

Press release: Ministers host Agri-Tech discussions with key global investors

Attended by ministers from [BEIS](#), [Defra](#) and [DFID](#), the roundtable helped to realise further growth in overseas investment in the UK Agri-Tech industry as ministers reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring the UK becomes a world leader in agricultural technology, innovation and sustainability.

Hosted at 10 Downing Street, the event was the fourth in the government's series of investment roundtables which promote UK industry sector opportunities to a global audience, and drive foreign direct-investment into the UK as we prepare to leave the European Union.

Ministers discussed the government's strategic vision for the UK Agri-Tech sector with senior executives from across the industry, whose companies in total employ 10,000 people across the UK.

Companies who attended include AGCO, Alltech, BASF, Bayer Crop Science, Calysta, Elanco, Marine Harvest, MSD, Syngenta, Vitacress and Zoetis

Dr Fox and his colleagues together highlighted that:

- underpinned by a modern Industrial Strategy, the UK is at the forefront of Agri-Tech innovation and offers an established business-friendly environment for investors
- UK Government's commitment to the future success of the sector is clear: UK Government-funded agencies are investing £400 million in agri-food research, with an internationally competitive R&D tax credits scheme
- the recent [Agriculture Bill](#) also provides an further opportunity for Agri-Tech investors, aiming to help farmers deliver a cleaner and healthier environment through increased productivity and investment in the latest technology
- a new start-up visa, launching in Spring 2019, will also make the visa process faster for entrepreneurs to enter the UK

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Today's Agri-Tech roundtable is an excellent opportunity for the UK to further build on already strong relationships with investors, and for them to strengthen their ties with the UK science base and farming industry.

As an international economic department, we want to work with investors across the world to embrace technology and make the UK a global leader in agricultural productivity, improve competitiveness and sustainability.

In doing so, these investments will create jobs and prosperity for rural communities across the country.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove MP, said:

The UK is a world-leader for talent in agriculture and technology, so there are real opportunities for our burgeoning Agri-Tech sector. Harnessing technology enables our hard-working farmers to become even more productive and environmentally efficient.

We are already seeing the rewards of investing in Agri-Tech, with further funding of around £30 million confirmed today for farmers to purchase hi-tech equipment. We know that by embracing technology – such as fruit ripeness spectrometers or calving detectors – farm businesses can become more efficient, productive and resilient.

Business and Industry Minister Richard Harrington said:

Agri-Tech businesses are revolutionising farming, from hands-free harvesting, to driverless vehicles and drones to plant and tend to crops. Through our modern [Industrial Strategy](#), we have already committed £90 million to transform food production, inspiring more innovative farming and boosting productivity and highly skilled jobs for the future.

New investment will put the UK at the forefront of robotics, AI and data science to meet the food demands of a growing population.

The UK's agriculture sector employs half a million people and contributes to the wider agri-food supply chain – valued at £112 billion in 2017 and employing 4 million people.

The roundtable comes at an opportunity moment for the government to engage with the Agri-Tech sector, as the UK looks to contribute to future global food security and international development by ensuring safe, healthy, nutritious food is affordable and accessible to all.

For further information, contact the Department for International Trade media and digital team at newsdesk@trade.gov.uk or on 020 7008 3333.