

## Farmer Collaboration Opportunity Feeding the 5000 / Gleaning Network UK



### Gleaning Network UK



An estimated 30-50% of food is wasted globally, with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimating that 20% of fruit and vegetables grown in Europe are lost at farm level. Alongside this, 5.8 million people live in deep poverty in the UK, and this figure is on the rise. [Gleaning Network UK](#) sets out to tackle these twin problems by reviving the ancient practice of gleaning: gathering the crops leftover after harvest.

In 2013, Gleaning Network UK already gleaned approximately 48 tonnes of produce, equal to over 200,000 meals, with over 200 volunteers across 18 gleaning days. By joining us, you'd become pioneers in this project. [Gleaning Network UK](#) can harvest any fruit and vegetables your farm are currently leaving unharvested and redistribute it to charities via our partners such as [FareShare](#), [CFE](#), and [Food For All](#). We provide free volunteers to harvest and collect the produce.

We aim to emulate the [gleaning network in the US](#) which has saved more than 164 million pounds of food for America's hungry since 1988, with over 400,000 volunteers, and a network of 900 growers. There are also extensive gleaning networks in Israel.



### **How It Works:**

Gleaning Network UK is generally interested in quantities above 1 tonne of produce, but we will consider lower quantities for lighter fruits and vegetables and locations that are especially close to our volunteer hubs. All harvesting and transport are coordinated by us, for minimum hassle to the farm. We are happy to liaise with farmers and supervise volunteers to ensure all farm rules are followed while volunteers are on site, and we comply with all health and safety requirements. We can come on a day of the farm's choosing to fit around their schedule. If you think your farm will have food waste during the harvest over the coming year, then please let us know the time of year you're likely to have unharvested produce available (this can be one-off gleaning days or more regular quantities), when you'd like us to come, and roughly the quantities you expect to be available for gleaning. We appreciate much of this is unpredictable.

There may also be opportunities to find markets to sell your produce, through organisations like [Company Shop](#). Gleaning Network UK may in such situations be able to offer some of the raised revenue back to farmers, and the rest will be returned as fundraising for charitable gleaning.

**If you'd be interested in having your unharvested produce gleaned, or for more information, please contact Martin Bowman, UK Gleaning Co-ordinator, at [martin@feeding5k.org](mailto:martin@feeding5k.org) or 07816088210.**

## What we can offer farms:

- **Divert unharvested food for charity:** 1 tonne of produce is roughly equivalent to 12,500 portions of food for the hungry and food insecure of the UK. You will get that glowing feeling of knowing that your unsalable produce has gone to where it is needed most. Fresh fruit and vegetables are especially valuable to the UK's poor who often cannot afford to buy them. Most of our produce is redistributed through [FareShare](#), already trusted by retailers around the UK with their surplus.



- **Publicity:** The Gleaning Network has achieved considerable press coverage in local, national and international media, including [Farmers Weekly](#), [Channel 4's River Cottage](#), [the Guardian](#), [BBC Radio 4's Food Programme](#) and [Al Jazeera](#). If we visit your farm, there will usually be the opportunity for some positive press, though we are also able to keep gleaning as a private arrangement and keep you anonymous if you wish.



- **Potential to prevent waste and boost profits through long-term campaigns:** We aim to transform the market to allow more of your farm's cosmetically imperfect produce to make it onto retailer's shelves. During extreme UK weather conditions in the summer of 2012, supermarkets temporarily relaxed their standards under pressure from the National Farmers Union. This saved an estimated huge 300,000 tonnes of produce. The British Retail Consortium says that cosmetically imperfect produce is the fastest growing fresh produce line. There is still a great potential to take this further.



- **Environmental benefits:** The [huge amounts of water, land and energy](#) (as well as your farm's time and effort!) used to grow food are most environmentally used by feeding them to humans if they cannot be sold, as shown by the [food waste hierarchy](#).

