

# Food and drink manufacturing

in The Marches (Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford and Wrekin)

The manufacture of food and drink is a growing sector and offers a wide range of careers across a variety of settings - from production, packaging and packing to testing and transporting.

## Local Overview

The Marches is home to a wide range of food and drink production - from large, well-known brands such as Müller and Arla to many small artisan companies.

### Statistics

Around **9,250 people work in food and drink sector**, and half of them (5,650 people) are employed in the processing and preserving of meat and the production of meat and poultry meat products.

### Employment Hotspots

Employment in the sector is highly concentrated in Herefordshire (more than three times the national average). The main employment hotspot is Hereford, other clusters can be found in Oswestry, Ellesmere, Shrewsbury, Market Drayton, Telford and Bromyard.

### Regional strengths include:

- Bakery
- Confectionery
- Dairy
- Meat
- Micro-brewing
- Cider and fruit wines
- Processing and preserving of potatoes, vegetables and fruits

The sector benefits from a well-established supply chain in food packaging, equipment

manufacturing, materials innovation development, and specialist storage and logistics services providing a host of interesting careers across the Marches.

**Harper Adams University** in Shropshire is a **world leader in agri-tech research** and the largest specialist land-based institution in the UK. Its Regional Food Academy provides training, education, knowledge transfer and technical consultancy support to the region's food and drink industry.

There are a range of education and training providers in the area and National Careers Service can support you to find the right course.

### Start-up and SME Offers

Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre offers start-ups and small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) access to excellent production units equipped to the highest standard with on-site business support, and there is a wealth of local business support for those setting up their own small business. The Ludlow Food Festival showcases the area's reputation for **celebrating high quality food** and there are plenty of smaller food festivals and local farmer's markets where local food and drink producers can tap into both local and visitor trade.

# Future trends

The food and drink sector uses many technologically advanced solutions to improve productivity and sustainability, facilitate product traceability and manage quality.

Innovations in food process engineering, automation and connectivity are changing the way we produce our food and drink.

Food and drink production is being transformed by robotics, sustainable packaging, renewable and energy efficient technologies, big data, artificial intelligence, sensors, blockchain technology, and industrial Internet of Things (IoT).

While technological advances mean that some jobs will become automated, there is likely to still be roles at all levels for those looking to work in this sector.

The challenges of food security and climate change will also play an increasingly bigger part in the future of the sector meaning plenty of jobs for scientists, mathematicians, analysts, engineers and technicians.

Businesses are looking to recruit individuals with the required knowledge, expertise and skills through apprenticeships and graduate training schemes and there will also be opportunities for training on the job.

# Local employers

1. ABP Food Group
2. Arla Foods
3. Avara Food
4. Belton Farm
5. Egmond Foods
6. Heineken
7. Müller
8. Pickstock
9. Ornuo Ingredients
10. Orchard Valley Foods
11. Palethorpes Bakery / Addo Food Group
12. Saputo Dairy



# Job roles



account manager

artisan baker

biochemist

brand manager

business development  
manager

buyer

chef

corporate social  
responsibility manager

customer panel manager

food photographer

food technologist

health and safety  
manager

HR administrator

hygiene operative

maintenance technician

manufacturing project  
manager

manufacturing supervisor

market researcher

nutritionist

operations section leader

packaging designer

production manager

production systems  
engineer

quality assurance  
manager

sales executive

soil scientist

supply chain manager

warehouse operative

warehouse manager



# Skills and qualities

In food and drink manufacturing, employers are particularly looking for:

**advanced digital  
and ICT skills**

**health and  
safety awareness**

**teamwork and  
interpersonal skills**

**personal initiative**

**ability to  
manage own  
time and prioritise  
tasks**

**commercial  
awareness**

**flexibility**

**technical and  
practical skills**

**good  
communication  
skills**

**an  
analytical and  
logical approach  
to solving  
problems**



# Routes into this sector

Ways to get into this sector will vary depending on the job role.



Apply directly for roles such as food processing worker and food packaging operatives - that don't ask for specific qualifications - **GCSEs** and basic digital/IT skills may help. A temporary job via an agency may also be a way in.



Choose a **college course** at level 3 (A level equivalent) or level 4 to add to your qualifications.



An **apprenticeship** could be a good route in - from lean manufacturing operative (intermediate apprenticeship) and food technologist (advanced apprenticeship) to food manufacturing operations (higher apprenticeship). Always check the requirements for each individual apprenticeship.



For some roles, employers will look for someone who has a **university degree** but also check to see if a higher or degree apprenticeship route is an option for a graduate-level job.

Work your way up to roles such as supervisor or manager by training on the job.

## What could you earn?

Food quality control inspector £15,500-£30,000

Food technologist £20,000-£45,000

Manufacturing supervisor £18,000-£35,000

Mechanical engineering technician £18,000-£40,000

Production manager £20,000-£40,000

Quality assurance manager £23,000-£55,000

Supply chain manager £20,000-£60,000

Technical brewer £18,000-£45,000



## Find out more

For more information about the labour market in your area or in a particular sector you can **speak to one of our expert careers advisers by calling 0800 100 900**.

Visit our website <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk> to access over 800 job profiles, online resources and digital tools, or to contact us via webchat or email.