

UK partnership launched to tackle agricultural challenges

The UK Government has today launched the UK Agriculture Partnership (UKAP), a new forum which will bring together stakeholders from across the UK to identify and improve collaborative working on shared issues facing the agricultural sector.

Discussions will explore topics such as on-farm water usage optimisation, the role of science and agri-tech in supporting food production, and solutions to reduce pollution and carbon emissions in the sector.

The first meeting of the UKAP will take place today (Thursday 27 January) at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, and will focus on water quality. Attendees will hear from a range of experts who will set out the challenges the UK is facing, and discuss solutions for improving water quality across the agriculture sector.

Sustainable agriculture has a vital role to play in helping to solve many of the most pressing issues the world faces such as biodiversity decline, meeting net zero targets and growing the food needed to feed an increasing population.

Universities, agricultural colleges, research institutes and agri-tech centres from across the UK are playing a central role in pioneering world-leading new approaches, and the UKAP will provide a platform for academics, experts, industry players and farming stakeholders to share scientific knowledge and best practice to learn from each other to identify innovative solutions to common problems.

Attendees for today's event have been selected to include key voices from across the UK, including those who will bring new perspectives to bear on topics. They include researchers, water body representatives, farming organisations, NGOs, as well as the Northern Ireland Executive Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Edwin Poots.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

I am launching the UK Agriculture Partnership to share UK-wide best practice, ideas and innovation – and to tackle some of the common challenges we face, from enriching our soils and reducing the environmental impacts of agriculture, to how best use technology and science to boost our food production ambitions.

We are bringing together farmers, farming unions, environmental groups, agricultural colleges and associations so that we can tackle practical challenges together.

Agriculture Minister for Northern Ireland Edwin Poots said:

I would like to thank SoS George Eustice, MP for inviting me to speak today. Our agriculture sector has shared issues across the United Kingdom so I hope that this forum provides a platform for collaboration and information sharing from all parts of the United Kingdom in the future.

Wales Office Minister, David TC Davies, said:

I am delighted to be a part of the first UK Agricultural Partnership forum launched today by the UK Government.

Agriculture is a vital sector in Wales and it will only be strengthened by collaborating with experts and partners across the UK, and making sure the voice of Welsh farmers is heard. This is a great opportunity to exchange ideas and expertise and forge new partnerships, ensuring that the issues faced by farmers are tackled together.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Malcolm Offord, said:

I welcome the launch of the UK Agriculture Partnership and look forward to it helping us lead the way in addressing challenges such as biodiversity decline, helping reach net zero targets and growing the food needed to feed the planet.

Agriculture is one of Scotland's great success stories. The UK Government wants to bring experts, researchers, farmers and policy makers from all parts of the UK together to improve collaborative working and find innovative solutions.