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By Nina Pullman

Tuesday 28th November 2017, 11:20 GMT

## Don't be afraid of 'green Brexit', says Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's Judith Batchelar used keynote address to highlight how sustainable agriculture is a business opportunity

**S**ainsbury's director of brand Judith Batchelar has urged suppliers to align business strategies to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and stressed that a 'green Brexit' is not something to be afraid of.

Speaking at the retailer's annual Farming Conference, Batchelar said: "We're not doing enough and we're not doing it fast enough [to tackle climate change]."

Sainsbury's is now using satellite data to trace supply of products including soya, beef and palm oil in areas where deforestation is an issue, Batchelar said, as well as hosting a major tree planting scheme and encouraging suppliers to focus on water usage through its 'more crop per drop' programme.

She also used her keynote address to highlight how the future of British agriculture is set to become more sustainable, especially once the UK leaves

"Green Brexit isn't about returning to an old fashioned way of doing things, it's about using the very best in data, tech and skills to optimise the best nature has to offer," she said.

"I don't think it's anything to be scared of. It's not disconnected from driving productivity, we just need to be more thoughtful.

"I would urge you all to look at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Think about the link to activities in your business. We are already doing some of them but there is a business opportunity here."

According to Batchelar, the five largest power generators in Europe lost £100 billion between them because they failed to prepare for an eight per cent rise in renewables usage.

"Renewables have to be the only option," she said. "Even if you don't believe in

climate change, extreme weather events are a reality. They are driving significant yield losses."

Elsewhere in the conference, head of technical Beth Hart reminded delegates about the perception of crop protection products by Sainsbury's consumers.

"No matter how essential they are, customers just don't like chemicals. Ordinary people just don't take the time to understand them. We have to be utterly transparent and protect the trust they have in us," she said.



Sainsbury's is encouraging suppliers to become more sustainable

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