Achieving our objectives
The Government launched its Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food in December 2002. The long-term vision is of sustainable, successful and competitive farming and food industries, making a valuable and valued contribution to the sustainable development of our nation. Placing sustainable development at the heart of our vision means we will:

- deliver more customer-focused and competitive farming and food industries;
- improve the environmental performance of farming and food;
- deliver improvements in nutrition, occupational health, and food safety; and
- work with other departments to deliver improvements in nutrition, occupational health and food safety.

We will:

- encourage best practice, waste reduction, improved information flow and co-operation between farmers and between different parts of the food chain; work with and support the Food Chain Centre, English Farming and Food Partnerships and the Red Meat Industry Forum; support the Office of Fair Trading’s work on the code of practice for how large supermarkets deal with their suppliers, and seek to broaden adherence to its principles;
- support producers’ efforts to increase their share of the value added to farm products; strengthen support for quality regional food and deliver our Organic Action Plan; support assurance schemes such as the Red Tractor Priority 1.

A more effective food chain.

Our target is to deliver more customer-focused, competitive and sustainable food and farming as measured by the increase in agriculture’s gross value added per person excluding support payments; and to secure Common Agricultural Policy reforms that reduce production-linked support, enabling enhanced EU funding for environmental conservation and rural development.

Defra’s objective 3 is to promote a sustainable, competitive and safe food supply chain which meets consumers’ requirements.

Defra’s objective 4 is to promote sustainable, diverse, modern and adaptable farming through domestic and international actions.

Chapter 4

Farming and food – facing the future

Defra’s objective 3 is to promote a sustainable, competitive and safe food supply chain which meets consumers’ requirements.

Defra’s objective 4 is to promote sustainable, diverse, modern and adaptable farming through domestic and international actions.
in order to make their operation more efficient and speed their development;

- provide financial support through grant schemes for a wide range of measures to improve competitiveness; and

- work with the industry to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy for the food industry.

Priority 2. To influence the global context of the food chain.

We will:

- work towards a good outcome in the World Trade Organisation Ministerial meeting in Mexico in September 2003 to reduce trade-distorting support and protection; and

- work for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, including supporting the general direction of the European Commission’s proposals for ‘decoupling’ farm support from production and shifting the emphasis of support away from production to rural development and environmental programmes, and press for reform of market regimes for cereals, sugar, tobacco and dairy.

Priority 3. To enhance the environment through farming.

We will:

- act to reduce agriculture’s negative impacts on the environment, by regulating in an effective and proportionate way, considering the use of economic instruments, ensuring that farmers have access to the information they need and by beginning to develop a more joined-up, whole-farm approach to contacts between government and farmers; and

- put in place positive incentives to enable farmers to enhance the countryside and the farmed environment; pilot a new approach to support for the agri-environment, based on an entry-level broadly based scheme with simple rules and procedures, that if successful, will be rolled out across England from 2005.
We will:

- work with industry and key partners to ensure that those who work in the industry can acquire the skills they need, starting with a review of learning opportunities for rural businesses, reporting in December 2003;
- invest in a substantial programme of research and promote technology transfer; establish a Research Priorities Group to advise on strategic priorities; continue to pilot a network of demonstration farms during 2003 to promote best practice and encourage new ways of working; and
- work to remove barriers to new farmers; to ensure a thriving tenanted sector; and to improve health and safety at work.

Priority 4.
To invest in people and knowledge for the future.

We will:

- work with the Department of Health and the Food Standards Agency to promote better links between food and health, through the development of a Food and Health Action Plan;
- develop a new Strategy for Animal Health and Welfare to ensure the high standards that are necessary (see Chapter 5);
- work to improve the integration of farming and food with the wider rural economy, including by helping businesses adapt to new opportunities;
- maximise the contribution that agriculture makes towards rural communities; and
- develop a new Plant Health Strategy to safeguard the crops sector and native flora.

Priority 5.
To achieve healthy communities.

We will: