

Business Update - Farming Transformation Fund (FTF)

Information correct as at 09:00am on 17.12.2021

- A further theme of the Farming Transformation Fund will open in January 2022
- Grants will be available for improving productivity
- Grants available for on-farm robotics and slurry acidification equipment

Following the launch of the first theme of the Farming Transformation Fund (FTF), Water Management, in November the Government have issued details regarding the next theme, Improving Farm Productivity.

The Improving Farm Productivity grant will open in mid-January 2022 and will have an eight-week window where farmers can check their eligibility using an online checker. The Water Management grant eligibility checker is open currently, closing on 12 January 2022. It is likely that the third theme, Adding Value, will be available in the coming months. Farmers can apply for more than one theme of the FTF and can also access the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF).

This grant is available to farmers and horticulturalists in England only.

The scheme has three core priorities, scoring projects against the criteria of improving productivity, improving the environment, and introducing innovation. Applications need to demonstrate how they can improve efficiency and effectiveness of primary agricultural production whilst having a positive environmental impact resulting in a positive contribution to net zero and greenhouse gas reduction. Applications also need to show how they will improve nutrient and resource management that supports optimisation of field and livestock operations. They will also consider the adoption of automation in areas where access to labour is an issue.

What are the grants for?

The grant supports the purchase of capital items that improve farm productivity through:

- the use of robotic or autonomous equipment and systems to aid crop and livestock production
- the installation of slurry acidification equipment (improved nutrient management, reduced ammonia emissions)

The grant is quite specific on what it does and does not include with a full list of eligible costs [here](#), however they do state that other items may be considered under the scheme. All equipment under the scheme has to have a lifespan of five years or more to be eligible for funding.

Robotic equipment

Equipment available under the robotic scheme includes autonomous driverless tractors, voluntary robotic milking systems, robotic feeding systems, and advanced ventilation control units along with other equipment.

Given the core priority of improving the environmental impact robotic equipment utilising an electric or renewable energy source will be prioritised over those using fossil fuel during the application process.

A full list of eligible costs is available [here](#).

Slurry acidification equipment

Equipment available under the slurry acidification scheme needs to lower the pH value of slurry using acid treatment to stabilise the ammonia. For a system to be eligible the following four items need to be present:

- acid storage
- dosing equipment
- mixing tank
- pump

Installation and commissioning of the four items is eligible under the scheme as is the cost of installing pipes and pumps necessary for the system to operate. Items currently available under the FETF in relation to slurry management and application are eligible under this scheme provided they are purchased alongside the slurry acidification equipment.

Details are available [here](#), with details of additional items under the FETF [here](#).

Who can apply?

Only those farming in England are eligible. You must either be an owner-occupier or have a tenancy agreement that will be in place for five years following the investment.

Agricultural contractors with businesses registered in England are also eligible for the grant.

What funding is available?

A minimum grant of £35,000 is available, with a maximum grant of £500,000. Grants can cover up to 40% of the eligible costs of a project. The minimum total eligible cost of a project would therefore be £87,500.

You can apply for both a robotic project and a slurry project under this theme, but the combined total must not exceed £500,000.

How to apply

Applicants must use the online checker, once available, as an initial indication of the project fit. If the project is deemed eligible further online questions are answered followed by the submission of an expression of interest if the criteria are met. Full applications are to be made via RPA account. The eligibility checker is likely to be available from mid-January 2022 and will be open for eight weeks.

Projects meeting the scoring criteria will then be invited to submit a full application.

For further discussion or to help with any questions that you may have, please contact Consultant Support on consultantsupport@kiteconsulting.com or 01902 851007 / 07542 403225