

£15 million for new equipment to boost farm productivity

Second round of funding for the popular Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme open for applications.

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The next funding round for the popular Countryside Productivity Small Grants scheme has opened for applications today (Tuesday 9 July).

Through the initiative, farm businesses can apply for grants of between £3,000 and £12,000 to help them invest in new and innovative technology. Today's announcement follows the first round of funding in 2018 when £15 million was awarded to successful applicants.

For the second round of funding, 26 new items have been added to the list of equipment available, including chlorophyll meters, which instantly measure the chlorophyll content of a plant leaf. Another new item is the portable ammonia analyser, which can be used to check the levels of ammonia in farm buildings. Farmers and rural businesses will have eight weeks to submit an application for this funding.

The evidence shows that smart use of technology boosts productivity and yields, but also improves animal welfare and the environment. For instance, it can help farmers be more precise in the application of fertiliser, or ensure that the correct levels of medicine are being given for animals.

Grants are available for all farm types, including livestock, horticulture and arable businesses, with a total pot of £15 million available to fund investments in new technology.

Farming Minister Robert Goodwill said:

The small grants scheme proved to be so popular in the first round because it gives farmers access to equipment that can deliver quick and tangible improvements.

This isn't just about increasing yields; it's also about using the best tools and equipment that can improve animal welfare and the environment, such as monitoring the levels of nitrogen in crops.

As we leave the EU we want more farmers to be able to invest in this kind of technology that can boost the bottom line and make a real difference.

Defra is developing plans for a third £15 million funding round in 2020, with details to be confirmed later this year to give potential applicants and suppliers sufficient time to prepare.

Farmers and land managers interested in finding out more or wishing to apply for a grant can visit GOV.UK to see the total list of items eligible for grants under this scheme. The application form is also available on <https://www.cpsmall.org.uk/>