

Farm Data Exchange: the trust gap behind the technology

Analysis of 575 Farming Forum contributions, 31 July–23 August
2026

The Farming Forum | 26 August 2026



Data reuse depends on trusted
permission

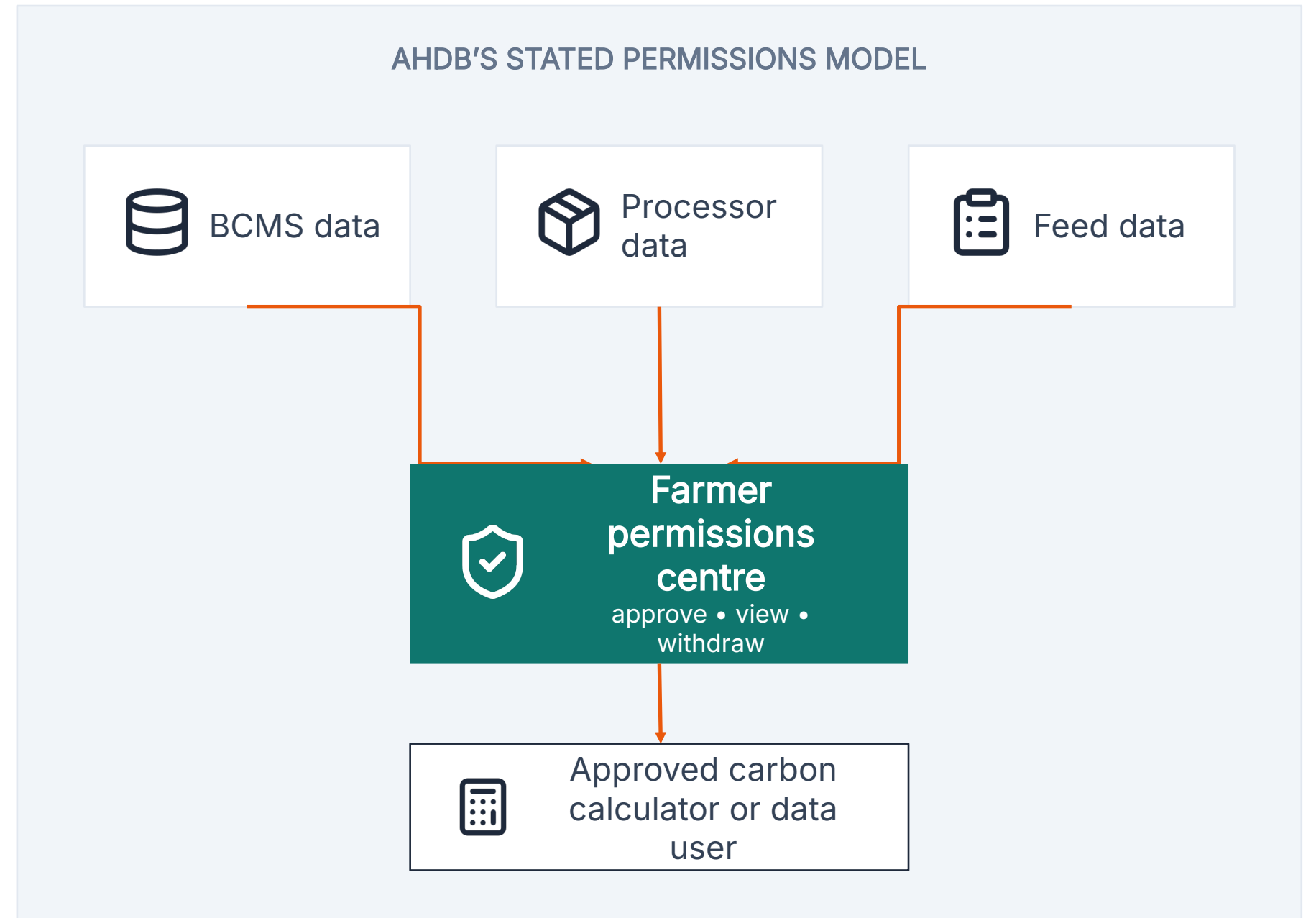
FDE promises reuse, permission and less duplication

01 FDE is described as a **permissions layer**, not a central database.

02 The proof of concept drew on data already held by BCMS, processors and feed suppliers.

03 Farmers selected sources, approved recipients and could withdraw access.

04 AHDB's practical case is to enter information once, reuse it safely and reduce repeated administration.



The conversation sustained exceptional volume and engagement

575

original contributions

1,901

reactions in total

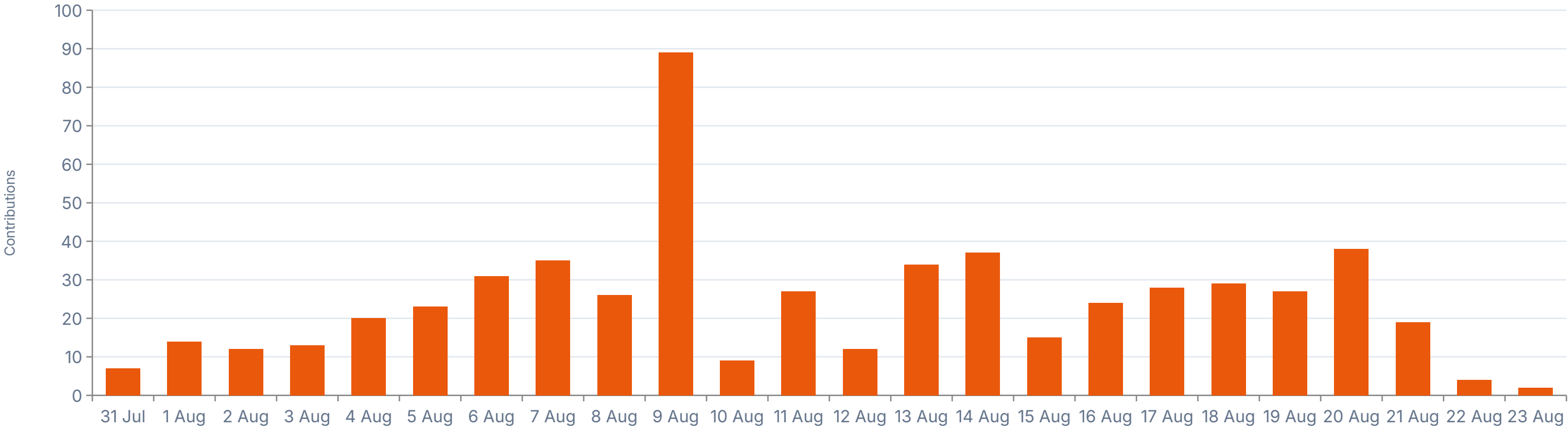
3.31

reactions per contribution

24

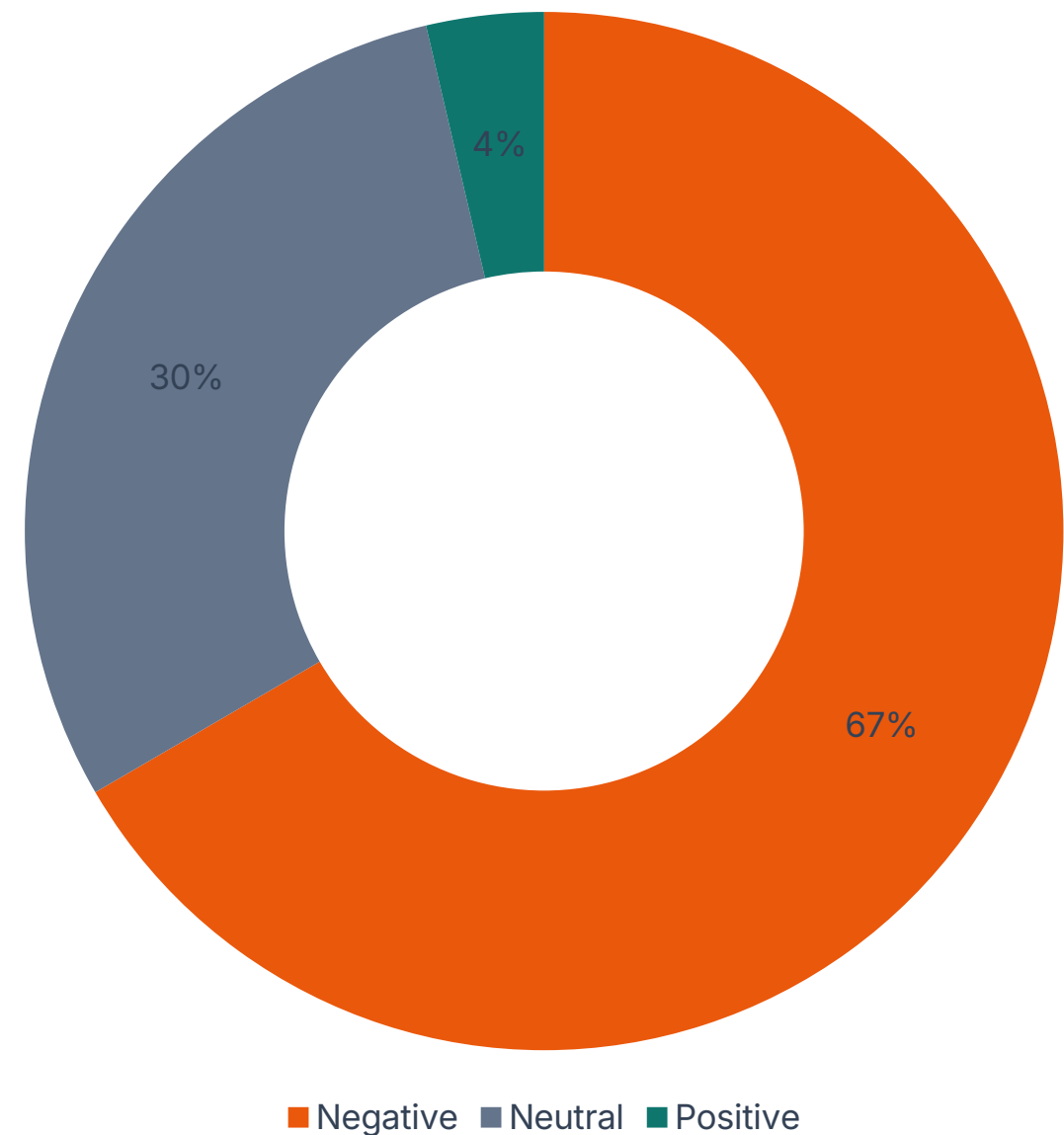
days of activity

Peak: 89 contributions on 9 August



Two-thirds of contributions carried a negative tone

SHARE OF ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS



MEAN SENTIMENT SCORE

-0.63

Scale: -1 negative to +1 positive

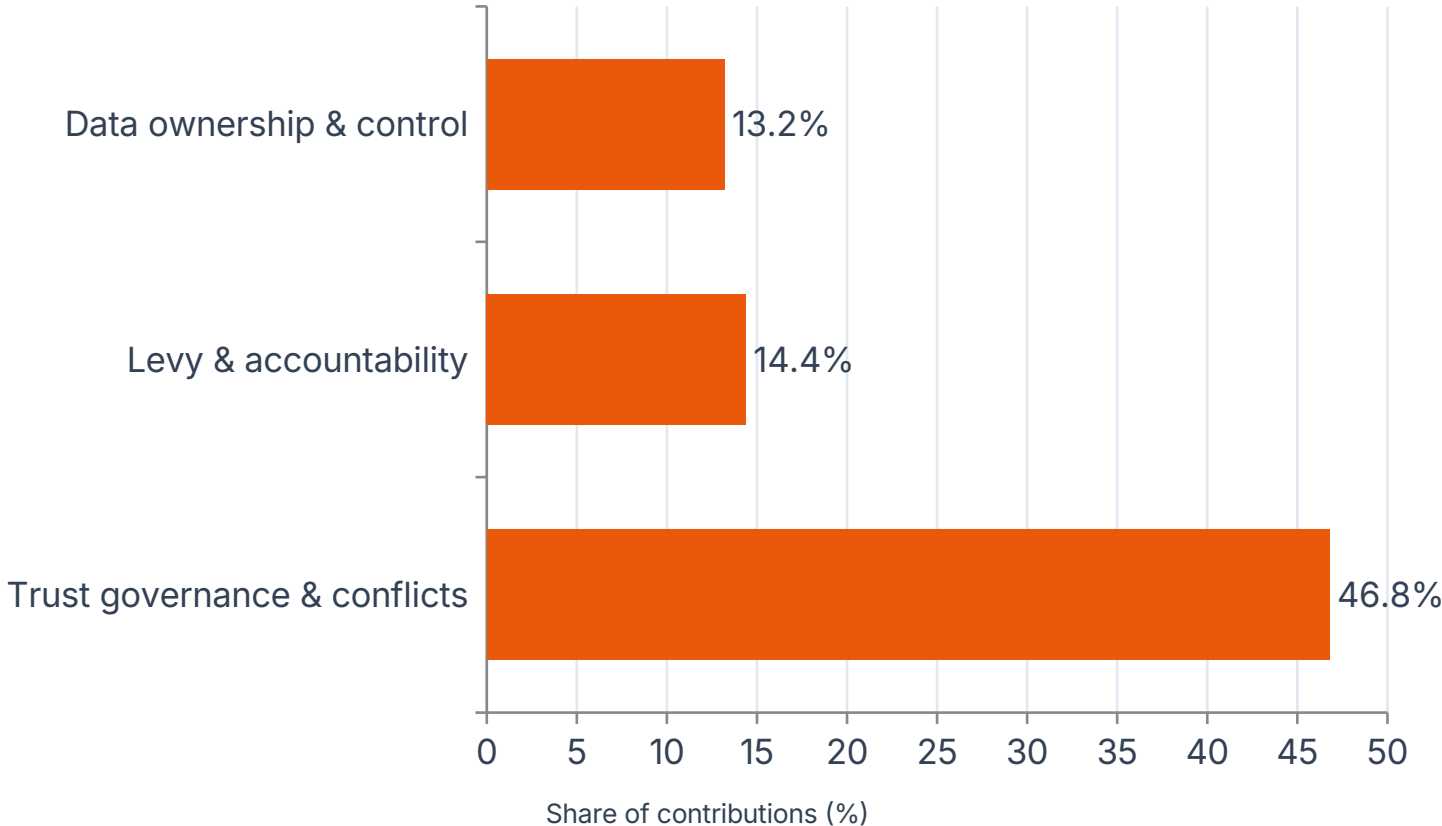
AVERAGE REACTIONS PER CONTRIBUTION

Negative	4.00
Neutral	1.77
Positive	3.10

This classifies tone in this conversation only. It is **not** representative survey evidence of UK farmers.

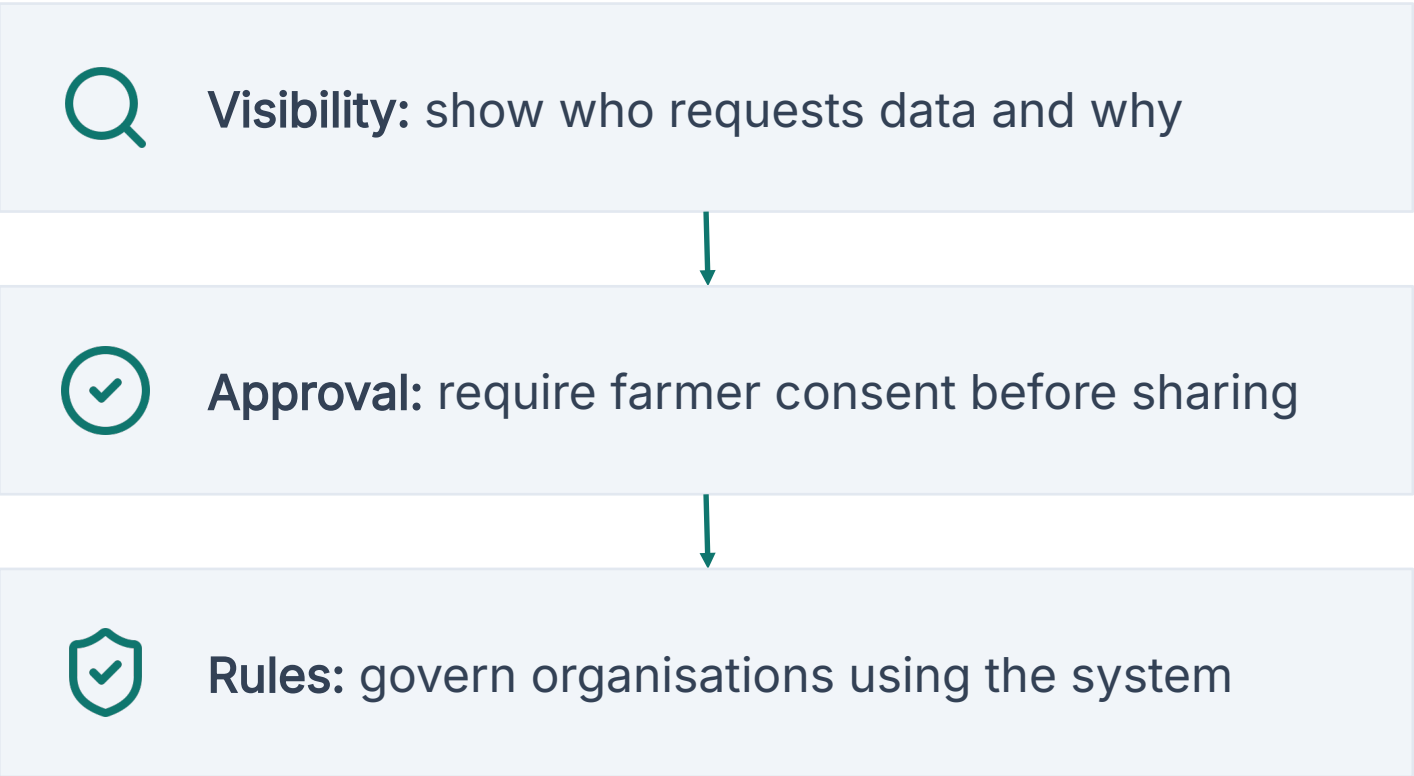
Trust and governance set the terms of the debate

GOVERNANCE-RELATED THEMES



Each contribution could carry up to three themes, so percentages do not sum to 100%.

AHDB'S REPORTED SAFEGUARDS



The decision question: does permission remain meaningful when commercial pressure shapes access?

Scope 3 reporting sharpened the argument over value

REPORTED GROUNDSWELL WORDING

"a condition of doing business with a supply chain"

Attributed by Direct Driller; not treated here as formal AHDB policy.

THE ECONOMIC FORK RAISED IN THE DISCUSSION



SHARE OF CONTRIBUTIONS TAGGED WITH THEME



The dispute is not only who can access the data, but who captures the value created from it.

The same infrastructure supports two very different futures

AHDB's stated case	Risks raised in the conversation
Reuse existing information Draw from data already held elsewhere.	Voluntary can become expected A selling point may evolve into standard market practice.
Reduce duplication and errors Enter less and improve consistency.	Aggregation changes bargaining power Permission may not preserve the value of combined data.
Farmer approval before sharing Choose recipients and withdraw access.	Purposes may expand over time Governance can change who uses data and why.
Clearer and more consistent reporting Support supply-chain and environmental requests.	Benefits may accrue off farm Supply chains could capture more value than producers.

AHDB later said it has “no ambition” for FDE to become a mandatory route to market.

Contributors drew clear red lines

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Condition of trade is an absolute red line for me.

ajd132 • TFF contributor

VOLUNTARINESS

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What would start out as a choice with a possible financial return would most likely end up as something that will have to be adhered to in future.

Purbeck • TFF contributor

MISSION CREEP

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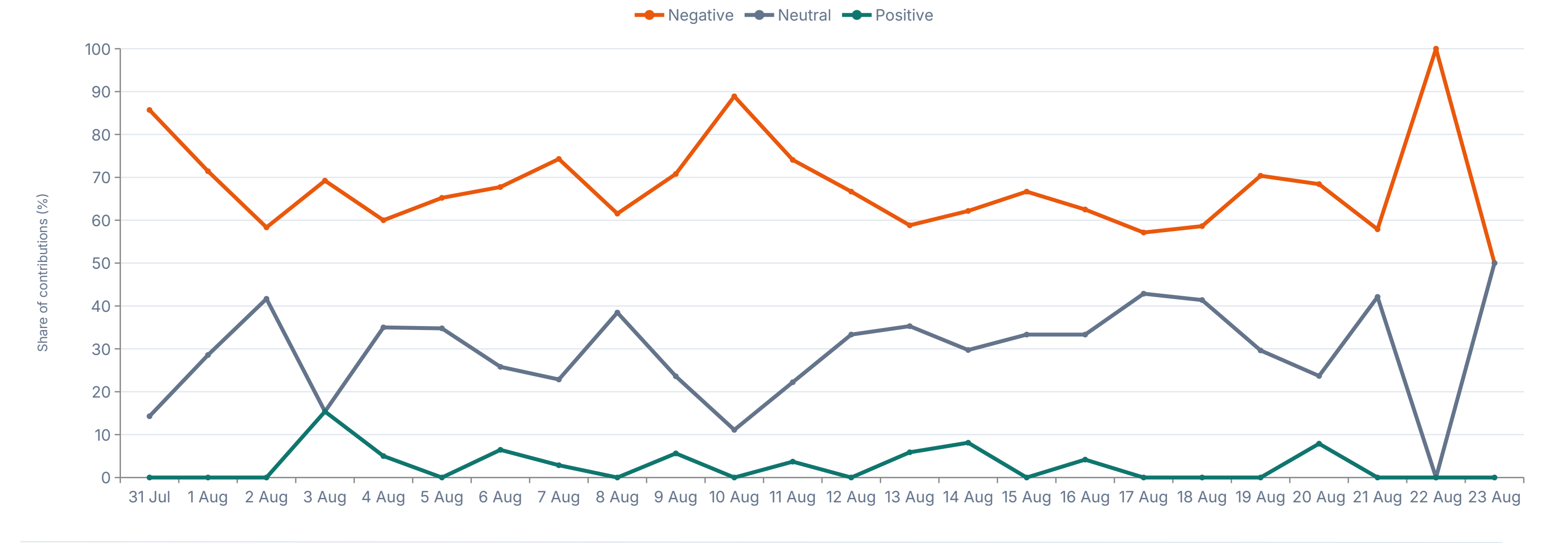
Data exchange isn't a bad thing, but farmer control and permission is absolutely vital.

William Scale
quoted by Farmers Weekly

FARMER CONTROL

The red lines were consistent: choice must remain real, purpose must remain bounded, and control must survive commercial pressure.

Concern persisted rather than fading with discussion



Opening day: 85.7% negative

Peak-volume day: 70.8% negative across 89 contributions

Daily percentages can move sharply when contribution volume is low.

Source: daily classification of original contribution text; multi-day trend is descriptive, not representative.

The unresolved question is who captures the value

01 Purpose

Publish durable limits on **who** can request data and **for which purposes**.

02 Consent

Make approval **specific, revocable and visible** in a complete audit trail.

03 Rights

Separate access permission from rights to **aggregate, benchmark, resell or reuse** data.

04 Value & oversight

Define payment, cost sharing and independent oversight **before wider rollout**.

FDE's technical case is credible. Adoption will depend on whether governance protects voluntariness, bargaining power and a fair share of the value created from farm data.