

Farming Investment Fund

We will provide targeted support to businesses so that they can invest in equipment, technology, and infrastructure that will improve their productivity and deliver environmental and other public benefits.

We will enable and encourage investments that will improve agricultural and forestry productivity in a sustainable way, supporting a competitive and thriving agricultural sector, with a reduced impact on the environment.

Scheme description

We will use this scheme to incentivise and support the purchase of equipment, technology and infrastructure to support environmentally sustainable farming and land management. All grants will be part funded by the farmer or land manager.

The new scheme will be based on Countryside Productivity Scheme, with a similar application process. It will include an Expression of Interest element for higher value investments and may offer grants for a higher proportion of the cost of items which deliver the greatest public goods.

It will be a competitive scheme, with higher-scoring applications more likely to be successful. Guidance will set out how applications will be appraised. The scheme will be split into two strands for lower and higher value investments, each with a different application process:

Farming Equipment and Technology Fund

Grants will be available towards the purchase cost of a list of specified, pre-determined items. Grants can be awarded for the purchase of multiple items. We are working with farmers, foresters, growers, contractors, and representative organisations to decide the equipment and technology that should be on the list of eligible items, based on their potential to improve farm performance.

Applications will be made by a quick and simple online application and approval process, with a clear grant value assigned to each item.

Farming Transformation Fund

Grants will be available towards the cost of more substantial investments in equipment, technology or infrastructure, with the potential to transform business performance. Applications will be assessed against their ability to contribute towards scheme objectives. This could include making more efficient use of water or using nutrients and pesticides more effectively.

There will be a two-stage application process, including an initial Expressions of Interest stage, where we will assess eligibility to guide applicants in preparation of their full applications. At the second stage, applications will be scored on their fit against our selection criteria before a decision on whether to award grant funding is made.

What will the grants be for?

Grants will be available towards the cost of equipment, technology, and infrastructure that will improve efficiency and productivity while also benefiting the environment. We are continuing to work with farming organisations as we develop the scheme design and decide what equipment and technology will be eligible for grants.

Eligible investments for Equipment and Technology or Transformation, or both strands, could include:

- on-farm water storage infrastructure, including reservoirs
- precision agriculture equipment (low emission and variable-rate nutrient or pesticide application)
- robotic or automated technology
- items to improve animal health
- specialist forestry equipment
- equipment and technology for storing, sorting, or processing products
- large-scale precision agriculture projects
- precision agriculture and low-emission nutrient application equipment

Detailed information about the eligible investments will be included in scheme guidance.

Eligibility

The scheme will be open to businesses with addresses registered in England. Applicants will need to be registered on the Rural Payments Service to apply.

Agents will also be able to apply on behalf of applicants; however, they will need the correct permissions on the Rural Payments Service to make legal changes for that business. We will publish full eligibility details in the scheme guidance, on scheme launch.

Payments

Grants will be available for a proportion of the costs for eligible investments, which may be higher where the item delivers the greatest environmental benefit. Grants will be paid in arrears. For Equipment and Technology grants, these will be single payments following confirmation of purchase of the listed items. For Transformation, we will pay grants through several instalments for larger investments.

Timings

The Farming Investment Fund for Equipment and Technology and Transformation will be open for applications in autumn 2021.

For Equipment and Technology grants, once the application windows shut, there will be a short period to appraise applications and issue grant funding agreements. There will then be a set period for applicants to accept their agreement via an online acceptance portal, purchase their grant item, and claim their grant funding.

For Transformation grants, following the expression of interest and full application stages, successful applicants will be offered a grant funding agreement, and will similarly be able to purchase and claim their grant.

Application guidance will be published on scheme launch and will give further information on application deadlines and expected payment dates.

We will be running a communications campaign from early 2021 to give farmers more information about the scheme ahead of applications opening, including providing a forward-look of future funding rounds to enable business planning.