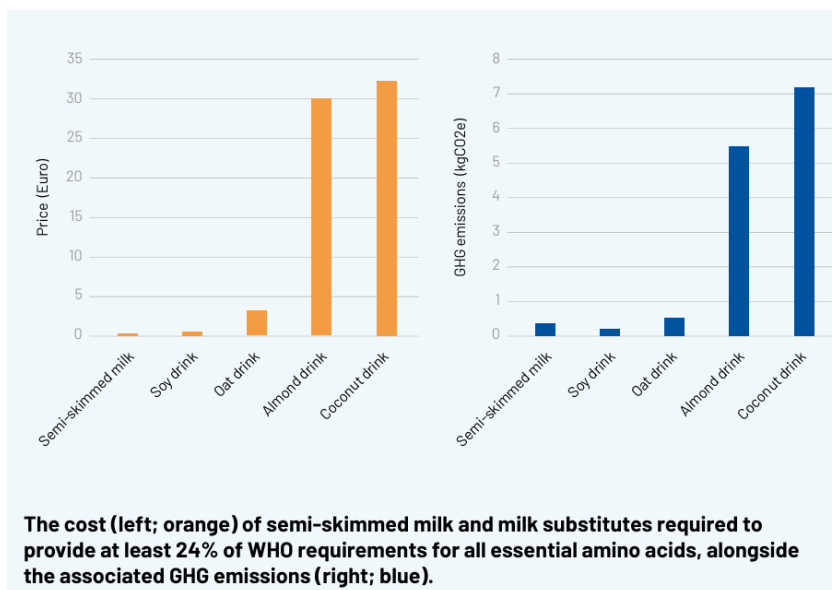


North Somerset Council Health and Wellbeing Board 29 July 2024 – Public Address

Farming provides essential food for balanced nutrition especially for the vulnerable in our communities, for infants, growing children and the elderly. These include the production of milk, butter, cheese, yoghurt, eggs and meat. Dairy UK states that,

“... dairy provides affordable, safe, value for money nutrition to the British public, via a range of tasty and diverse product options. It accounts for 9% of UK adult calorie intake and is a vital source of key nutrients for all age groups.

Protein quantity and quality are higher in milk than milk alternatives; one glass of semi-skimmed (not even full fat) milk provides at least 24% of the World Health Organisation requirements for all essential amino acids. By contrast, approximately 2 glasses of soy drink, 8 glasses of oat drink or a staggering 246 glasses of rice drink are required to provide the same level of protein nutrition.”



Please can the Board send me your information on the long term health effects of eating ‘alternative’ foods, with less dairy and meat.

The UK is particularly reliant on imports to meet domestic demand for cheese and yogurt that are natural probiotics. From 1996 to 2020 the total number of UK dairy cows had fallen 28% to 1.9 million. In December 2021 the UK was around 91% self-sufficient in dairy production, a year later it was only 85%.

Between 2000 and 2010 the number of registered dairy production holdings in England and Wales, halved to 11 thousand. By October last year, there were a total of 7,500 dairy farmers remaining in England, Scotland and Wales, a decline of 4.5% compared to the previous year. This year the average Farm Business Income on dairy farms is forecast to be 78% lower.

Domestic production of all food available in the UK is maintained at around 60% of consumption. A survey last year showed that, almost half of British fruit and veg farmers fear they will go out of business within the next 12 months, due to supermarket buying behaviour. However, we currently only produce 55% of our vegetables and 17% fruit.

We can't live without our farmers. Due to these types of food security issues we support the request to North Somerset Council to declare a Food Security Emergency. This is particularly important as production is influenced by the related Climate and Nature emergency that has already been declared, and that food security is one of the central government's 13 key infrastructure sectors.

The UK is not food secure, and so cannot afford to lose access to local nutritious food, or the land it depends on. There are many external factors affecting our food production, so we ask that you

- work with councillors, farmers, schools and residents to return to a more natural balanced diet that includes dairy;
- help ensure access to affordable nutritious food for health, to avoid costly NHS pharmaceutical bills later in life, and to
- help to make our food production more resilient and less vulnerable to external influences, such as climate, supermarket dominance and price control, political and geopolitical uncertainties.

Finally, we would like the board to prioritise and protect farming, dairy production and related land, to deliver natural food as this is key to health and wellbeing, and to include this in all North Somerset Council policies, plans and activities.

Thank you for your support.