

Ingenious innovations to help transform UK farming

New technologies are set to help UK farmers cut down on pollution, minimise waste and produce more food.



- Farmers set to benefit from innovations that boost food production and cut down on waste
- funding will support projects including using electricity instead of herbicides to tackle destructive weeds and ground-penetrating radars that monitor potato crops
- projects supported by £22 million of government investment through the modern Industrial Strategy

New technologies are set to help UK farmers cut down on pollution, minimise waste and produce more food thanks to a £22 million government investment.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore today (28 June 2019) announced the first 31 projects to benefit from the government's dedicated Transforming Food Production Challenge, a £90 million Industrial Strategy fund to help businesses, researchers and industry to transform farming and meet the needs of a growing population.

This investment in the latest technological developments is a key part of the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#), and commitment to boost R&D spending to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

It will also contribute towards providing greener, cleaner processes for the agricultural sector, helping towards the government's commitment to a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Projects will benefit from a share of £22.4 million to develop their innovative projects, with industry partners contributing a further £8.8 million. They include:

- Rootwave, in Warwickshire, who will use a £690,000 grant to use electricity instead of chemicals to kill weeds via the roots avoiding damage to crops
- Tuberscan, in Lincolnshire, who will use £391,000 to develop ground penetrating radar, underground scans and AI to monitor potato crops and identify when they are ready to harvest. This technology could increase the usable crop by an estimated 5%-10% and reduce food waste with minimal extra cost
- a project in Middlesex, who will use a £233,000 grant in its project to help cows graze without farmer supervision by placing sensors on farm gates that communicate with GPS trackers on cows to open and close gates allowing cattle to graze freely
- aiScope, a project based in Sheffield, who will use a £1 million grant to apply AI and analysis to tackle the common cereal weed, Blackgrass, potentially saving farmers £580 million a year.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

The UK is a global leader in technological innovation, as well as being the first major economy to introduce plans for a legally binding target to reach net zero emissions and end the UK's contribution to global warming entirely by 2050.

The projects announced today will ensure we lead the way in supporting our vital farming industry, delivering high quality food for consumers while reducing the wider environmental impact.

This is a key part of our modern Industrial Strategy, investing in ground-breaking projects, creating highly skilled jobs and providing a cleaner, greener future for generations to come.

Farming Minister Robert Goodwill said:

Agri-tech can help us address the biggest challenges facing the agriculture industry, such as eradicating crop pests and diseases for arable farmers without harming the wider environment.

In 2018 we saw the total value of agri-tech investment worldwide skyrocket to \$17 billion – an increase of 40% on the previous year.

Today's funding will enable more investment in new technology, helping lead to scientific breakthroughs that could transform the sustainability of global food supply chains.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport, said:

It is predicted that [60% more food will be needed worldwide by 2050](#) to feed the increasing global population. To do this we need to

produce food in more resilient, sustainable and efficient ways. This means reducing emissions and pollution, minimising waste and improving our soil.

The projects announced today will help to address this challenge, delivering benefits for consumers through innovation in the food economy.

Full list of successful projects: [Agri Tech projects](#) (PDF, 141KB, 12 pages)

Transforming Food Production Challenge is part of the Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund which aims to strengthen UK science and business innovation to take on the biggest challenges that society and industry face today.

The Challenge Fund aims to bring together our world-leading research base with Britain's best businesses to transform how we live, work and travel.

By investing in the very best research, development and innovation, it will tackle the major industrial and societal challenges we face today and put the UK in the best position to take advantage of future market opportunities.

Notes to editors

Full list of successful projects:

[Agri Tech projects](#)

(PDF, 141KB, 12 pages)

Transforming Food Production Challenge is part of the Government's Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund which aims to strengthen UK science and business innovation to take on the biggest challenges that society and industry face today.

The Challenge Fund aims to bring together our world-leading research base with Britain's best businesses to transform how we live, work and travel.

By investing in the very best research, development and innovation, it will tackle the major industrial and societal challenges we face today and put the UK in the best position to take advantage of future market opportunities.

Thousands of new teachers to benefit from extra support

Schools and training experts invited to develop products to support Early Career Framework



The biggest teaching reform in a generation is a step closer to being rolled-out in schools.

The Early Career Framework will revolutionise the support given to new teachers and today (Friday, 28 June) schools and training providers have been invited to help develop the programme.

Education and training organisations have been invited to develop a range of products to support schools in their implementation of the programme, backed by at least £130 million a year in extra funding when fully rolled out in 2021.

The Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, will be at a school in Darlington today, with the North East one of the areas set to benefit from an early roll-out of the Early Career Framework in September 2020, along with Bradford, Doncaster and Greater Manchester.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The early stages of a teacher's career are an incredibly exciting time – but they can also be very challenging, which is why it's so important to make sure they are properly supported.

Earlier this year I set out my plans to transform the support available to newly-qualified teachers through the centrepiece of our flagship Teacher Recruitment & Retention Strategy.

Today marks an important milestone on this journey by inviting tenders to create training and support for those starting out their careers in teaching.

Announced in the Department's Teacher Recruitment and Retention Strategy earlier this year, the Early Career Framework will provide new teachers with the foundations for a successful career in the profession through a two-year package of structured training and support.

This will include a reduced timetable to allow teachers to make the most of their training, alongside high-quality materials for new teachers and their mentors that underpin each area of the Early Career Framework.

Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of Education Endowment Foundation said:

We know that high-quality teaching is the thing that makes the biggest difference to young people's educational outcomes. Yet recruiting and retaining teachers – particularly to disadvantaged schools – is challenging. If we don't get more great teachers to join and, more importantly, stay in the profession over the next few years, it will be the poorest pupils who lose out the most.

We welcome the progress being made towards implementing the Early Career Framework, which represents a vital opportunity to support teachers to access and apply the best available evidence right from the start of their professional life. The Education Endowment Foundation has played a key role in ensuring the framework draws on the best available evidence. By evaluating the roll-out of the programme, we will learn key lessons so that every new teacher in England gets the support they need and deserve.

Damian Hinds will be in Gateshead and Darlington today, which will benefit from early roll-out of the Early Career Framework, where some schools face real challenges in recruiting and retaining teachers.

The Education Secretary will also meet with employers in Gateshead, to see the wide ranging T-Level and vocational opportunities on offer to young people to help develop their talents, giving them the technical skills they need to be work and employer ready, as part of the department's focus on the region through the Opportunity North East (ONE) programme.

In a summit of ONE Vision school leaders – whose schools are partnered with high performing institutions and given tailored support to help improve outcomes in their schools – Damian Hinds will discuss how the programme is continuing to raise aspirations for young people in the region and helping them learn the knowledge and skills they need to fulfil their potential.

Today's visit builds on the momentum of the ONE programme, which has pledged up to £24 million in the region, as part of the government's drive to improve education and boost career prospects in the North of England.

Last month the Department called on North East schools, academy trusts and local authorities to pitch proposals to boost the prospects for young people by drawing on their expertise to improve transition from primary to secondary. The best proposals will be granted up to £1.8 million from the ONE funding.

Schools, academy trusts or local authorities who have submitted an expression of interest have until 19 July 2019 to submit their proposals.

[General Assembly debate on the responsibility to protect and the prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity](#)

We call on all member states to do all in their power to prevent and end atrocities against the peoples and to prosecute those responsible for them.

From: [Foreign & Commonwealth Office](#) Delivered on: 27 May 2019 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)



Mr Chair, this debate is an opportunity for us to reaffirm our support for the principles of our Responsibility to Protect, as endorsed in the 2005 World Summit. Yet, despite this historic commitment, it is clear as we look across the world that we are failing in our responsibility. The UNHCR reports that armed conflict and persecution have led to 70.8 million people being forcibly displaced. Some member states in this United Nations not only failed to protect their people, they willingly harm them. So our adherence R2P has never been more important. We must continue to assert that states should protect; not harm their people. We should anticipate and diffuse conflicts before they begin and where atrocities occur: we should investigate and hold those responsible accountable. So, unlike some, we strongly support the inclusion of this item on the formal agenda of UNGA 2019. We also welcome the S-G's report and the valuable work being done by Special Advisors Adama Dieng and now Karen Smith.

Let's remind ourselves what our common undertakings are. Under Pillar 1, states must uphold their obligations under International Human Rights law, Humanitarian Law and Refugee Law. But there are too many examples of states that fail to do so because they are either unable – but more often – unwilling to meet their responsibilities. Some of those states have spoken here this morning. Tellingly, they dispute this concept of the Responsibility to Protect. They do so because its existence is a daily repudiation of their abuses against their own people.

In Venezuela, economic devastation, starvation and, malnutrition has resulted in the flights of over 3 million Venezuelans to neighbouring countries – the largest migration in Latin American history. In Myanmar, a culture of military impunity left the civilian government unable to prevent the mass exodus of 700,000 Rohingya refugees who have fled to Bangladesh since 2017. Primarily due to the actions of the Myanmar military. There are further 244,000 internally displaced within Myanmar. The atrocities against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities constitute ethnic cleansing on an industrial scale. And they also may constitute genocide. And in Syria – who we heard from at length this morning – there the horrifying reports of attacks on schools, hospitals, and first responders and the use of barrel bombs in Idlib are chilling examples of the devastating effect on civilians when a state not only fails to uphold its Responsibility to Protect but actively breaches its obligations to do so. Russia and the Assad regime must cease these attacks against the Syrian people, and respect their obligations under International Human Rights Law. But we must all, here, redouble our efforts to help those people whose own governments have abandoned them or actively persecuted them.

We should also do more as the Secretary- General's reform agenda urges us: to focus on the preventative capabilities within the Responsibility to Protect – the second pillar. We know that human rights violations and abuses if left unchecked can be both an indicator of, and a first step towards, mass atrocities. We welcome the Secretary-General's assessment that there needs to be a more systematic and structured approach across the UN system to information gathering, assessment of atrocity risks, and collective analysis so that member states can receive early recommendations for action and

prevention. We agree with the Secretary-General that there should be greater use of the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review process to highlight human rights violations and abuses and to help states respond to them. And the UN Joint Office continues to play an essential role in mainstreaming R2P within the UN and on an international level. We welcome the appointment of Dr. Karen Smith as the new R2P Special Advisor and support her work in partnership with the Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide and bringing potential risks of atrocity crimes to the attention of the Security Council.

Mediation also has a key role: active preventative diplomacy and mediation can help prevent atrocities and reduce tensions and conflict. The UK has been a strong supporter of the strengthened UN mediation capacity. The UN Secretary-General recently reported that peacebuilding dividends in respect to Mali, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and South Sudan were all clearly visible from this work. We encourage states to be alert to the early signs of conflict, to engage with communities and civil society, and to make use of the Secretary-General's Good Offices and the UN mediation Support Unit.

And these peacebuilding processes and efforts to prevent conflict also need to be inclusive and diverse. We know that women continue to build peace when formal processes fail. They lobby for peace processes to begin when parties refuse to talk, and implement peace agreements long after international donors have left. We want to see the UN through support from the international community increase the number of female Special Envoys nominated by the Secretary-General and increase both the number of women nominated for the mediation standby unit and the number of female candidates selected.

Finally, onto the third pillar: accountability and ending impunity. It is vital for deterring the recurrence of atrocity crimes. States have the primary responsibility to investigate and prosecute crimes committed within their jurisdiction. While international courts and hybrid tribunals can play an important role where states are genuinely unwilling or unable to do so, the UN should draw on diverse mechanisms to identify risks and take early action to prevent countries from falling into greater crisis. We will continue to shine a light on appalling violations of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law in situations such as Syria and Myanmar. There should be no impunity for those who perpetrate these crimes and atrocities.

Mr Chair, there have been a handful of suggestions within this chamber this morning that Responsibility to Protect is somehow discredited. But these voices are an insignificant minority set against the voices of support we have heard today. But our words of support need to result in real action. Yesterday, in this room, we recommitted ourselves to the UN Charter. We the peoples. But what good is that if we do not recommit ourselves to the Responsibility to Protect those peoples? We call on all member states to do all in their power to prevent and end atrocities against the peoples and to prosecute those responsible for them. We owe this to those who cannot protect themselves.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

'Claudia's law' to lift families of missing people out of legal limbo

New law will allow families to take over the affairs of missing loved ones.



Peter Lawrence OBE

- Previously there was no legal recourse to deal with someone's affairs if missing
- The new regulations will come into effect on 31 July 2019

The financial and administrative burdens faced by families of missing loved ones will be eased after legislation was laid today (28 June 2019) to pave the way for 'Claudia's Law'.

Named after Claudia Lawrence who went missing in 2009, the law creates a new legal status of guardian of the affairs of a missing person, allowing families to act in their best interests after they have been gone for 90 days or longer.

It will mean that families can step in and safeguard their loved one's assets in their absence – for example, suspending direct debits for mobile phone and utility bills or making mortgage payments.

Previously there was no mechanism in England and Wales to specifically protect the property and affairs of a missing person. Instead families could only take over the financial affairs of a missing person if they declared them dead, adding emotional pressure to families during an already difficult time. This also meant they could be left unable to pay debts or prevent

repossessions or insolvency

Officially known as the Guardianship (Missing Person's) Act 2017, the new provision was introduced as a Private Members' Bill by Kevin Hollinrake MP and backed by Claudia's father Peter Lawrence OBE, who has been tirelessly campaigning for the change since her disappearance, together with the charity Missing People and other families affected.

Justice Minister Paul Maynard said:

No family dealing with the despair of a loved one going missing should have to endure the additional stresses of administrative problems.

This government is committed to helping families cope as best they can in these incredibly difficult circumstances and today's legislation is an important part in that.

Claudia's law will mean families can oversee the financial and property affairs of their missing loved one – removing a huge burden at such a traumatic time.

Families in England and Wales can apply to be a guardian following a number of statutory instruments being laid in Parliament today to bring forward provisions within the Act – with the new regulations coming into force on 31 July 2019.

Successful applicants for the guardian role will be able to look after their loved one's affairs for up to 4 years with the option to renew. The scheme will be operated and supervised by the Office of the Public Guardian.

Susannah Drury, Missing People's Director of Policy and Research, said:

This is a triumph for all the family members who have campaigned with us over the past decade and shown so powerfully why Guardianship is needed.

This regulation will mean that families who face the emotional distress of a disappearance will not be blocked from handling the financial and legal affairs of their loved ones.

Peter Lawrence OBE, father of missing York chef Claudia Lawrence said:

I am delighted that Claudia's Law is coming into force at the end of July.

This will make such a difference to the lives of the hundreds of families who have been waiting so long for it, enabling them to deal with their missing loved one's financial and property affairs

in the same way as everyone else is able to on a daily basis.

One less burden at a time when families are at their emotional lowest ebb will help enormously.

Notes to editors

The Guardianship (Missing Persons) Act 2017

- Introduced as a Private Members' Bill the Act received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017.
- The Ministry of Justice launched a public consultation on 19 December 2018 to seek views on the proposals for bringing the legislation into force.
- Specifically the new legislation will:
 - Set out rules of court and related practice directions for guardianship proceedings;
 - Detail the regulations relating to the registration and supervision of guardians by the Public Guardian, which will provide safeguards to both the missing person and the guardian;
 - Introduce fees payable to the court and to the Public Guardian including relevant remissions and exemptions; and
 - Publish a Code of Practice to provide guidance to guardians and persons making applications under the Act.
- The Presumption of Death Act 2013 let families take over the financial affairs of a missing person, but required families to declare a missing person dead.

[Fram of Shieltaig report and flyer published](#)

Our report on the fatal man overboard from the fishing vessel Fram of Shieltaig on 7 August 2018, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, the subsequent actions taken and recommendation made: [read more](#).

A [safety flyer to the fishing industry](#) summarising the accident and detailing the safety lessons learned, has also been produced.

Press enquiries

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292