

## Farmer Collaboration Opportunity Feedback's Gleaning Network UK



**Who We Are:** [Gleaning Network UK](#) is a charitable project to help fruit and vegetables farmers get any produce they can't sell to food poverty charities around the UK. Farmer Tim Casey of Lincolnshire said "Until now we had no way of using our surplus produce" and "it's great to know that local charities and those in need can benefit from it."

**How It Works – In-Field Waste:** If you sometimes have produce which you cannot sell, and is left unharvested in the field, we can organise groups of volunteers to come and harvest this produce, and get that nutritious produce to food poverty charities, where the food is needed most.

**How It Works – Packhouse Waste:** If you have already harvested produce which you cannot sell, we can help link you with charities to donate it to, or with commercial outlets. Commercial outlets, like [Company Shop](#) and [Rubies in the Rubble](#), will almost certainly pay you a higher price for this produce than you'd get from selling it for livestock feed or anaerobic digestion.

**Free, Safe and Minimum Hassle:** Gleaning is free for farmers. For minimum hassle to the farm, we coordinate all logistics ourselves – including vans, containers for the produce, harvesting equipment and transport for volunteers. We can come on a day of the farm's choosing. Farmer Geoff Philpott from Kent said it was "very easy to host a gleaning day". We have first-aid trained coordinators supervising the volunteers at all times. We have a risk assessment, insurance, and health and safety policies.

**Tried, Tested and Trusted:** From 2012 to 2015, we've gleaned over 188 tonnes of produce across 99 gleaning days. We've worked with numerous large-scale producers in the UK, including [Produce World](#), who in 2014 won the Co-operative Best Food Waste Initiative of the Year for their work with FareShare and Gleaning Network UK. We were the winners of the [BBC Food and Farming Award for Best Initiative in British Food](#). Farmer Peter Thompson, Essex said that hosting gleaning was "A fun and enjoyable experience" and "inspiring to have such enthusiastic visitors pleased to be on the farm and getting their hands dirty."

### Contact:

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

## How It Works

For in-field waste you are ploughing back into the field or leaving to rot, just let us know when waste is coming up. We ideally require 1-2 weeks' notice, but can sometimes operate with less notice. We will organise all the logistics of the gleaning day, if you just let us know the field location and a few other details. It is helpful (though not compulsory) if a farm staff member can give volunteers a quick 5-10 minute talk at the beginning of the gleaning day to show volunteers the field, which crops volunteers are allowed to glean, any rules that need to be followed onsite, etc. – we can supervise volunteers for the whole rest of day. We bring a crew of volunteers by public transport or by car-share to the farm, along with a van to transport the produce, with containers we harvest into. We ensure volunteers are well behaved, safe, and treat the field with respect, leaving no mess.

## What We Can Offer Farms:

- **Divert unharvested food for charity:** We donate all the produce we harvest to charitable projects like [FareShare](#) (the largest redistributor of food surplus in the UK, who work with all the major supermarkets) – from them it goes to homeless hostels, womens' refuges, and other charities. Over 2 years, we have gleaned 110 tonnes of produce, equal to more than 1.3 million portions of fruit and veg for the 5.8 million people experiencing food poverty in 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.
- **Publicity:** The Gleaning Network has achieved considerable press coverage in local, national and international media, including [Farmers Weekly](#), [Fresh Produce Journal](#), [South East Farmer](#), [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:** We aim to transform the market to allow more of your farm's produce to make it onto retailer's shelves, through campaigning and awareness raising. For instance, we campaign to relax cosmetic standards.
- **Environmental benefits:** The [huge amounts of water, land and energy](#) (as well as your farm's time and effort!) employed to grow food are best used, in environmental and social terms, by feeding them to humans if they cannot be sold. This is shown by Feedback's [food waste hierarchy](#), which is now widely adopted by groups as diverse as [Tesco](#), [WRAP](#) and the [London Food Board](#).

