

Sustainable farm-based protein competition opens

The development of products such as methane reducing animal feeds and high protein crops have received a boost today (Monday 25 July) with Defra opening a £12.5m competition to support research and innovation.

Farmers, growers, foresters, businesses and researchers are invited to apply with projects to help increase domestic production of healthy and sustainable protein. The competition is part of the Government's £270 million [Farming Innovation Programme](#) being run in partnership with UK Research and Innovation's Transforming Food Production Challenge to help spark new ideas and collaboration across the sector.

The aim is to accelerate the development of novel and disruptive technologies to create new sources of resource efficient, low-emission proteins, leading to a more sustainable farming model for the future. This will help improve farming productivity, resilience in the sector and move existing agricultural sectors towards net zero.

Defra Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Steve Double, said:

Our farmers and food producers are the best in the world, and we want to encourage collaboration across the sector to help improve productivity and sustainability.

Food production and environmental protection are two sides of the same coin, it's why we are spending £270m to support farmers to innovate for the future through the Farming Innovation Programme.

Whether it's a game-changing animal feed that helps animals produce less methane or new high-protein crop, this competition is now open to support its development.

Katrina Hayter, Challenge Director for UKRI's Transforming Food Production Challenge, said:

When it comes to addressing the key issues of productivity and sustainability in the UK food sector, we're looking for applicants who are truly able to demonstrate and deliver – and on-farm protein production is no different. It's vital that new technologies disrupt the status quo, bringing with them measurable improvements to the environmental impact of food production and more sustainable

models for the future. We're looking forward to working with applicants and supporting those who can truly move the needle forwards with new farm-based protein solutions.

This competition is split into 'Feasibility' projects (up to 2 years), and 'Industrial Research' (up to 5 years for breeding projects). Projects must have a value of £200k-£500k and £500k-£1m respectively.

Altogether, Defra expects to spend around £600 million on grants and other support for farmers to invest in productivity, animal health and welfare, innovation, research and development over the next 3 years.

Guidance on how to apply is available at the following links: