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# Ribena

**RIBENA BLACKCURRANT  
GROWERS' SURVEY  
2025**

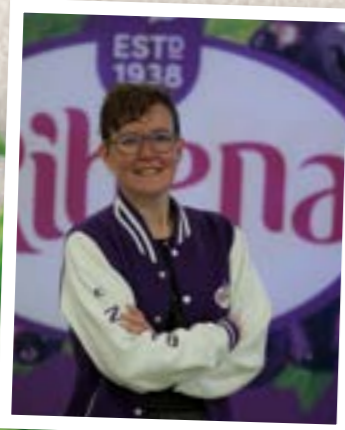
# RIBENA AND BRITISH BLACKCURRANTS

**SUNTORY**  
BEVERAGE & FOOD GB&I

Suntory Beverage and Food GB&I (SBF GB&I) is the third largest branded soft drinks producer in the UK and is made up of nearly 700 passionate people working on iconic brands including Lucozade, Ribena and Orangina. Our factory, located in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire, is at the heart of our UK business where we produce over 800 million drinks a year.

**We are proud of our long-standing relationship with our blackcurrant growers. On average, this relationship goes back five decades, but with some of our growers it extends back three or even four generations of farming family – over 70 years! We are committed to supporting our growers, including creating more sustainable farms for our blackcurrants to thrive on.**

- Since 2004, Ribena has worked closely with blackcurrant growers to put in place **Biodiversity Action Plans which support on-farm conservation and protect habitats** where Ribena blackcurrants are grown.
- In partnership with the James Hutton Institute, we've **invested over £2m to improve the sustainability and quality of British blackcurrant crops**, mitigating the effects of increasingly extreme British weather.
- In 2023, with the support of the University of East Anglia, we teamed up with one of our growers to launch a three-year regenerative farming pilot project. The scheme focuses on reducing scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions from blackcurrant production, improving soil health to increase the long-term resilience of our farming system and the amount of carbon it can sequester.



**“I’m honoured as Chief Operating Officer for Suntory Beverage and Food GB&I to represent iconic and beloved brands, like Ribena.**

**Our annual Blackcurrant Growers’ Survey gives us the chance to better understand the opportunities and challenges faced by the community of farmers behind the blackcurrants in every bottle of Ribena.**

**By collaborating with this incredible group of farmers over many decades, we are able to identify and invest in innovative technologies and techniques that help drive productivity on farms while enhancing and protecting the environment on which we all rely.”**

**ELISE SEIBOLD, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

# SURVEY RESULTS

**In the final months of 2024, we conducted our latest Ribena Blackcurrant Growers’ Survey, asking all 34 growers to outline their key concerns and suggest changes that government and policymakers could implement to support their businesses.**

We work with businesses of all shapes and sizes—with two thirds of our growers owning microbusinesses.

As our growers represent over **90% of the UK’s blackcurrant crop** this means their views are representative of the UK blackcurrant industry.

## WHAT’S CHANGED?

**Poor weather and climate change remains the number one challenge – and concern is growing...**

Nearly all our growers (**93%**) cited poor weather as a major challenge, up from **74%** last year, with over three-quarters (**78%**) expecting extreme weather to have the greatest impact on their businesses in the next 5-10 years. Volatile weather, including hotter summers and milder winters significantly impacts harvests.

**Concern about economic pressures has eased, slightly...**

High inflation remains a significant concern for many growers, but less so than last year. **29%** cite difficulties with rising costs, down from **37%** in 2023. Similarly, a quarter of growers now report that they’re struggling with labour shortages, down from **33%** in 2023.

**But this has not fed through into confidence about growth...**

Only a third of growers believe they will grow their business in the coming years, the same proportion as last year, while only **10%** of growers expect to add headcount to their business. Additionally recent policy decisions have contributed to concerns about future investments.

## INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT

Despite the challenges, the survey reveals a blackcurrant sector that is committed to investing in new technologies and sustainable practices;

- **Data Management Systems:** Nearly two-thirds of growers are investing in advanced data management systems to improve decision-making and operational efficiency.
- **Automation and Robotics:** Over half of the growers are adopting automation and robotics to address labour shortages and increase productivity.
- **Smart/Precision Irrigation or Fertilisation:** Half of the growers are implementing smart irrigation and fertilisation systems to optimise resource use and improve crop yields.
- **Renewable Energy Infrastructure on Farms:** More than 4 in 10 growers are investing in renewable energy solutions to reduce carbon footprints and enhance sustainability.



## CASE STUDY: BIRDSONG

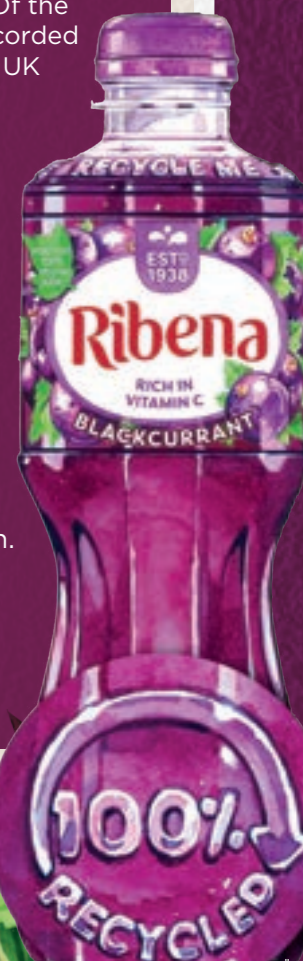
In partnership with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West, SBF GB&I used AI and recording technology to analyse birdsongs across five blackcurrant farms over the past year.

The bioacoustic monitoring initiative recorded an average of **58** different bird species per farm, which is testament to the work the growers have done as part of SBF GB&I’s long-running Six Point Plan (6PP) to enhance biodiversity on farms. Of the **83** different species recorded in total, **15** were on the UK Red List of birds of conservation concerns, and 17 were on the Amber List.

The innovative use of AI to detect biodiversity hotspots on blackcurrant farms serves as an inspiring example of how technology can play a vital role as part of farm stewardship to improve biodiversity and wildlife protection.



FIND OUT MORE ABOUT PROJECT BIRDSONG



## HOW CAN GOVERNMENT AND POLICYMAKERS HELP?

Doubling down on this commitment to innovation, growers identified that the top three most useful ways Government could support their businesses were:

- 1. Back innovation and R&D in the sector:** Over **9 in 10** growers seek more flexible funding options for research and development, while **8 in 10** want more support in identifying and evaluating new tech that could be useful to them.
- 2. Reform to funding streams:** Nearly two-thirds call for reforms to the Sustainable Farming Incentive and other funding streams to make them more accessible. It is telling that, while last year's survey showed half of our growers were planning on SFI applications, only a third are currently in receipt of support.
- 3. Access to grants for new equipment, technology and skills development:** More than two-thirds of growers identified a need for support in purchasing the most up-to-date equipment, and training in how best to deploy it.

## HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT BRITISH BLACKCURRANT GROWERS?

We appreciate your continued support for our brilliant blackcurrant growers but, as our findings illustrate, more can be done.

Please continue to work with us to address the challenges faced by blackcurrant growers and be a champion for British agriculture in Parliament and your constituency.

If you'd like to discuss any of these findings in further detail, please contact [andrew.knight@suntory.com](mailto:andrew.knight@suntory.com).

**Established in 1938**  
Ribena has played a great part in UK drinks history & heritage

**1947**  
A new factory opens at Coleford, Gloucestershire. Ribena has been produced here ever since.

Since 2004 every Ribena grower has followed our **6** point plan **promoting biodiversity** and the conservation of habitats

All our drinks are **non-HFSS**

Invented by **Dr Vernon Charley** & manufactured by **Frank Armstrong**, Chairman of HW Carter & co in 1936

All our Ribena bottles have been made from **100% recycled plastic** since 2007\*  
\* EXCLUDING CAP AND LABEL

We work closely with **34** UK farms

**100%** Locally sourced

**Over 90%** Of the UK's blackcurrants go into Ribena

**Fresh & fast**  
We aim to pick and press within 48 hours  
**No air miles**

Area the size of **116** rugby pitches planted with seeds to support pollinators

During WW2 Ribena was distributed for free to children & pregnant women as an important source of vitamin C. Ribena remains **rich in vitamin C** to this day.

Map of the UK showing Ribena production locations: Dundee, West Midlands, East Anglia, Monmouthshire, Somerset, Kent.