



**N**amed after the UN's terrifying prediction of the years remaining before we run out of fertile soil, Philip Lymbery's book **Sixty Harvests Left: How to Reach a Nature-Friendly Future** (Bloomsbury, available now) at least for the first three parts, offers an equally bleak outlook on the state of international agriculture.

The overriding theme: we "treat soil like dirt".

Some have dismissed the UN's warning as a "myth", but Lymbery builds a convincing argument that the prediction may even be optimistic for some parts of the world.

For many in the UK, the idea of industrial farming is limited to places like the US and China, with Red Tractor and free-range labels providing a false comfort about UK production. However, the UK is home to nearly 1,100 US style mega-farms and Lymbery's book is a sobering reminder that we cannot ignore what is happening on our doorstep.

Despite this, he is not bashing farmers. Rather he sees them as the solution. Throughout the book but particularly in the final part, titled Spring, he highlights the incredible work being done across the sector in an attempt

to inspire others to take up the mantle.

His rallying cry is twofold – for the industry to instigate a mass movement of sustainable and regenerative agriculture, and for consumers to change their diet to fewer, more sustainable animal products.

While the changes needed seem daunting, especially on an industry-wide level, Lymbery is clear that we don't have a choice.