

AMBITIOUS

Responsible

BUSINESS REPORT 2020

EXCELLING

INCLUSIVE

INTEGRITY

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AN INTRODUCTION FROM ANDY DAWKINS

Welcome to Avara's 2020 Responsible Business report. We are a business which prides itself in acting with integrity in the interests of all its stakeholders and supply chain partners. This report holds ourselves to account to do the things we say we are doing.

I am therefore pleased to be able to talk about another year of real progress:

- All of our manufacturing facilities are on track to be ISO14001 and ISO5001 compliant, backing our commitment to leave a smaller footprint wherever we operate. Furthermore, we have completed a carbon map for our supply chain and now have a line of sight for carbon reduction based on science-based targets.
- The safety of our people and the products they produce have stepped up year on year. Critically, we have maintained exemplary standards during the midst of a global pandemic, meaning our customers always receive food they can trust, produced in the right way.
- Our commitment to looking after the animals in our care has been reflected in new ways of working and increased farm investment.



This progress has been made not by the company, but by the people who make it what it is. Delivering by acting responsibly is what brings people to work at Avara and I am proud of the progress we are making, the standards we are meeting and the momentum that is building while working to feed the nation at this difficult time.

In reading this report, I hope you are reassured that our commitment to producing accessible, affordable food is built on an equal commitment to doing so ethically, responsibly and sustainably.

Andy Dawkins



This progress has been made not by the company, but by the people who make it what it is.

OUR APPROACH

Being a responsible business means sustainability is integrated into everything we do, firmly rooted in our approach, it's part of who we are and how we work. This is only made possible through the passionate work of our people, delivering day in, day out, keeping responsibility at our core.

It's implicit within our values and spans wider than just what we touch and control, including our whole supply chain and environment.

Our goal is to ensure healthy, high quality food is available to all sectors of society. We will do this by producing responsibly sourced protein, that consistently leaves a smaller footprint on our environment, whilst improving bird welfare.

IMPROVING ON A GREAT TRACK RECORD

These three circles are not independent of each other, they are interconnected challenges, where changes in one area also impacts on the others. Our aim is to improve in all three areas whilst maintaining the most appropriate balance between them.

It's an ongoing challenge, but one that we have a great track record in, demonstrated over the last few years where we've raised the bar of animal welfare, cut carbon emissions and maintained a steady focus on productivity and efficiency.

2019 REPORT

Having only formed in 2018, our 2019 Responsible Business Report was our first as Avara. This is an update on that starting point and a summary of our progress over the last 12 months. Across this report we've kept the five key pillars of responsible business consistent from last year, referencing these key areas that cut across all three circles of sustainability.



Responsible Farming

Providing for the birds in our care and continually raising our high standards.



Food you can trust

Producing safe healthy products that our customers and consumers can trust.



Putting people first

Ensuring we provide safe, inclusive employment, where colleagues can develop.



Leaving a smaller footprint

Reducing and limiting our impact on the world around us.



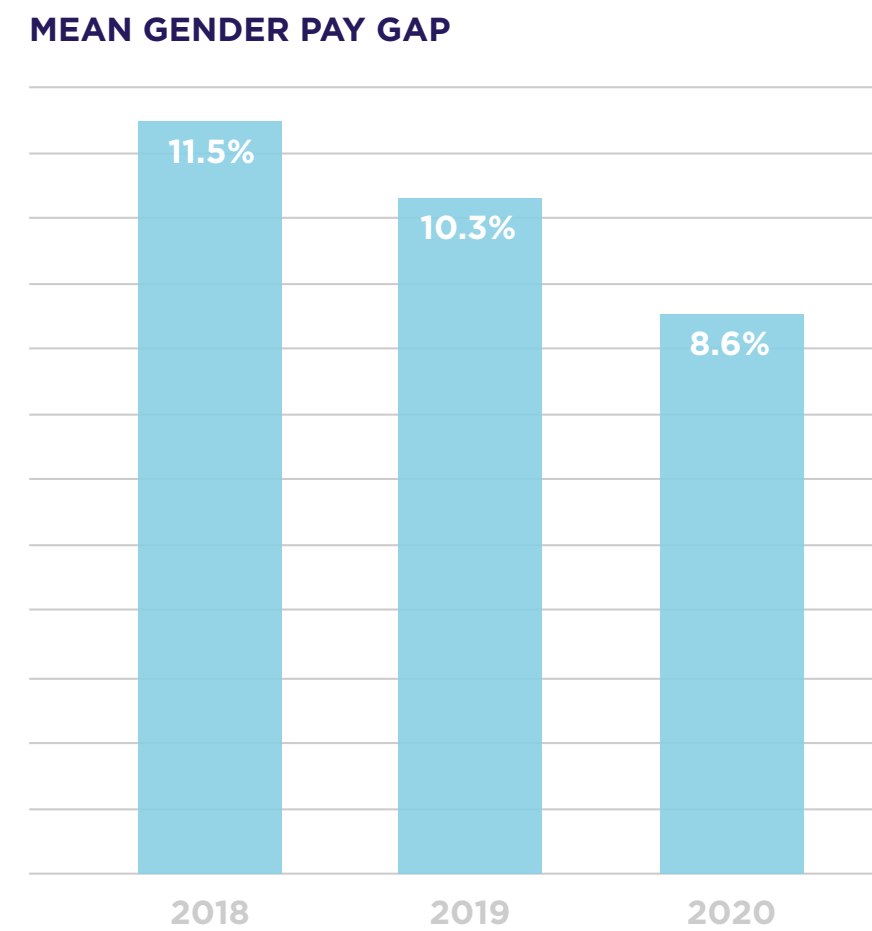
At home in the community

Recognising our role as a proactive and positive member of the community.

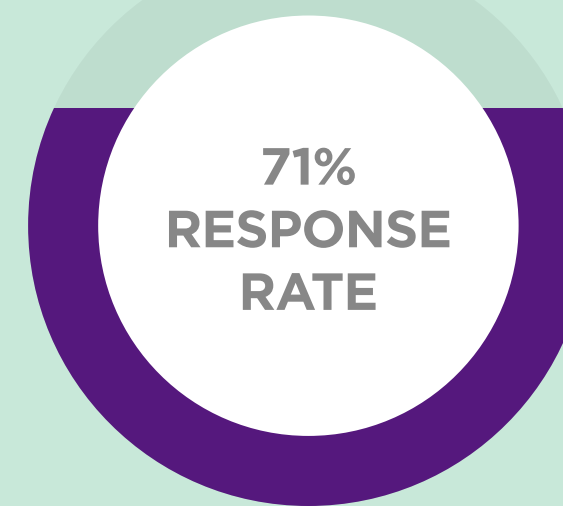


BY THE NUMBERS

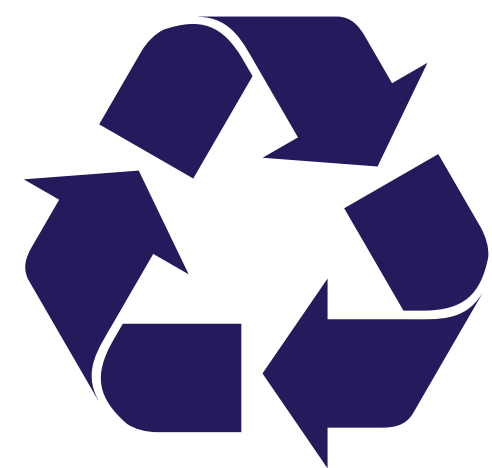
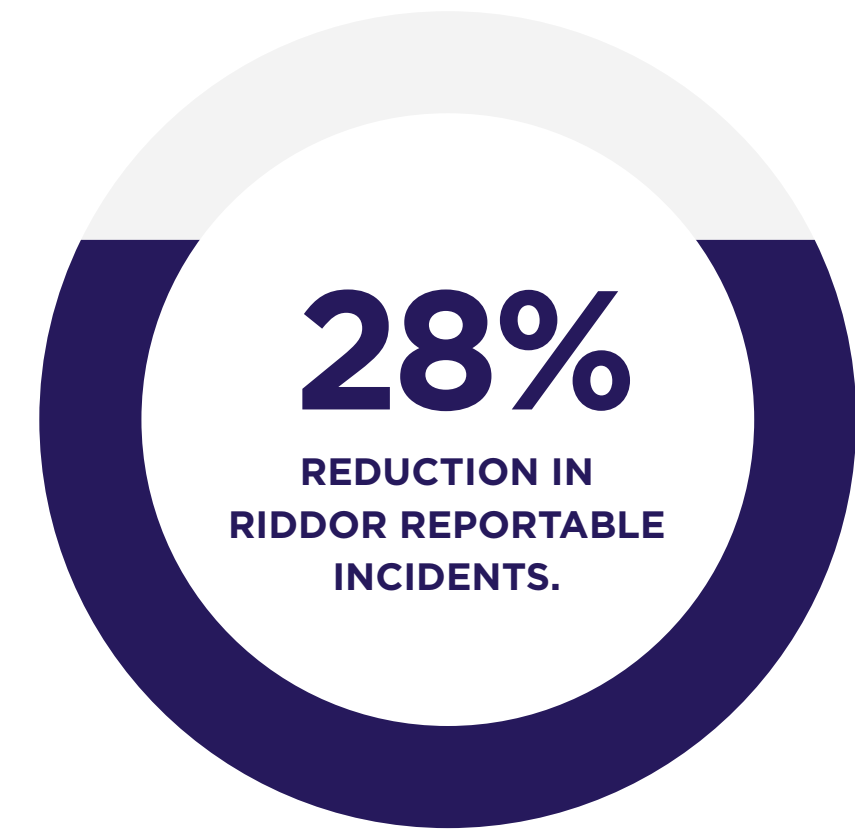
Here's a snapshot of some of the key numbers and figures across our sustainability agenda



PEOPLE SURVEY RESULTS



BY THE NUMBERS



30%

RECYCLED CONTENT ACROSS
OUR ENTIRE PET-BASED
TRAY RANGES



100%
OF OUR FARMS ARE
RED TRACTOR ASSURED



100%
SOY SOURCED FROM
CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE
PRODUCTION IN 2020



COVID-19 has been a gamechanger in 2020: our challenge being to maintain the same high standards and trusted delivery against a backdrop of rapid change and uncertainty. While it hasn't fundamentally affected what we do, it has required major and structural change to the way that we do it.

With no previous experience to draw on, and with guidance developing as the pandemic unfolded, we established a simple default position from which all actions would stem: that we will continue to provide the public with a vital source of fresh, nutritious food, and that we will only operate if we could do so in a way that was safe. All of our measures are based upon comprehensive risk assessments and we have worked closely with external agencies, including environmental and public health, and union partners, to ensure that we are operating to best practice standards and that our measures are being universally adopted. These measures include:

KEEPING THE VIRUS OFF SITE:

- We have made clear that anyone feeling unwell must stay at home and not attend work.
- We operate a daily Test, Track and Act programme. We review all Covid related absence to identify potential close contacts and proactively isolate to reduce risk in our business.
- Attendance on site is restricted: individuals work from home if not required on site, visitors and inter-site travel is limited and entrance controls (including temperature screening) are in place for all visitors, contractors and returning employees.

PREVENTING SPREAD WITHIN OUR FACILITIES:

- Measures to accommodate social distancing are in place at all sites, this includes additional locker rooms, external rest areas, canteen provision, shift and rota changes and working from home.
- Where two metres cannot be achieved in factory settings mitigation is in place including screening and physical barriers.
- Extra vehicles have been arranged where company transport is provided, so that staff can sit separately.
- Hygiene measures: food production is highly regulated with high hygiene standards however we have increased cleaning regimes particularly around high traffic volume areas and surfaces.

We will only operate if we can do so in a way that is safe.





ENCOURAGING THE RIGHT BEHAVIOUR:

- Anyone absent due to Covid, whether symptomatic or not, receives a minimum 80% salary from day one. This encourages the right behaviour and removes the incentive to attend work.
- The physical measures outlined above are monitored closely on site, and audited on a weekly basis to ensure that our expectations are being consistently delivered.
- We've transformed the way we communicate with colleagues, implementing new on-line methods and translating more critical information to make it accessible.

Throughout the pandemic we have been open and transparent with external agencies including Environmental Health, the Health and Safety Executive, Public Health England and Local Protection teams. From that process we have been recognised as going above and beyond expectations and received praise from our primary union partner.





CARBON AND THE ENVIRONMENT

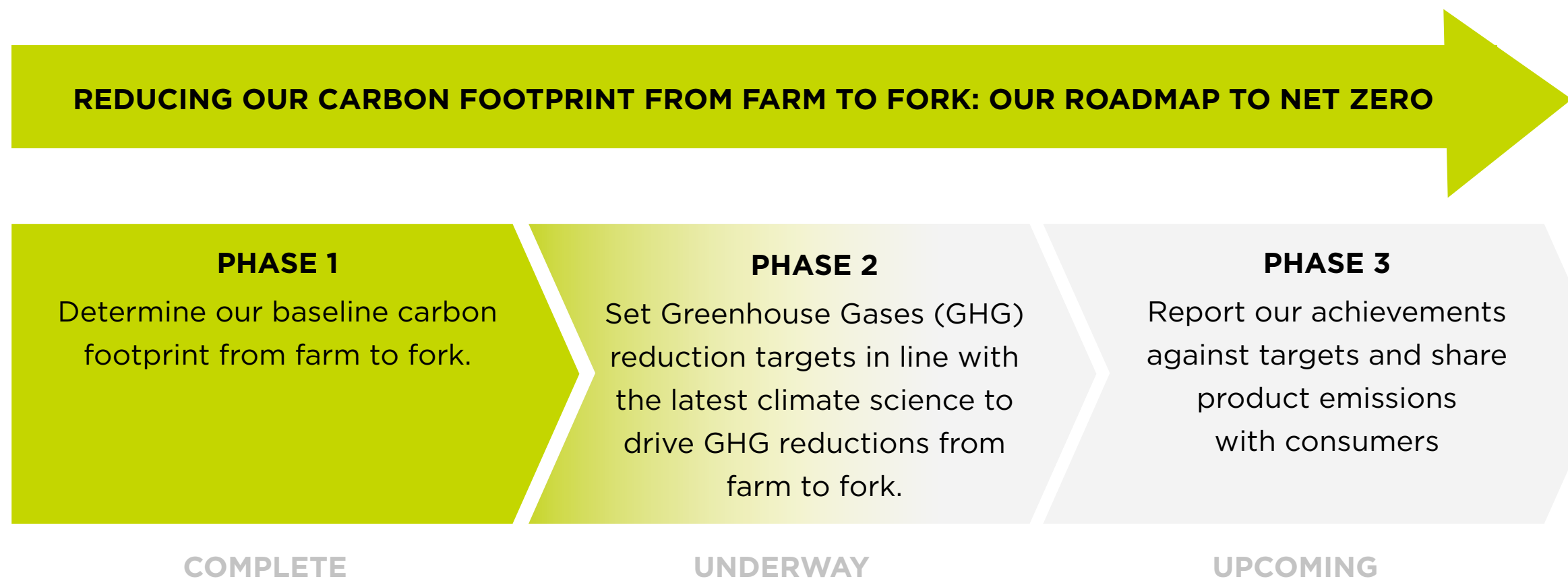
While COVID-19 has undoubtedly cast a shadow over 2020, we have not lost sight of our longer-term goals and have made significant progress mapping and reducing our carbon footprint.

We recognise that climate change is the most important environmental crisis the world is facing today. We believe that everyone has a responsibility to both understand and reduce their environmental footprint, and this is no different for us.

MAPPING OUT OUR ROUTE

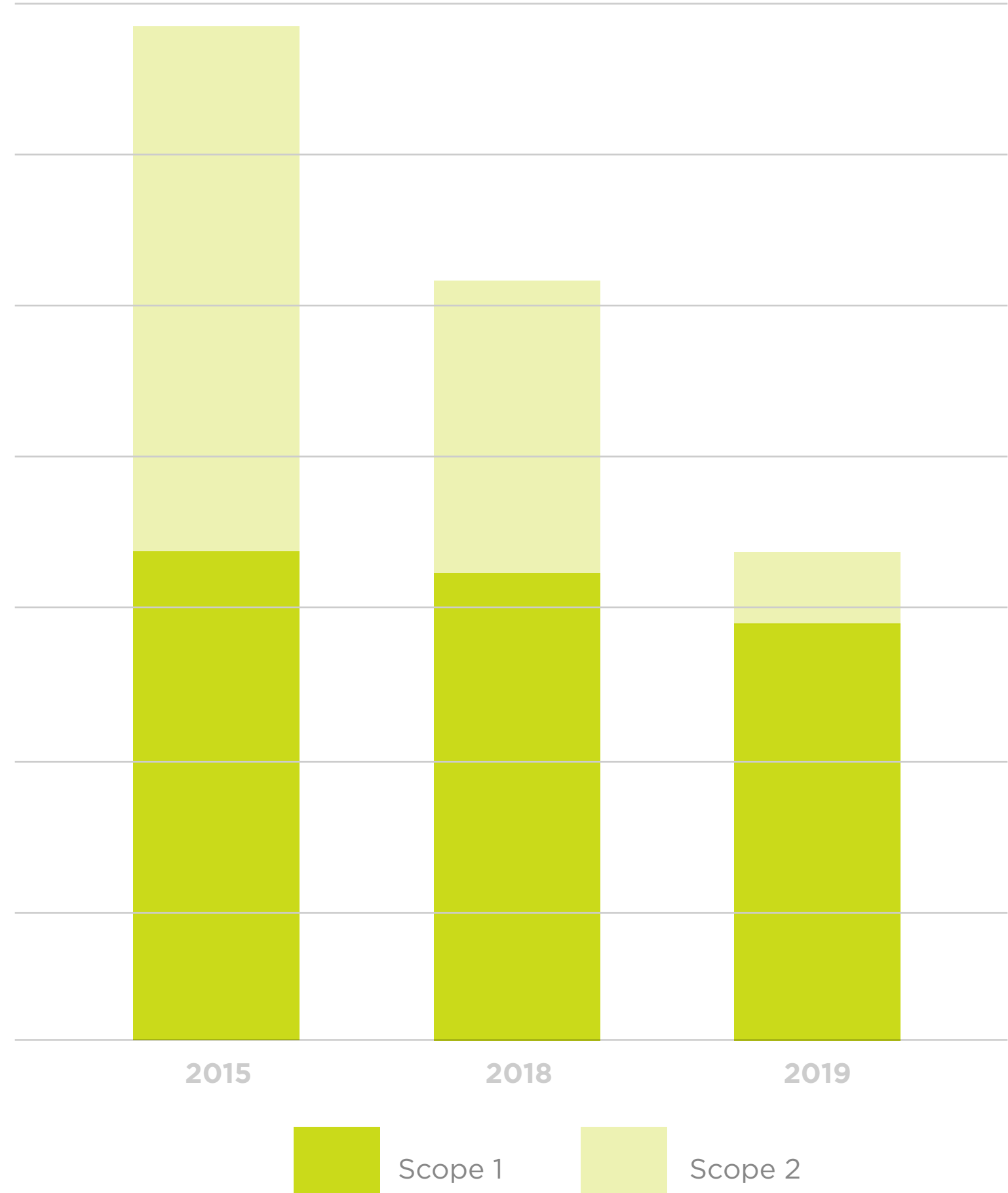
We have made significant progress since our last report, this includes a comprehensive assessment of our carbon footprint covering scopes 1, 2 and 3, and substantial reductions in carbon emissions.

We have established a clear road-map for the years ahead that will help us to set science-based targets and deliver our commitments towards a net zero world.





50% REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS



SCOPE 1:
GHG's emitted by the direct burning of fossil fuels by our sites and vehicles.

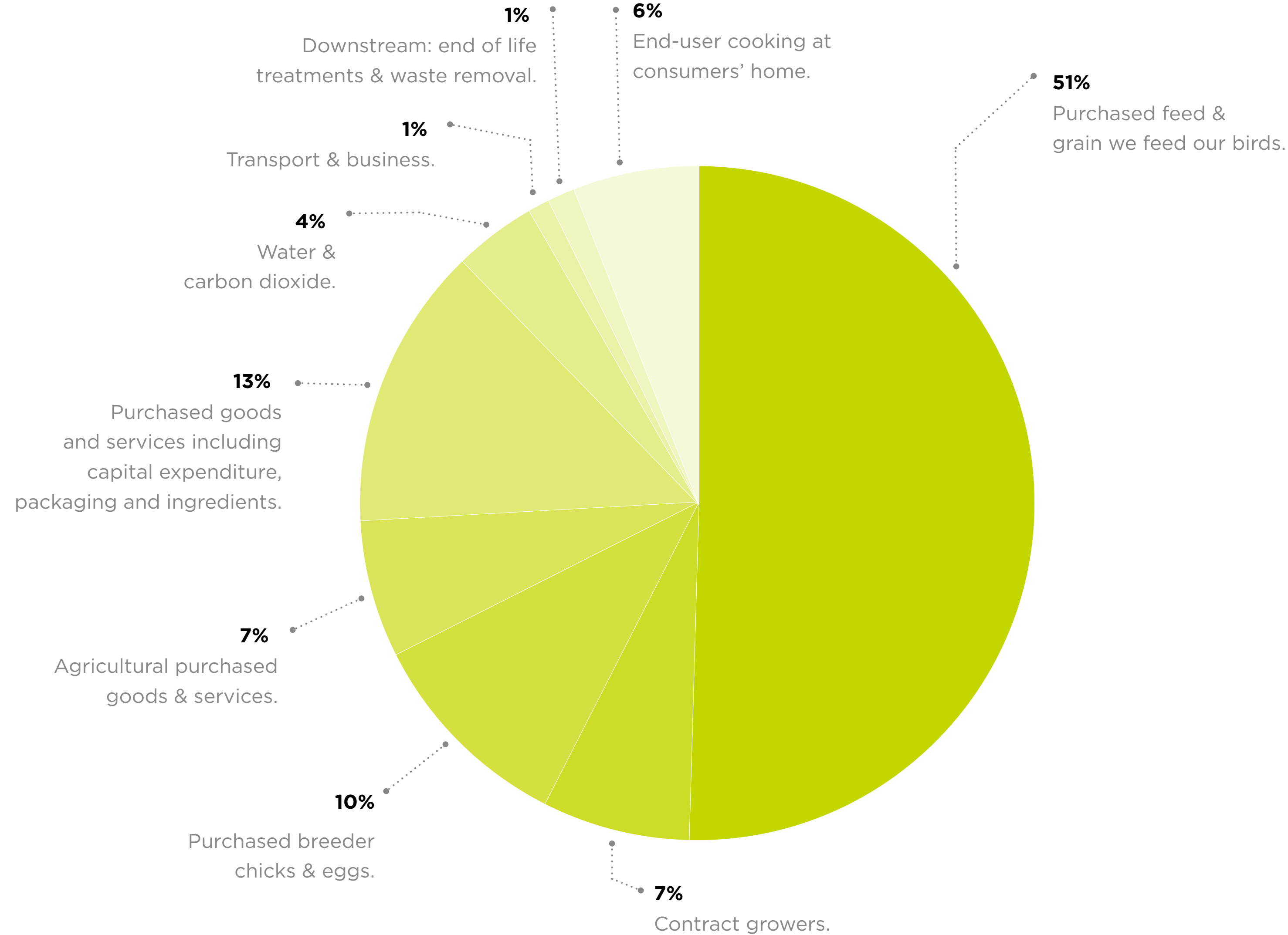
SCOPE 2:
GHGs associated with the generation of our purchased power.

OUR ACTIONS DRIVING GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTIONS

We have made significant progress to date in reducing our direct emissions. Below are our key successes and the drivers behind that success, since 2015:

- ISO50001 energy management scheme: 11% improvement in energy efficiency since 2015 across processing sites.
- Sourcing zero carbon electricity: reduced emissions by 20% from 2018-2019.
- Facility modernisation: our new state of the art Telford site has improved energy efficiency by 32% since 2015 resulting in an 83% reduction in emissions.
- Streamlining operations and operational changes: our site in Hereford has reduced emissions by 62% 2019-2018 while production has increased by 8%.
- Investment in agriculture biomass: there has been an 80% reduction in total GHG since 2015 at Tram Inn Mill.

OUR SCOPE 3 FOOTPRINT



In addition to our scope 1 and 2 emissions we measured our full scope 3 carbon footprint from farm to fork.

We will go on to use this analysis as our baseline for setting targets on our scope 3 emissions as we aim to reduce the total footprint of our products.

NEXT STEPS

Our primary objective over the coming 12 months, and complementing our existing carbon reduction efforts, is to establish science-based targets that encompass our direct and supply chain emissions. Once in place these targets will be the basis from which we continue to drive forwards our carbon reduction programme.

SOYA

Our responsibility goes beyond our own footprint, extending into our wider supply chain. This is why we continue to use only 100% sustainably certified soya for all our feed requirements. We have committed to a zero-deforestation transition plan and are targeting sourcing from verified zero-deforestation areas by 2025. We have already achieved phase 2 of this plan, certified mass balance procurement, and are on track to reach certification down to a regional level by January 2021.

We use local rapeseed and beans as alternative sources of proteins to reduce our reliance on South American soymeal, have signed the statement of support for the Cerrado and sit on the group's steering committee. We continue to explore different diet formulas and are also investigating a range of alternatives to soya to reduce the footprint of our feed supply chain.

SCOPE 3:

GHGs emitted indirectly down our supply chain that still contribute to our products' overall footprint.

LOOKING AFTER PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



OUR SURVEY SAID

We consistently say that we are a business where people make the difference and giving the Avara team an opportunity to give us feedback is an important part of that. We recently ran our first 'all-colleague' survey, open to everyone working at Avara - whether permanent, temporary or on agency contracts - and what they told us is now informing and changing our people strategies.

Of course, in every survey there are areas to improve and this is no different. Our communication with teams was highlighted and we've already taken action to address this. Partly as a result of the COVID pandemic, we have introduced a new online platform for colleagues to access company information, used our epayslips platform to send important information directly to individuals and translated more information than ever before.

We will continue to liaise with teams and individuals across the business as we strive to ensure that we truly are a business you want to work with and for.

71%
RESPONSE
RATE

72/100
OVERALL
SATISFACTION SCORE

AREAS OF STRENGTH

- CLEAR EXPECTATIONS
- COMMITMENT TO HIGH STANDARDS
IN FOOD SAFETY
- BIRD WELFARE
- PRODUCT STANDARDS

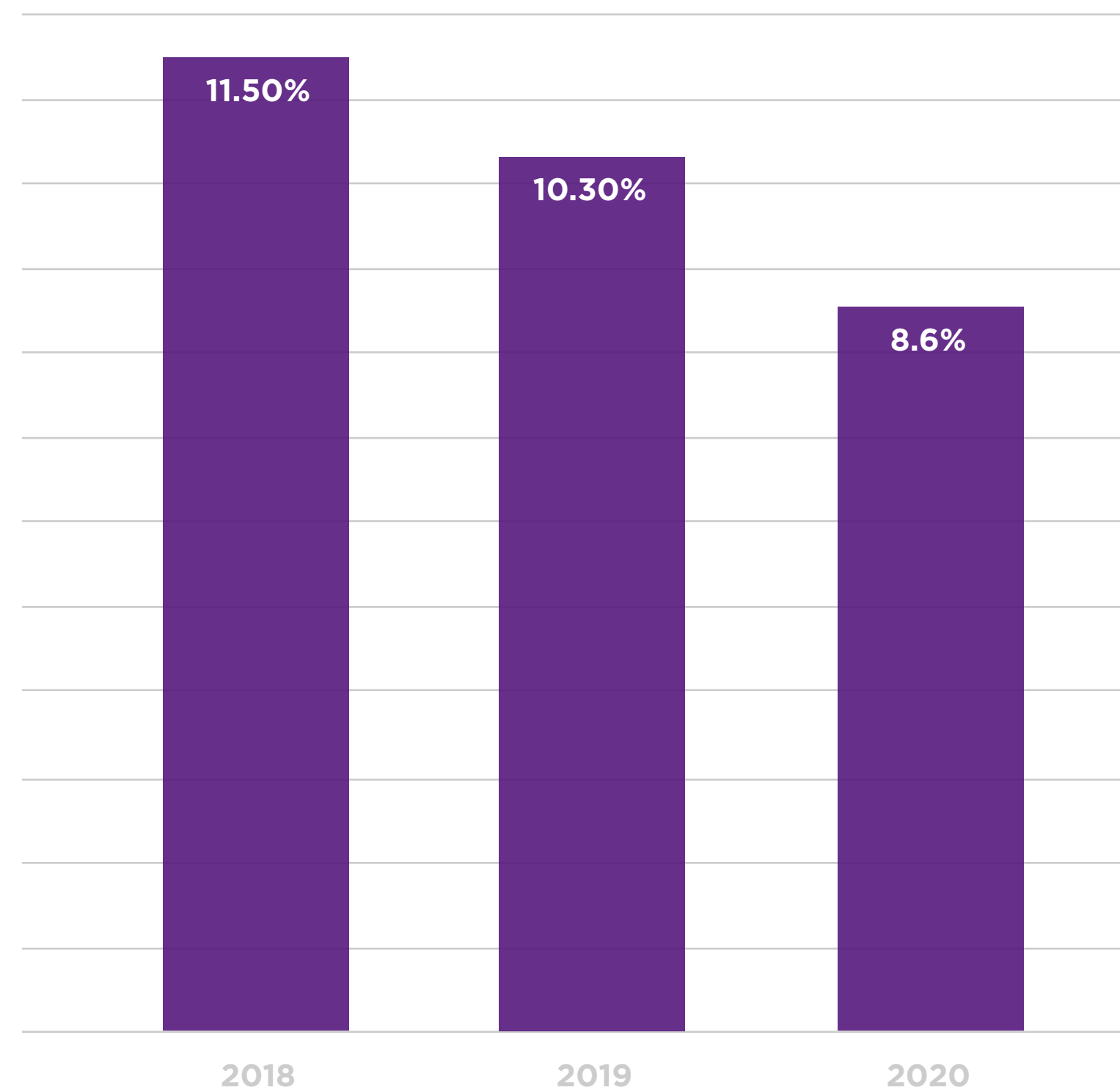




AN INCLUSIVE BUSINESS

We are determined to be a genuinely inclusive business. Somewhere that anyone, regardless of their gender, age, background or any other characteristic, can work and succeed. Our gender pay gap, and the actions we are taking to reduce it, should be regarded in that wider context, as we see challenges associated with gender inequality as part of our wider mission of inclusivity.

MEAN GENDER PAY GAP



The nature of our business, in particular the historic prevalence of males and the long average length of service, means that addressing the gender pay gap requires sustained change over the long term. Our areas of focus are:

1. Regular internal gender reporting to provide a real time picture of the pay gap.
2. The creation of an internal governance team with aim of identifying and addressing anything that might deter or disadvantage specific groups or sections within our existing, or prospective workforce.
3. Changing resourcing strategies to attract under-represented groups in our local communities.
4. Reviewing policies and procedures to make sure that the way we operate is consistent with our inclusive objectives.

This approach has already resulted in changes to family and carer policies, an increase in maternity and paternity pay beyond statutory minimum standards, and the establishment of gender pay and reporting within our internal talent review and development process.





SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

We believe protecting the health and safety of everyone who works with and for us is fundamental to our success. We set high health and safety standards to hold ourselves accountable against, monitoring measuring and analysing our performance, and helping us to drive continuous, sustainable improvement.

Whilst COVID-19 has presented new, unexpected health and safety challenges in 2020, our default position has remained the same - we will continue operating only if it can be done safely. (You'll find more practical examples of this in our COVID section on page five).

TACKLING THE THREAT OF MODERN SLAVERY

Feeling safe at work is about more than just physical safety - we are acutely aware of the threat of modern slavery and go to great lengths to keep it out of our business and wider supply chain. Each year we publish an update summarising the steps we have taken and progress we have made to effectively tackle this risk.

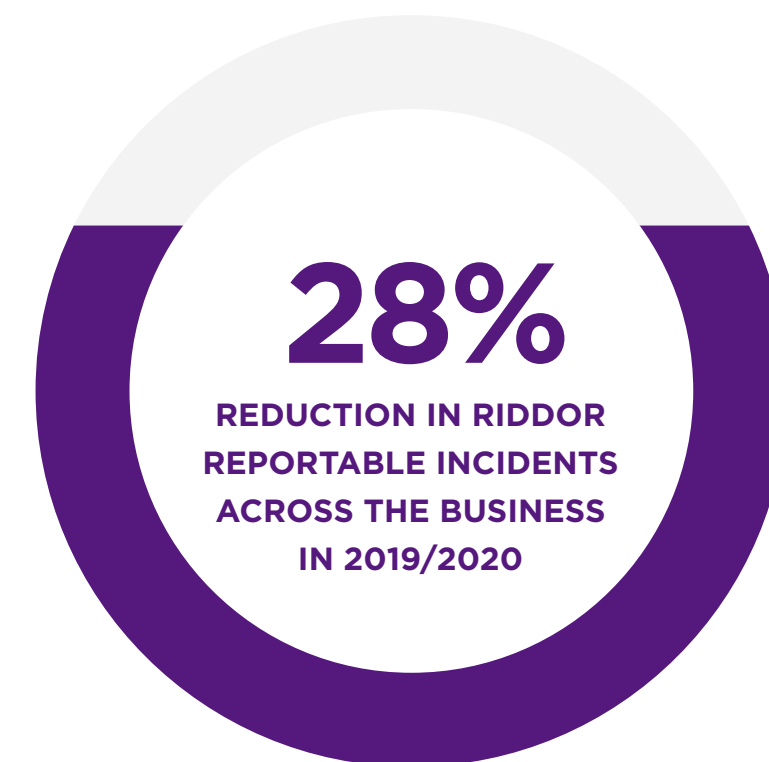
REDUCING AGENCY NUMBERS

We have reduced the proportion of agency workers in our business to around 6-7%. Aside from the benefits to the individual of greater job security, it also helps to mitigate the risk of modern slavery.

We have also increased the proportion of new employees recruited directly through our own teams. This means that we maintain oversight and control of the recruitment and onboarding process, and can therefore more closely manage associated risks.

NEW CODE OF CONDUCT

Recognising the potential implications for our supply chain we have adopted a new supplier code of conduct, which includes clear expectations on our part relating to ethical practice, and potential consequences for anyone falling short.





COMBATING FOOD POVERTY

Responding to the challenges presented by COVID, we have redirected our focus towards an area where we can have the greatest impact. The impact of the national lockdown, including the closure of schools and many businesses, was far reaching. For some sections of society, access to wholesome and nutritious food has been a challenge so, as a food business with existing relationships to draw on, we doubled down on our efforts to combat food poverty.

FARESHARE PARTNER

We believe that good quality, healthy protein should be available to everyone - we've long been a supporter of FareShare, the charity aimed at relieving food poverty in the UK through food distribution programmes. We were the first poultry supplier to commit to regular, dependable deliveries of fresh, quality protein, for them to distribute amongst their charity partners.



WORKING TOGETHER THROUGH COVID

During the Covid pandemic we've worked closely with FareShare, acknowledging the renewed strain that this period has put foodbanks and charity organisations under, with more people than ever accessing their vital services.

To help address this we've increased our regular supply by 1000kg, bringing our weekly amount to 2.7 tonnes. Our contributions help support a network of over 200 charities across the South West and West Midlands, which FareShare estimate provided over 261,000 meals between September 2019-2020.

As well as planned volumes, we have continued and extended existing work to proactively donate surplus products that cannot go to our customers, delivering to new Fareshare depots over the last 12 months.



... we delivered 109.9 tonnes of product to FareShare, equivalent to 261,672 meals.

2000KG

1000KG

2.7 TONNES

WE'VE INCREASED OUR REGULAR SUPPLY BY

1000KG

BRINGING OUR WEEKLY AMOUNT TO

2.7 TONNES



SUPPORT FOR LOCAL EDUCATION

Helping address skills gaps in the UK, preparing the next generation for work and supporting their education are all areas in which we can make a difference.

STEM CHAMPION

As a major manufacturer we understand the importance the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects have in maintaining a pipeline of future talent in the industry. We have joined up with local schools and institutions to encourage more students to consider these routes.

INDUSTRIAL CADETS

Two of our major operational sites have been key drivers in this initiative, developing employability skills and driving engagement in these subjects. Telford has created and run a work experience programme for year 9 students in collaboration with the Engineering Development Trust. This programme is accredited with the Industrial Cadets Silver recognition award and was shortlisted as a top 4 finalist out of 50,000 projects. Our Brackley site has run the Industrial Cadets Gold award, sponsored a student on the Arkwright Engineering Scholarship and supported local schools with project based learning.

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

We are a strategic partner with NMiTE (New Model in Technology and Engineering), a new university delivering engineering related education, situated close to our Hereford site. We're committed to supporting the development and delivery of curriculum, offering placement opportunities at our sites and sponsoring the first cohort of Masters students studying there.

Over the last decade our scholarship programme with Harper Adams university has seen over 40 students completing their placement year with us, providing a steady stream of graduates into Food Science, Engineering and Agriculture careers.



LOCAL INCLUSIVE EMPLOYER

As a major local employer in the community and at many of our sites, the largest in the area, we understand that one of the most significant contributions we can make is to provide meaningful jobs and opportunities into work. By employing the people around us, it better reflects the communities we're embedded in, and is more representative of the areas in which we're based. We are a stable presence in our communities and want to be recognised locally as a viable employment option, offering meaningful careers.

1000 NEW COLLEAGUES

Since the pandemic began, we have undertaken a company-wide recruitment drive, welcoming over 1,000 new colleagues into our business between March and September. We've continued to recruit throughout the recession - offering safe, secure work that is flexible to suit a range of needs, accommodating both permanent and fixed term contracts.

- Over 1,000 directly recruited new starters in 2020
- 74% scored in the Business in the Community Tracker on 'Good Work and Inclusive Growth'
- Silver and Gold Industrial Cadets recognition awards achieved
- Working in partnership with NMITE and Harper Adams University
- 161 colleagues have undertaken ILM training programmes
- 60% of opportunities filled through internal succession.



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

With people in the 18-24 age category set to be hit hardest by the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, having already experienced disproportionately high levels of furlough and job losses, we are proud to still be doing our bit to support youth employment.

Through our range of talent pathways we have continued to actively recruit throughout the pandemic. We currently have 25 graduates and 113 apprentices in the business, spanning from level 2 all the way through to degree apprentices.



100% OF APPRENTICES ON PERMANENT CONTRACTS

DEVELOPING OUR PEOPLE

We provide opportunities for everyone in our business, through well established pathways and by offering functional training, professional qualifications and accredited leadership programmes.

Despite the pandemic we have continued to develop our people with 52 undertaking ILM programmes between September 2019 to October 2020 and 161 since Avara was formed.



ANIMAL WELFARE

When it comes to bird welfare, our starting point is to understand the needs of the birds in our care and make sure they are met. As a responsible business we have an ongoing commitment to continually challenge and improve our existing high standards.

A DATA DRIVEN APPROACH

Improving farm animal welfare is a continuous process and will develop further as animal welfare science progresses. We are committed to identifying the best pathways to do so; through our own research, a data-driven approach and industry metrics - focused on outcomes, the direct measurable impact on the birds, as well as inputs that have predictable consequences.

UNDERSTANDING THE EUROPEAN CHICKEN COMMITMENT

We are undergoing a full breed and stocking density evaluation, comparing breeds of differing growth rates and stocking densities. This evaluation, which will include the European Chicken Commitment, is aimed at gaining a better understanding of whether predictable outcomes are delivered by alteration of these controlled inputs.

As a responsible business, we feel it's only right that we fully understand the impact these inputs will have on the environmental and affordability aspects of sustainability, in rearing birds this way. It is essential that activities intended to address one perceived issue do not have unintended consequences for other long-term sustainability objectives.

RAISING AWARENESS OF THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

We are open about what we do, engaging in campaigns like Farm 24, to raise consumer awareness and help people better understand farming and our responsibilities. We have had media teams on farm for interviews and regularly welcome a range of auditors who ensure that we are meeting the high standards expected of us.

From farm to fork, we are proud of what we do, the standards we keep and the people that work with and for us in our agricultural supply chain.



Our approach to welfare is data driven, outcome focused and continuously improving.



DELIVERING SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

In addition to our extensive work mapping and reducing our carbon footprint, our focus on wider sustainability challenges has continued throughout 2019 and 2020. We have continued to make good progress across our key commitments relating to waste and water, as well as important progress extending the management systems that underpin so much of our good work.

EXTENDING OUR ISO CREDENTIALS

We have adopted the ISO14001 and ISO50001 management systems at the heart of our environmental controls. By September 2020 all of our processing sites, bar one, meet at least one of the two standards and during 2021 every Avara processing site will meet both ISO standards.

Such widespread adoption of these standards is unique in our sector, but we believe is vital. These systems help us understand how we use various types of energy and identify realistic ways of reducing consumption, emissions and costs, whilst ensuring close management of our environmental responsibilities - refer to page 7 on Carbon and the Environment for specific examples. These systems will be instrumental in our continual efforts to drive down carbon emissions.

TRANSFORMING WASTE MANAGEMENT

This year we've brought in a new waste management partner, active across all our sites in the business. They will analyse all our waste streams, working alongside our operational teams, bringing their expertise and experience to help us think differently about waste and seek out new opportunities for continued improvement.

INDUSTRY LEADER IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

By bringing in the best, forming a close strategic relationship and using a data driven approach, we will be able to set a strong baseline that allows us to set stretching targets to work towards. This will enable us to reduce our general waste volumes, increase what we recycle and position ourselves as an industry leader in waste management practices.

Our ISO management systems are at the heart of how we manage and reduce our environmental impact.



OUR COMMITMENTS

WATER



As signatories of the Courtald commitments, one of its focus areas is the 2025 Water Ambition. Monitoring water use in our operations and improving efficiency, whilst helping deliver collective action to improve the quality and availability of water in the aquatic environments around us. Across our factories we saw an increase in water efficiency of 3% from 2018 to 2019, with the Hereford site leading the way in improving its efficiency by 9%.

PLASTIC



We are working towards the targets set out by the UK Plastic Pact and are making good progress to achieve this.

Our packaging is continuously being reviewed in order to reduce plastic and non-recycled content where possible, with great emphasis given on removing problematic and unnecessary plastic across all our formats. We have already achieved minimum 30% recycled content across our entire PET based tray ranges

Our work to reduce the amount of plastic we need in our packaging has resulted in some interesting and exciting trials. While it's still quite early in the process, we're hopeful that these new and innovative ways of packaging our products will help us reduce our plastic use by over 100 tonnes every year.

WASTE



Reducing waste is in our DNA; our model is built on finding value in everything we produce, whether it's for the human food chain, animal consumption or as by-products.

We're committed to the 10x20x30 initiative and the Target-Measure-Act approach, driven by the Champions 12.3 coalition, setting a target to halve food loss and waste in our operations by 2030.

We are a signatory to the WRAP initiative, Meat in a Net Zero World, a collaborative commitment to improve resource efficiency from farm to fork.

We know we have made great progress in reducing our waste footprint but recognise there are still areas we can improve in - one of these is the significant proportion of food waste which occurs 'in the house'. We are continually looking to innovate through collaborative packaging design and labelling to minimise this waste at the consumer end.





DELIVERING IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

Despite the high demand for our products and the challenges of operating through a global pandemic, we've delivered without compromising our high standards, supplying great products that both customers and consumers can trust.

As a dependable and trusted supplier of affordable food accessible to all, the most important thing we could do as a responsible business during Covid was to stay open and continue producing - keeping food on the shelves and the nation fed. Integral to this, was ensuring our high standards never dropped and robust auditing processes remained in place, both internally and externally across our farm network and in our factories.

MEETING OUR CUSTOMERS NEEDS

In the early days of lockdown we saw demand reach unprecedented levels, with panic buying creating an upsurge in orders as our customers looked to us to keep pace. We're proud to have met the challenge head-on, maintaining a steady supply throughout to meet their needs.

To maintain a normal supply in extraordinary circumstances required a carefully managed balance between our customer demands, the complexity of the products we make and our available labour.

Working closely with our customers, opportunities were identified where production efficiencies could be increased to keep up with demand. By reducing our normal range of products and focusing on less labour-intensive ones, we were able to reduce complexity and produce more of the simpler products, even if our workforce became temporarily reduced.

FACILITY	BRC AUDIT STATUS
Abergavenny	A+
Brackley	AA+
Caistor	A+
Dudley	AA+
Grandstand Rd	AA+
Holly Bank	AA+
Newent	AA
Telford	AA+
Yazor Rd	A+

+ an unannounced audit.



TAKING THE NEXT STEP

We're proud of the progress we've made over the last 12 months but equally recognise that being a responsible business is a journey not a destination. With that in mind, here is a recap of some of the specific milestones that we expect to achieve in the next 12 months, alongside our broader efforts to be a responsible business and inclusive employer.

1. Review our experience managing through the Covid pandemic and identify opportunities to embed those aspects that will improve safety on site and continue to drive down incident rates.
2. Establish science-based targets for carbon emissions and adopt them as the basis for future activity.
3. Donate enough food to provide another 250,000 meals for those that are most in need.
4. Complete a full scientific analysis of different broiler programmes to ensure that we fully understand the impacts on the animals, the environment and wider implications for the availability of food to all sections of society.
5. Extend our ISO50001 and 14001 management systems to cover every Avara processing site.
6. Implement an industry-leading waste management programme across all our operations.
7. Engage and attract underrepresented groups to be an inclusive community employer, focusing first on those that are at the start of their career journey.

In our next Responsible Business Report we expect to be able to share a new set of highlights and achievements, as well as the next steps in our ongoing journey. In the meantime, as we achieve milestones or complete notable actions, we'll provide updates on avarafoods.co.uk.



We recognise that being a responsible business is a journey not a destination.

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