

UK Worker Shortage Leaves £60 Million of Food to Rot in Fields

- Lack of workers to harvest fruit and vegetables, survey shows
- Crops are wasted as cost-of-living crisis hurts households



A farm worker harvests asparagus near Sandwich, UK. *Photographer: Chris Ratcliffe/Bloomberg*

By [Megan Durisin](#)

August 15, 2022 at 1:56 PM GMT+1

Tens of millions of pounds worth of fresh produce is being left to rot in UK fields because farmers can't attract enough workers to pick crops, just as the cost-of-living crisis worsens.

About 22 million pounds (\$27 million) of fruit and vegetables were wasted in the first half of the year due to labor shortages, according to a National Farmers Union survey of almost 200 growers. Because the poll represents a third of the horticulture sector, the overall figure likely topped 60 million pounds, at a time when grocery-store prices are rising at a near-record pace.