

## Animals, Land and Environment

Do you like working outdoors in the fresh air, or like the idea of working with animals? You might enjoy working with engines or machinery, or want to help save the world from the impact of global warming! If this all seems wide ranging, then you will find that this career area stretches across many disciplines, abilities and areas of expertise, from science or forestry to fishing or mechanics.

Lantra (the Sector Skills Council for food based and environmental businesses) have developed a new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) resource, which highlights how STEM is used within landbased, environmental conservation and aquaculture careers. This helps to demonstrate the range of careers available in these sectors.

### What areas can I work in?

This career area is concerned with the natural world and appeals to those interested in animal care, the countryside, planting and landscaping, and the environment.

Jobs and courses are available in agriculture, aquaculture and fishing, arboriculture and forestry, horticulture and landscaping, earth studies, environmental and rural resource management, environmental services, forestry and working with animals.

To see the routes to getting into each of these sectors, take a look at our [Career Pathway](#).

### What kind of companies can I work for?

Possible employers include:

- gardening centres
- agricultural chemical manufacturing companies
- arable or livestock farms
- fisheries
- veterinary surgeries
- educational institutions
- stables and riding schools
- zoos and wildlife parks
- conservation trusts.

### What's the job market like?

According to Lantra, advances in technology, such as automation to reduce human labour, means there is increasing demand for highly skilled staff in this industry. As well as essential skills and knowledge, for example, health and safety, literacy and numeracy, the most sought-after skills are:

- technical
- ICT (such as robotics), and

- leadership and management (successful planning, entrepreneurial skills, knowledge skills).

In many cases, job prospects can depend on where you live, or are prepared to live, as well as on the type of work you do and your qualifications.

In 2026, the top employing regions in Scotland in the Food and Drink Primary Production sector are forecast to be the Highlands and Islands and Tayside, with the workforce numbers predicted to be 30,900 across Scotland. <sup>1</sup>

The top employing occupation is forecast to be skilled agricultural trades. <sup>1</sup>

Mid-term forecasts (2023-2026) indicate that there will be 7,200 job openings in the sector, due to new job growth and job replacement demand (due to factors such as retirement). <sup>1</sup>

Growing awareness of climate change and the need for sustainable development is also creating opportunities for younger entrants with transferable skills.

## Facts and figures

- The ornamental horticulture and landscaping industry is set to contribute nearly £42 billion to the UK and support over 760,000 jobs by 2030. <sup>2</sup>
- The direct economic contribution of Scotland's aquaculture sector has increased by 154 percent to £472 million over a decade. <sup>3</sup>
- 2024 UK employment figures for the following occupations are: Skilled agricultural and Related Trades – 357,600; Animal care services occupations (excluding vets and vet nurses) - 106,500; Vets – 32,500; Vet nurses – 24,900; Conservation Professionals – 27,700; Environment Professionals – 67,900. <sup>4</sup>
- Forestry and timber processing accounts for £771 million of Gross Value Added (GVA) every year in Scotland. It also provides more than 30,000 jobs across the wood production, forest management, haulage and processing sectors. <sup>5</sup>
- The equestrian sector in the UK is worth £4.7billion. <sup>6</sup>

## Want to find out more?

Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for food based and environmental businesses. You can find more information about the sectors it covers and related careers and training pathways on the [Lantra Careers](#) website.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> Sectoral Skills Assessment: Food and Drink Primary Production, October 2023. [Skills Development Scotland website](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Royal Horticultural Society website](#) (June 2024)

<sup>3</sup> Comment on Scottish Government's marine economy report, December 2023, [Salmon Scotland](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Annual Population Survey - Occupation by sex, employment status and full/part-time - UK](#), Nomis, (March 2024)

<sup>5</sup> [Forestry and Land Scotland website](#) (June 2024)

<sup>6</sup> [SRUC Prospectus 2025](#)