

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?

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 2024, the Scottish Food and Drink Primary Production sector (which includes crop and animal production,

hunting and related service activities, and fishing and agriculture) was estimated to have a workforce size of 40,900 people. The top job postings between July 2023 and June 2024 included farm workers and large goods vehicle drivers. Specialised skills and knowledge requested by employers in this period included: machinery; animal husbandry; environmental health and safety; poultry; auditing; and, warehousing. ¹

Future demand in the mid term (2024-2027) forecasts employment to grow by 0.8% (300 people), although there could be demand for 10,800 people in the sector, primarily because of the need to replace workers leaving the market. It is also predicted that the top employing occupation in 2027 will be in skilled agricultural trades. ¹

According to the Royal Horticultural Society, environmental horticulture is essential to nature-based climate solutions, reporting that access to green spaces and gardening improves mental and physical wellbeing as well as strengthening communities by fostering social inclusion. In 2023 this sector contributed £38 billion to the UK economy and supported over 722,000 jobs. By 2030, it could be worth £51.2 billion, supporting 763,000 jobs. ²

Meanwhile, the timber industry makes a vital contribution to the Scottish economy. Forestry and timber processing accounts for £878 million of Gross Value Added (GVA) every year. It provides more than 30,000 jobs across the wood production, forest management, haulage and processing sectors. ³

Facts and figures

- In 2023 there were 5,664 workforce/grooms, 10,149 coaches and 13,830 volunteers working in the equestrian sector in the UK. ⁵
- In December 2024 Scottish employment figures for the following occupations were: Skilled agricultural and Related Trades – 32,900; Animal care services occupations (excluding vets and vet nurses) – 11,300; Vets – 4,100; Conservation and Environment Professionals – 8,000. ⁴
- In 2023, there were 3,793 fishers working on Scottish vessels, down 326 fishers compared to 2024. Since 2014, employment on Scottish vessels has fallen by 13%. ⁶
- The real time median advertised salary for jobs in the Food and Drink Primary Production sector between July 2023 and July 2024 was £26,000 per year. ¹

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](https://www.lantra.co.uk/careers) website.

Sources

¹ [Sectoral Skills Assessment: Food and Drink Primary Production](#), Skills Development Scotland (October 2024)

² [Horticulture contributes £38 billion to UK economy and climate resilience](#), Natalie Ashbee, Royal Horticultural

Society (27 November 2024)

³ [The Timber Industry](#), Forestry and Land Scotland (June 2025)

⁴ [Annual Population Survey - Occupation by sex - Scotland, NOMIS](#) (December 2024)

⁵ [State of the Nation 2024](#), British Equestrian (June 2025)

⁶ [Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics 2023 - corrected March 2025](#), Scottish Government (4 December 2024)