

# 2022 Impact Report



harvestlondon



**Our mission is to build a sustainable food system with a greater choice**

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## What is the B-Corporation movement?

**Harvest London is part of a global community of over 6,000 B Corps, united in the belief:**

- That we must be the change we seek in the world.
- That all business ought to be conducted as if people and place mattered.
- That, through their products, practices, and profits, businesses should aspire to do no harm and benefit all.
- To do so requires that we act with the understanding that we are each dependent upon another and thus responsible for each other and future generations.

# What is this report about?

It was an early goal of ours, when we founded Harvest London in 2018, to become a B Corporation.

**We wanted to become a B Corp because no other external validation looks so comprehensively at the impact a company has on the world around it - not just the environment, but our staff, suppliers, and community.**

We're proud of what we've achieved since our founding, opening two farms, building our customer base, creating jobs, and in early 2022, winning our B Corp accreditation.

**Certified**



**Corporation**



The process to become a B Corp is rigorous, with applying companies scored across five areas: governance, workers, community, environment, customers. As a start-up, we performed better in some areas than others. As we grow, it will be easier to score higher in some areas, but it may also make it more difficult to get the highest scores in others.

One of the great strengths of the B Corp community is that members are encouraged to be honest about their challenges. As an accreditation, it is also explicitly aimed at for-profit companies. Looking at our own industry, we believe agriculture will only be truly sustainable if it is possible to produce and sell food at reasonable prices, taking account of the full impact of that food.

**This report looks back at our first year as a B-Corp: the progress we've made, and our plans for the future.**



# Who are Harvest London?

We are a vertical farming company. We use innovative technology to grow crops in a controlled environment, in which we can set the conditions (lighting, temperature, nutrients etc.) to maximise production in a much smaller area than you would need for field agriculture.

Growing in this way has many benefits. We can build farms in cities, bringing food production closer to the consumer, offering fresher, tastier food, and reducing the ways in which agriculture detrimentally affects the environment.

Although essential to human life, agriculture is a major cause of greenhouse gas emissions - nearly a third of the total of human-generated emissions come from food production.<sup>1</sup>

It's also increasingly clear that this is not just about what happens on farms: the fastest-growing source of emissions are pre- and post-production processes including fertilisers, food processing, packaging, transport, retail and waste.

We need to look at the food system as a whole; not just emissions, but also soil degradation and waterway pollution (a major problem in the UK). At the same time, recent crises including the Covid pandemic and the war in Ukraine have reminded us of the fragility of food supply. And that's before we've talked about labour shortages that meant millions of pounds worth of crops went unpicked in the UK last year.

We think vertical farming is part of the solution to these challenges.

1. Source: [Copernicus.org](https://www.copernicus.org/)

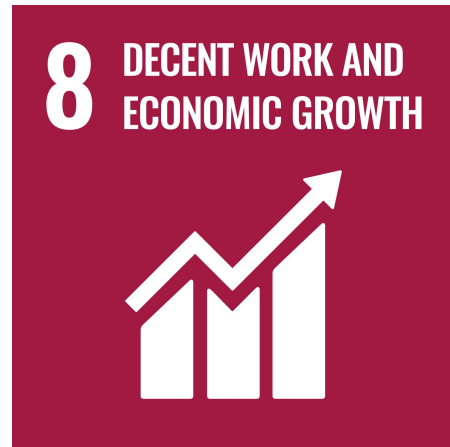


# Pushing technology to new levels

We're constantly increasing our productivity, and the range of crops we can grow.

# UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, members of the United Nations collectively adopted “a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet”, which was made up of 17 goals. At Harvest London, we seek through our actions to align to the following goals in particular:



# Our B Corp Score

Harvest London scored **104.7** in its impact assessment. Our scores in individual areas are broken down later in this report.

The largest contribution to this score came from the environment section, reflecting the fact that we chose vertical farming specifically because of the possibilities it creates for reducing the impact of farming on air, land and water.



- 104.7 Overall B Impact Score
- 80 Qualifies for B Corp Certification
- 50.9 Median score for Ordinary businesses



# Governance

We see ourselves as advocates for the potential of controlled environment agriculture to make food supply chains shorter, reducing reliance on imports and improving shelf-life and even nutrition.

In the past we've given leaders from government and business tours of our East London farm, and we were very proud to be named a Climate Innovator by the New York Times at the COP26 UN Climate Summit in Glasgow in November 2021 (this report is for 2022, but it's also our first, and COP doesn't come to the UK every year!).



Chris Davies, Harvest London's CEO. second from left, at New York Times Climate Hub, COP26

Mission & Engagement	2.8
Ethics & Transparency	2.6
Mission locked	10
Harvest London Score	15.4

We've continued to make connections to find ways to innovate in UK agriculture in 2022, including working with an architecture firm who are lobbying to have space for food production included in all new developments.

We're building connections  
across food production,  
academia and industry to  
spread the benefits of  
controlled environment  
agriculture



SUSTAINABLY  
GROWN,  
WITH ZERO  
PESTICIDES.

—  
harvestlondon

# Workers

## A living wage

All of our staff are paid at least the living wage set by the Living Wage Foundation, which for 2022 was £11.95 per hour. This figure is calculated based on the cost of living, and is higher than legal minimums (it shouldn't be confused with the National Living Wage, which is the statutory minimum wage for over 25s, and doesn't have a London top-up).

As a Living Wage Employer, we have committed to increasing the wage every year as the LWF produces a new calculation.



Financial Security	9.6
Health, Wellness, & Safety	5.0
Career Development	2.5
Engagement & Satisfaction	5.6
<b>Harvest London Score</b>	<b>23.6</b>

## Our culture

Harvest London took on its first employee in 2020. We've grown considerably since then, with low staff turnover. To give us a clear picture of how employees feel about our company culture, we've commissioned our first staff survey, which will be taking place early in 2023. After all, it's only worth having a company mission if everyone buys into it.

# Community

## Creating jobs locally

Working with our local council, we have hired people from the local area to work in the farm through the Kickstart scheme, which was designed to help unemployed young people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We also see schemes like this as having the additional benefit of giving people in cities a better connection to their food. Over 80% of the UK population lives in cities, and only around 350,000 people work in agriculture. Vertical farming gives us the opportunity to create more, good, jobs in food production, where people live.

As we expand, we will work with local authorities where new farms are situated to provide employment opportunities.



## Chilli Con Carner

We want as many people as possible to know about the possibilities of vertical farming, so when we can, we get local groups in for a tour. Chilli Con Carner is a cooking school for young people with ADHD, who came to see the farm in August 2022 as part of their course

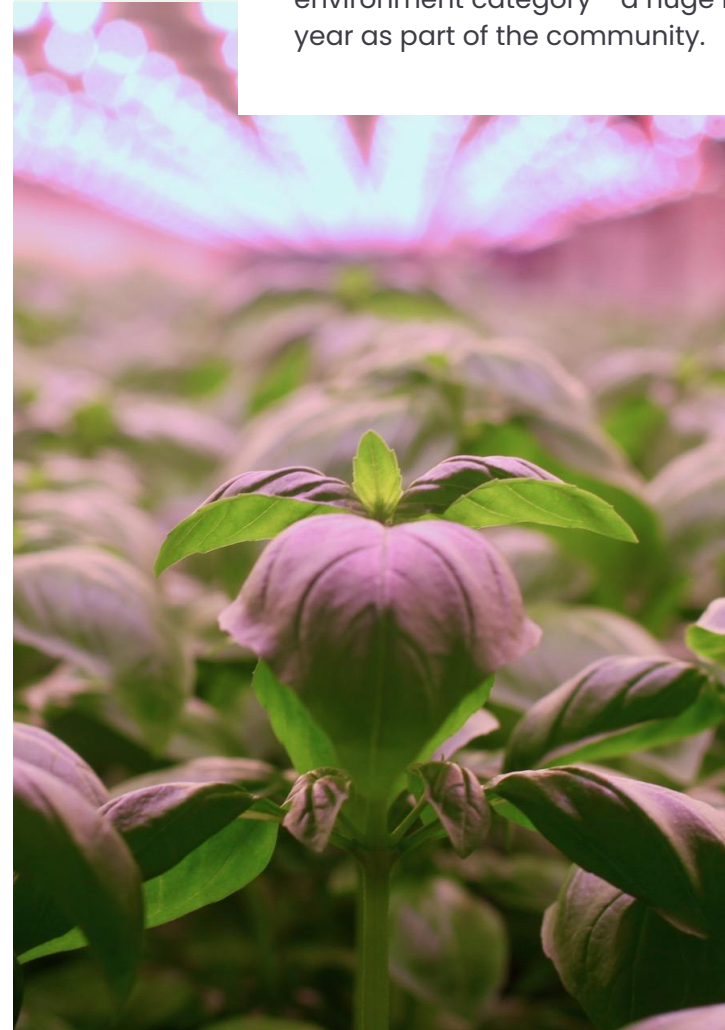
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	3.7
Economic Impact	7.2
Civic Engagement & Giving	1.5
Supply Chain Management	2.4
Harvest London Score	17.9

# Environment

## In 2022 we used:

- 100% renewable electricity to power our farm
- Zero-carbon transport to deliver our produce to customers (bicycles and EVs)
- Reusable crates to send our ingredients to restaurants
- Zero chemical pesticides

Environmental Management	5.3
Air & Climate	8.4
Water	4.0
Land & Life	8.9
Resource Conservation	16.5
Harvest London Score	44.5



## Best for the World

These efforts earned us a B-Corp 'Best for the World' accolade as one of their leading members in the environment category - a huge boost in our first year as part of the community.



# 100%

Renewable  
electricity

## Water

Along with energy, water is one of the key resources used in growing crops. Globally, 70% of freshwater withdrawals are for the purpose of food production. The impact is most significant in parts of the world suffering from water scarcity, which often overlap with countries which supply the UK with crops we can also grow in our farm.

Because we can recirculate water within our hydroponic system, we use around 80% less water per kilo to produce our herbs and vegetables, and will continue to become more efficient. Crucially, we do not spray fertilisers and pesticides onto fields which then runs off into rivers and lakes. In the UK, agriculture is the biggest contributor to waterway pollution, higher even than water companies.<sup>3</sup>



# 80%

Less water  
per kilo



## Carbon footprint

We have built two farms to-date: the first, a proof-of-concept, was closed when we moved to our current location in Leyton, East London, which opened in 2020. We have commissioned a carbon footprint assessment, using 2021 (the first full year of operations of our current farm) as the baseline. Unfortunately it isn't ready for this year's Impact Report, but in our 2023 report we will have two years of data enabling us to see progress over time.

3. Source: [Copernicus.org](https://www.copernicus.org/)



In 2022 we began  
selling live herbs to our  
first supermarket chain

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# Customers

Harvest London's first customers were independent restaurants, impressed by the great taste of our ingredients, and the way we could get them from the farm to their kitchens in a matter of hours.

We've saved customers hundreds of thousands of food miles by replacing imported ingredients.

We've branched out since then, and in 2022 sent more of our produce to other food service customers, including office canteens. We've also expanded into retail, providing living herbs, sold without plastic packaging.

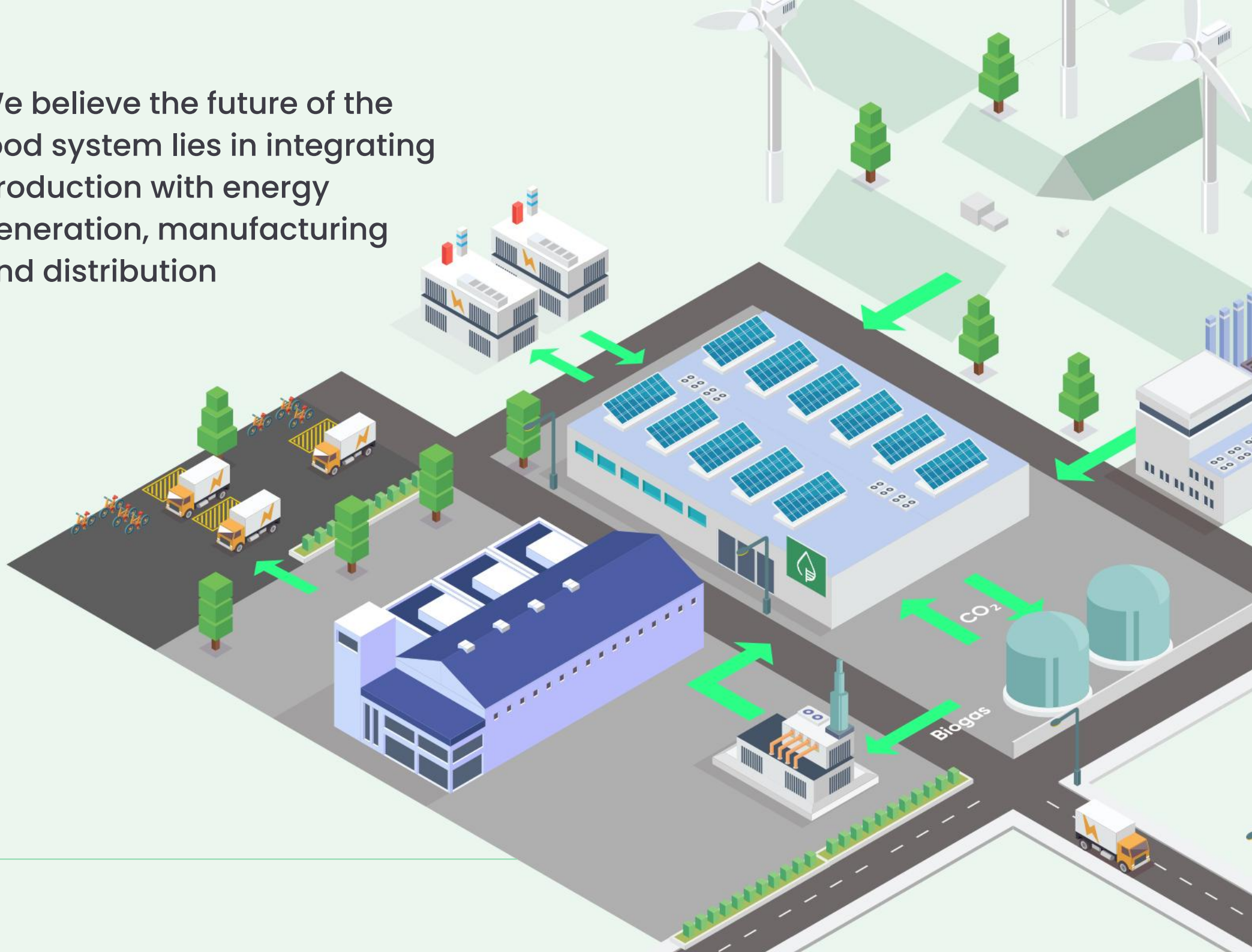
As well as improving the taste, by shortening the supply chain we reduce the amount of food that customers waste. Our partners can be the biggest advocates for the benefits of vertical farming, so in 2022 we participated in several events to spread the word among their staff and customers on how we need to reshape the food system.

Harvest London Score **3.1**





We believe the future of the food system lies in integrating production with energy generation, manufacturing and distribution



# 2023 goals

We are a very new B-Corp, and while we want to celebrate what we did in 2022, we've still got a long way to go in terms of measuring and formalising our impact.

Next year, we plan to:



**Finalise our carbon footprint measurement for 2021 and 2022**, and generate product life cycle assessments, to compare our produce against traditionally-farmed food



**Write a Community Engagement Plan** for future sites, to ensure that people living near our farms know what we're doing, and help us play our part in the local area.. We will also continue to build partnerships with local authorities



While we minimise waste across our business, we still need **a good solution for compostable waste**, which we will explore in 2023.



Because we want to help the vertical farming industry grow and maximise its impact, we're setting ourselves a target of collaborating with universities on **two research projects next year** – we can improve our own efficiency and move technology forward for everyone.