chatted to Denise at Peelham Farm about trying something new, right?

That's right. She suggested we try their lovely pork and garlic sausage. I was certainly keen. All their sausages are hand-crafted,

and they don't use any additives, so they're beautifully natural. She sent me a few samples and I had them with my morning fry-up. Considering we're at home, it's a good way to start the day.

And what was the verdict?

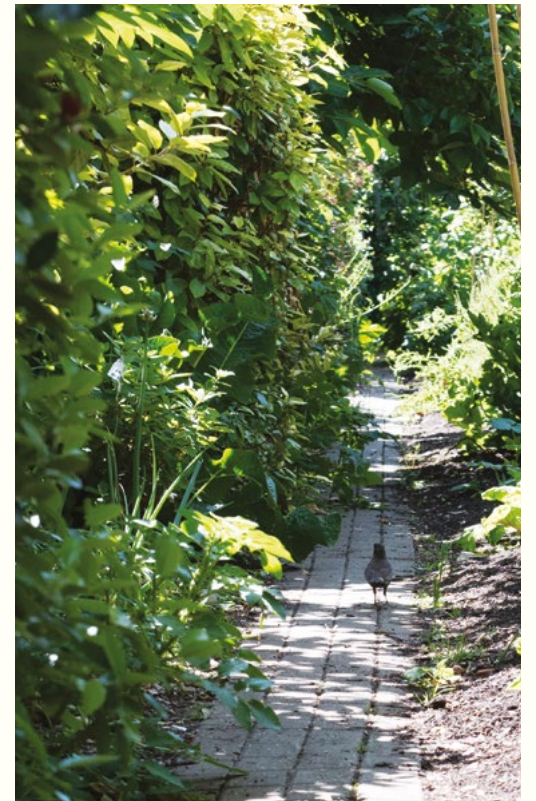
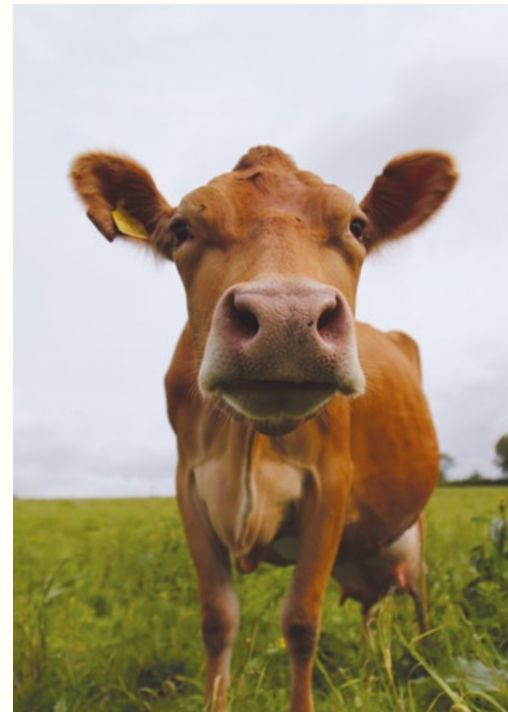
They really hit the spot. The garlic didn't overpower things, and they were nice and fatty. I didn't waste much time getting back to Denise, to let her know how delicious they were and that we're certainly interested in adding them to our delicatessen range. Look out for those sausages!

Why do you enjoy working with our organic farmers, like Denise?

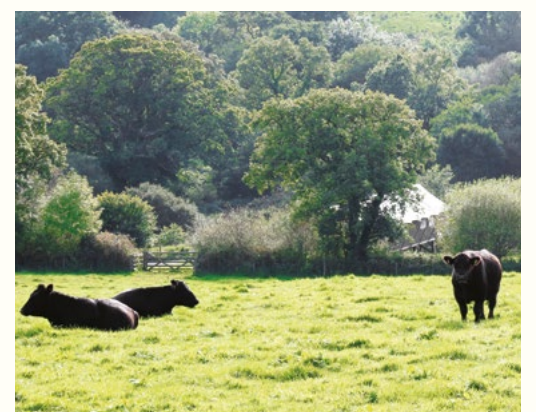
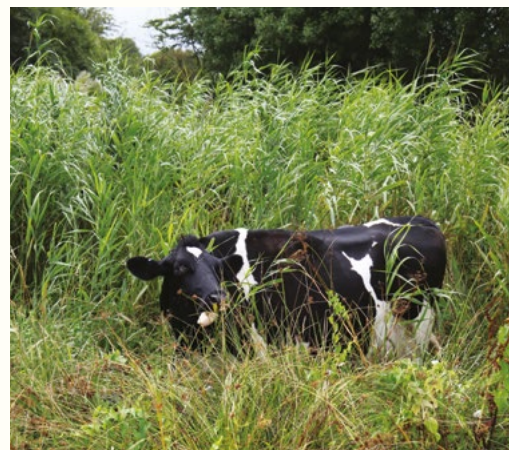
I love to work with our organic farmers because their passion for the planet and for the welfare of their animals always translates into end-products made with the utmost care. This makes my job incredibly easy, as great tasting, quality food is at the forefront of everyone's minds.

Hop over to: abelandcole.co.uk/fridge for all of Ilyas' delightful deli picks.

Nature has the answer



Get to know all our brilliant farmers, makers and bakers at abelandcole.co.uk/producers



We've been shouting about the benefits of organic farming for over thirty years now. From fighting climate change to encouraging biodiversity, it does all kinds of good for the environment. Join us for a whistle-stop tour of how farmers up and down the country are putting our planet first in brilliantly innovative ways.

Keeping your organic farm free of nasties is job number one. At Albury Estate, a winery tucked neatly into the Surrey Hills, manager Alex (who is one of the only women in her field in the UK), creates [teas and other specialist natural applications for her vines](#) instead of turning to chemical fixes.

Similarly, at Foskett's Farm in Suffolk, they use garlic and chrysanthemum extracts as natural insecticides to fend off anything that might

want to nibble on their lovely carrots. They're clever, organic solutions that keep soil healthy. As healthy soil is a major store of carbon, it's a fantastic way to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Then, there's the Burys in Devon, at Eversfield Farm. Mark planted over 30,000 trees and miles of hedgerows when he first bought the land, to help nurture it back to its natural state after years of intensive farming.

The Bury family steer clear of routinely using insecticide, instead encouraging the natural populations of invertebrates such as dung beetles. These industrious little things incorporate the manure into the healthy soil a lot quicker, reducing the chance of it running into and polluting local rivers, as well as reducing the release of methane.

The surroundings are now prospering, with even the salmon returning to the local river.

Keeping soil healthy takes some out-of-the-box thinking, then. So does powering your organic farm. Severn & Wye, in Scotland, are well known for their superb smoked fish, but their sustainability efforts are second to none too. There are plans afoot to construct [a new wind turbine, which would go on to provide enough clean energy to power Severn & Wye's smokery, as well as two local primary schools](#). And being the sustainability champs they are, they give back what they take from the land: they've replaced the oak trees they used to build their smokery and for smoking materials by planting a staggering 350 British deciduous trees.

Over at Hermitage Farm in Herefordshire, Jen and Alan know just what a brilliant impact trees

can have on the earth. A few years ago, they took the farm on and were immediately intrigued by the large walnut groves they'd inherited. Rather than see the trees get chopped down for their wood, the couple wanted to make good use of them.

With the help of our very own agronomist Peter Bevan, and our fruit grower Martin Soble, they eventually figured out a way to harvest, dry and peel the organic walnuts. *"It seems such a waste to let just the squirrels eat them,"* says Jen. Indeed. And the walnut trees don't just give us cracking walnuts either.

With their deep-growing roots, they help to prevent nutrients and soil from washing away, meaning there's less erosion, and neighbouring streams and rivers are cleaner.

But it's not just trees that have a positive impact on the environment. Organic muesli-maker Alara have been in pursuit of becoming even greener for over 30 years now. This mission has led to projects like their Permaculture Garden, which runs along a half-acre strip of land at the back of their HQ at King's Cross, in the heart of London. Home to over 80 different food crops - including Europe's largest yacon plantation - [Alara believes the garden has the potential to sequester about 100 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year](#). That's no small number.

So leaving things to grow certainly has its benefits. But what about maintaining all that growth? In Sussex, at Court Lodge Farm, wildlife enthusiasts David and Marian Harding have the organic answer. They use their herd of British Friesian and Ayrshire cows for conservation grazing. A traditional

system that helps to maintain biodiversity, their cows seek out the reeds for their mineral content, as well as the more deep-rooted plants for their medicinal qualities.

This [constant daily munching keeps the area in check, allowing for more species to flourish](#) on the land. And let's not forget about the dung the cows leave behind. The manure forms rich mini ecosystems, teeming with hundreds of insects that are food for birds, badgers, foxes and bats. As harmonious a cycle as can be.

By working with nature, and not against it, these farmers and growers aren't just producing healthier, more flavourful food. They're also ensuring the land they tend stays green for the next generation. By choosing organic, you're playing your part too.

Healthy meal planning made easy

MIXIN' AND MATCHIN'

Looking to slip into a healthy habit? That's where this nifty mix and match meal planner comes in.

Our clever recipe boffs have put together seven wholesome meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Pick out your dishes, partner them with an invigorating smoothie, and you'll be set for the week. Now, what'll it be?





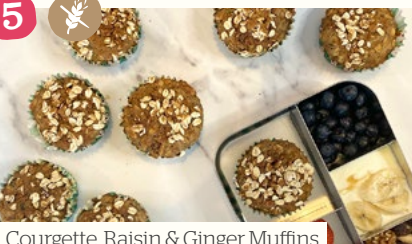


Put together your menu right here.

Visit our [Recipe Patch](http://abelandcole.co.uk/recipes) for much more foodie inspiration at abelandcole.co.uk/recipes


Smoothie

						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		Vg	Vg	Vg	Vg	Vg

Breakfast

						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vg	Vg	Vg	Vg			

Lunch

			
1	2	3	4
Vg			
			
5	6	7	
		Vg	

Dinner

			
1	2	3	4
			
5	6	7	
	Vg		

THE GOOD STUFF

We've come a long way in 30 years, but we know there's more work to be done yet. By shopping with us, you don't just get boxes of brilliant organic food dropped to your door. You're also part of a green movement that's doing amazing things for the environment and local community.

2020 in a nutshell



250KG FRUIT AND 250KG PANTRY ESSENTIALS donated to Knight's Enham Andover school's PTA

Over **7,000 meals** and **1.5 tonnes of fruit** donated to the **NHS** over 10 weeks

536 FRUIT & VEG BOXES DONATED



£1,400 donated to fellow B Corp **The Big Issue**

20,000 eggs and **667 Mylk** cartons donated to **City Harvest**

£426 raised through sales of **MarmalAID** for **HandsUpFoundation**

£619 raised through sales of **Gooseberry Gin Jam**, donated to **Friends of the Earth**

4 tonnes of fruit provided for **School Food Matters'** Breakfast Box programme

£1,000 donated to **City Harvest** to help support **COVID** surplus demands

£214 raised for **Agrespect** through sales of **thyme**

Looking ahead

Innovative, refillable deliveries through

CLUB ZERO will return soon

MILK PACKAGING is under review

We are **reviewing the use of plastic** in our **fruit & veg range**

We're reducing our **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** by **2030**, to align with the **Paris Agreement 2015** alongside our other fellow **B Corps**

SWITCH TO GREEN ENERGY AT bigcleanswitch.org/abelandcole and we'll **donate the commission money** to environmental charity, **Friends of the Earth**

We're raising money for **Walk the Walk** with sales of our **face masks** in October. *Find out more on our website!*