



Sustainability Report 2025





DGM Growers' history

DGM Growers are innovators and growers of niche and speciality vegetables. We look for the new and unique to offer a comprehensive basket of delicious produce.

We have long standing relationships with growers in both the UK and Europe supplying fresh produce to the UK market all year round. We're also the only commercial growers of chicory with over 40 years experience.

Building on our expertise of hydroponic and vertically grown produce, we've invested in a new smart farm that uses innovative protected crop technology to widen our farming capability and product range.



Message from our Managing Director



We're proud to share our first DGM Growers sustainability report. Over the years, our sustainability report agenda has steadily evolved as we prepare to meet our goal of achieving net zero by 2040.

There have been significant investments at our Holbeach site to both modernise and decarbonise the facility alongside increasing our capacity. Our new energy-efficient cold stores and hydroponic growing rooms, along with solar panels that generate 24.3% of our electricity (the remaining 75.7% is sourced from renewables), have placed us in a strong position.



We've made excellent progress in other areas too... we've committed to science-based targets, and maintained our ISO 14001 accreditation, allowing us to build a greater understanding of our impact on the environment and have measurable processes in place to ensure we adhere to doing things the right way at all times.

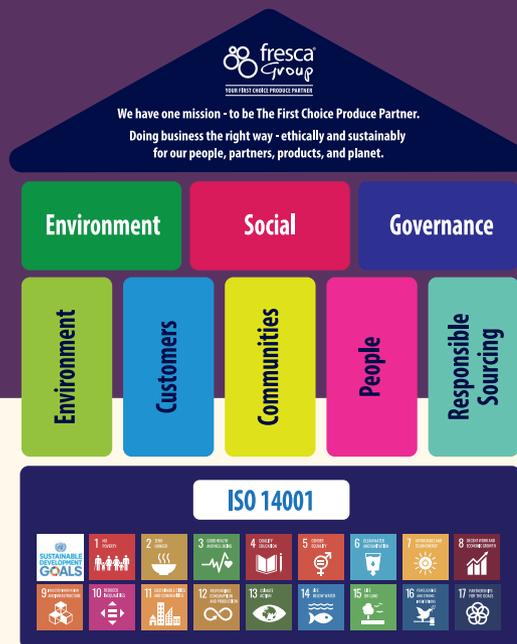
Community is important to us, both locally and nationally and we're proud to call out the landmark achievement of donating over 3 million meals to FareShare to date.



Our next steps will be focusing on developing our Scope 3 footprint and we look forward to reporting that in future reports.

Sustainability goals and targets

Being part of the Fresca group, our ESG goals align with the wider group targets. Following the ESG 5 pillars, we focus our efforts on the environment, our customers, the community, our people, and responsible sourcing. Within these overarching pillars, we concentrate on various areas, as shown throughout the report.



Environmental performance

Greenhouse gas emissions data:

| Scope | Details | Tonnes CO ₂ | Percentage of total emissions |
|-------------------------|---|---|--|
| Scope 1 | Biogas, red and white diesel, propane, kerosene | 357.91 | 0.5 |
| Scope 2 | Grid electricity | 0 | 0 |
| Scope 1 + 2 | | 357.91 | 0.5 |
| Scope 3 | Cat 1: Crops grown and purchased (UK only) Cat 2: Capital goods Cat 3: Fuel & energy related activities Cat 4: Upstream transport & distribution Cat 5: Waste Cat 6: Business travel Cat 7: Employee commuting Cat 9: Downstream transport & distribution Cat 12: End of life treatment | 25,004.23 125.97 55.95 3,777.64 117.21 15.98 190.53 2,731.13 841.17 | 75.27 0.38 0.17 11.37 0.35 0.05 0.57 8.22 2.53 |
| Total Scope 3 | | 32,859.81 | 98.91 |
| Total all scopes | | 3,217.72 | 99.41 |

Our largest impact (98.91%) comes from the scope 3 emissions in our value chain, and 75.27% of these emissions come from the growing and purchasing of crops.

Water usage and management

Although we use a large amount of water across our site, we aim to take measures to increase sustainability where we can. Our chicory is grown through a closed-loop hydroponic system using an average of 4% rainwater annually, reducing our freshwater usage.



Waste management practices

At DGM, 100% of our food waste is used for either cattle feed to produce beef or sent for anaerobic digestion to produce energy. Making small changes like minimising the trimming process on celeriac has reduced our food waste.

We aim to find alternatives to single use packaging and are reducing the thickness of the plastic film, where achievable, resulting in a 20% decrease in plastic (11 tonnes).



Energy consumption & efficiency initiatives

We aim to source our produce from within the UK where we can, to reduce transportation used and have more control over the supply chain.

Using robots for harvesting is currently being explored. These robots use sensors and cameras and therefore are highly efficient and accurate although there is still work to do before we can consider this a viable alternative to humans.

The new Glycol chiller system, that was installed at DGM, runs on R32, and has a lower GWP. This means that it has better energy efficiencies than other refrigerants.

The shrink wrap on celeriac lines has been removed, which eliminates around 730kg of film per year, and removes the use of a (high energy usage) heat tunnel from the process.



ISO 14001

We are proud to say that DGM Growers is ISO 14001:2015 certified. ISO 14001 sets out the requirements for an environmental management system and we have integrated this into all aspects of our business over the last 2 years.

Environmental objectives:

- 3% reduction in total electricity consumption year on year, based on case volume.
- 5% reduction in total general waste year on year, based on case volume.
- Tracking of Smart Farm diesel and propane.
- Analysis of water consumption between Smart Farm, chicory, and packhouse/welfare.

In practice

We have installed a variable speed air compressor and have completed an air leak survey to reduce the wasted energy of our old compressor. This change has been our greatest energy saving for 2024.

Our energy and water usage are being monitored through meters so we can minimise usage where possible.

The 350KWh solar panel installation (910 solar panels) now generates 24.3% of our current electrical usage.

LEAF accreditation

The LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) standards promote sustainability and creates a resilient farming system. Almost every one of our UK and import growers are LEAF certified and display these high standards.





Social Performance

Workplace health and safety measures

At DGM Growers, the safety, health, and wellbeing of our colleagues is paramount. We believe that a safe working environment is fundamental to the success of our business.

To promote risk prevention, we have installed snapshot boards highlighting key risks in each area and increased the number of trained first aiders and mental health ambassadors throughout the business.



We have streamlined our fire evacuation process by dividing the muster point into segments based on working locations. Clear signage throughout the site ensures smoother, safer evacuations.



Our newly implemented I-Sight technology monitors on-site truck speeds and records accidents. The system is fob-activated, ensuring only trained individuals have access.

Over the year, introducing various measures has significantly reduced the number of accidents on site. The highest number of accidents reported have been from cuts and ensuring that staff wear Kevlar gloves when using knives has reduced this number. The roadway at the HGV entrance has been completely resurfaced to prevent pallets from moving around and presenting a risk to staff when off-loading from trucks.

The addition of a new role, Senior Area Controller, has enabled an extra level of supervision in the packhouse.



Employee diversity and inclusions practices

We take various measures to ensure diversity and inclusivity in the workplace. The pledge for ED&I outlines our equality and diversity commitment. This pledge is followed across the Fresca group and therefore allows us to align with the other businesses within the group.

The D&I in Grocery Maturity Model helps companies benchmark where they are on their diversity journey.

From 2024, our average score has increased by 2 points, based on analysis of data across 10 D&I categories, including recruitment and leadership.

The model also illustrates our areas for development (recruitment, ESG, and data collection), and we are already working on projects to improve these zones.



Food events

Throughout the year, we organise food events, such as fish and chips and ice cream days, to say thank you to our colleagues for all their hard work. This year, we also brought in The Cheesy Pig, and everyone loved it. Seeing the smile it brings to their faces is always so warming.

We regularly donate products to our colleagues both allowing us to reduce food waste and providing the opportunity to sample our niche products free of charge.



Benefits Hub

The benefits hub hosts various incentives, ranging from discounts at a variety of retailers /cinema, to cashback for medical bills.

The range of benefits offered takes into consideration employees' mental, physical, and financial wellbeing. All employees at DGM have access to this.



Community engagement and development programmes:

Giving back to the community is very important to us at DGM and we believe that this is a crucial part of maintaining a sustainable business.

Tim Allen, our Commercial Director, completed the Ford Ride London to Essex 100-mile route, raising £1040, including Gift Aid, for the Queen Elizabeth Chemotherapy Suite in Kings Lynn. Tim completed the journey from Central London to Braintree in Essex and back to Tower Bridge in an impressive 6 hours and 9 minutes.

Students from Holbeach Bank Academy visited our site to look at our lettuce growing process. They had the chance to see the lettuce from being planted as a seed to being packed into customer packaging.

In May 2024, Debbie Minns raised £520 for Macmillan through an office raffle, and we also donated to Grocery Aid in the same month.



We donated £250 to Long Sutton Primary School towards their polytunnel repair costs and Brian Read, our Head of Growing, also donated seeds.



We have been sponsoring Wyberton FC U11s girls' football kit for the past 2 years and it's been lovely seeing the team spirit they bring.



Spalding Gymnastics Club recently had a tumble-a-thon to raise money for new gym equipment and we donated £200 towards this to help them get further with achieving their goal.

FareShare is a charity committed to mitigating food waste and fighting hunger. We are proud to say that, as of September 2024, we have redistributed over 3 million meals and are working towards our next milestone of 4 million meals.



Human rights considerations in the supply chain

We continue to be proud of our SMETA audit results, showing our dedication to continuous high standards of responsible practices.



Our entire grower base is linked on Sedex which creates an open book approach, increasing the transparency across the supply chain. This encourages all members of the supply chain to enhance their Corporate Social Responsibility activities and operate in a more sustainable and ethical manner.

We have signed up to the ETI base code which outlines ethical practices in the workplace. This base code includes rules relating to working conditions, child labour, living wages, working hours, and discrimination.

Regular worker welfare chats are held throughout the year to ensure our agency workers are treated well and in an ethical manner. These conversations include questions about pay, contracts and working conditions. It also provides an opportunity for staff to voice their opinions or raise any concerns they may have.



Governance Performance



Corporate governance structure

Being part of Fresca Group allows us to collaborate with other business units within the group and build on each other's expertise. The ESG Steering Group consists of Technical and Environmental leads from across Fresca, and they meet quarterly to discuss policies and ESG updates.

Fresca are members of various networks including, the Food Network for Ethical Trade (FNET), Modern Slavery Intelligence Network (MSIN), Spanish Ethical Trade Forum (SETF), Association of Labour Providers, and SEDEX. These associations aim to bring positive change in the sustainability and ethics of supply chains and also help hold organisations accountable.

Management diversity and sustainability oversight

Across the business we aim to have an even split of male and female employees in order to maintain diversity in the recruitment process.

Overall, the business consists of 56% female employees, with 59.1% of Junior Managers and 58.3% of Senior Managers being women.



Stakeholder engagement

Our grower base

We regularly visit our grower network and ensure they are engaging in ethical and environmentally responsible practices. The relationship we have with our grower base is extremely valuable to us and we have built this up over several years.

Here's a bit about some of our suppliers:



Mayes Exportación

Our longest supplier relationship is with Mayes (Spain), who have been supplying courgettes to us for over 40 years. They aim to provide good health and safety for their employees and collaborators and ensure the best agricultural practices.



Jack Buck Farms

Based in Lincolnshire, Jack Buck have been in the business for 150 years and grow a large variety of vegetables and flowers. Their celeriac brand, 'The Ugly One', makes up most of their business. They aim to farm in a sustainable and responsible method and undertake various audits every year. These audits (LEAF, Red Tractor, Tesco Nurture, SALSA, and Select Farm) ensure that they are operating in an environmentally friendly, safe and ethical manner.



Primaflor

Based in Spain, Primaflor supply us with a variety of products, including garlic, chard and pak choi.

They are working to ensure net zero by using renewable energy and eco-friendly technology.

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Feedback mechanisms and stakeholder dialogue

Communicating with our colleagues, sharing crucial information, and asking for feedback and opinions helps them feel included. Monthly Worker Committee Council meetings are held between different departments to allow them to raise any concerns or ideas they may have, helping to drive change. Employees can also anonymously share feedback through 'have your say' surveys.

Recognising good work allows individuals to feel valued. At DGM, we use the '**Great Job Award**' (voucher) and '**Thank You**' cards to show our colleagues that their hard work doesn't go unnoticed. Anyone can nominate their colleagues for the '**Great Job Award**' or request '**Thank You**' cards to be sent out.

To:

From:

I just wanted to say *thank you* for...

Progression opportunities

Career progression is important to many individuals, so at DGM, we aim to help employees develop professionally.

This year, we have 3 employees over Commercial, Supply Chain, and Production taking up the ILM Team Leader Supervisor Level 3 qualification and 1 graduate undertaking the ILM Operations/ Departmental Manager Level 5 apprenticeship.

We also have 2 employees, across Compliance and HR, on the Fresca Future Leadership Programme.



Here's a bit about Simon Scott's (our MD) career journey within Fresca:



"I started my journey at Paddock Wood, 30 years ago, working for Mack Salads (which later became Thanet Earth) as a QC on intake which was a great place to learn how the business works and the importance of getting quality right. A year later, the opportunity arose to become an Avocado Ripener, which gave me the chance to interact with the Commercial team. Then, due to departmental segregation within the business, the most exciting offer came up... to be the buyer of French and Italian tomatoes! It sounded great as I could (sort of) speak French but had to learn Italian in 4 weeks before spending a month in Sicily with our tomato grower.

During this time, I gained exposure to customers which transitioned me into account management.

A few years later I switched to citrus where I helped successfully rebuild our Sainsbury's business before moving on to a spell in bananas and pineapples, a time when Sainsbury's wanted to move the entire supply base to Fairtrade making this an interesting challenge having to restructure our entire grower base.

After about 4 years in bananas, I was asked to join the stone fruit team. This was the most difficult move, as the function of the team and the relentless focus on varieties was all new to me.

Despite being in the building for over 15 years, I was new and didn't understand why a peach isn't a peach and why the variety names mattered so much, but I soon learnt that it was all relevant and I absolutely loved the challenge and successes we had.

Transitioning from fruit to vegetables at DGM Growers - initially as a Business Unit Manager and now as Managing Director was a significant adjustment. Although both fall within the same industry, the differences are substantial. Taking on new responsibilities across operations, financial oversight, and farming presented challenges, but eight years on, witnessing the transformation of the DGM business has been one of the most rewarding achievements of my career. At its core, DGM Growers is defined by its exceptional people, and it is their dedication that truly makes the business what it is today.

Progress Reporting and KPIs

Metrics and data to demonstrate progress towards sustainability goals

We are using Manufacture 2030 to continuously track our progress. This tool focuses on meeting carbon commitments, reducing environmental impacts and improving operational efficiency.



Roadmap to Net Zero

Our Scope 1 carbon footprint measures direct emissions from fuel usage, company cars, and emissions from refrigerants (LPG, diesel, company cars, and refrigerants).

Our Scope 2 footprint includes emissions from purchased electricity.

Our Scope 3 data includes the emissions from within our supply chain that we don't control. We have collected this data for all our UK suppliers with the assistance of Climate Partner. This is aiding us to stay on track and meet our net zero target by allowing us to create a plan on how to efficiently mitigate our emissions.



What's next for DGM?

The WRAP roadmap will aid us to tackle any water related challenges we may face in the various countries that our suppliers are based in. The initiative focuses on different water related challenges such as drought, flooding and water quality, alongside other elements such as biodiversity, in order to protect critical water resources. We are using the WWF water risk filter tool to complete this.

The initiative aims to source 50% of the UK's fresh food from regions with sustainable water management.



WWF





DGM Growers
Oak House, Holbeach Bank
Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 8BB

01406 422615
mail@dmgrowers.co.uk

