

# Press release: Landmark Agriculture Bill to deliver a green Brexit

- UK Government sets out major post-Brexit policy to invest in the environment and take back control for farmers after almost 50 years under EU rules
- Bill will provide powers for Welsh Government Ministers to pursue their own reforms

The Agriculture Bill sets out how farmers and land managers will in future be paid for “public goods”, such as better air and water quality, improved soil health, higher animal welfare standards, public access to the countryside and measures to reduce flooding.

This will replace the current subsidy system of Direct Payments, which is ineffective and pays farmers based on the total amount of land farmed. These payments are skewed towards the largest landowners and are not linked to any specific public benefits. The top 10% of recipients currently receive almost 50% of total payments, while the bottom 20% receive just 2%.

In its place, a new Environmental Land Management system will start from next year. The government will work together with farmers to design, develop and trial the new approach. Under the new system, farmers and land managers who provide the greatest environmental benefits will secure the largest rewards, laying the foundations for a Green Brexit.

The Bill will also be underpinned by measures to increase productivity and invest in R&D.

For example, there will be funding available for farmers to come together to develop and get the research projects that they want and need, whether that be on soil health or sustainable livestock farming. This will lead to practical gains for farmers that help them become more profitable and reduce their environmental footprint.

The government will also be able to make payments during the seven year transition period for farmers to invest in new technologies and methods that boost productivity.

## **Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:**

The introduction of the Agriculture Bill is an historic moment as we leave the EU and move towards a brighter future for farming.

After nearly 50 years of being tied to burdensome and outdated EU rules, we have an opportunity to deliver a Green Brexit.

This Bill will allow us to reward farmers who protect our environment, leaving the countryside in a cleaner, greener and

healthier state for future generations.

Critically, we will also provide the smooth and gradual transition that farmers and land managers need to plan ahead.

Following close engagement with the devolved administrations the Bill will provide powers for Welsh Government Ministers to pursue their own reforms, and extend provisions to Northern Ireland, until primary legislation is taken through their own legislatures.

### **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

I am pleased that the UK Government has worked closely with the farming industry and Welsh Government to ensure powers in the Agriculture Bill have been extended to Wales. The Bill will provide new powers for Ministers in Cardiff Bay to ensure our farmers are provided with stability and certainty as we leave the EU.

It is vital that we are bold and ambitious to maximise the opportunities presented by Brexit, working alongside businesses and communities to ensure our rural economy continues to grow.

The Royal Welsh Show earlier this year provided an excellent opportunity to do this, and to reaffirm our commitment to get a good deal for the sector in our EU exit negotiations.

Farmers will be supported over a seven year transition period as we leave the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

For 2019, Direct Payments will be made on the same basis as now, subject to simplifications where possible. Direct Payments for 2020 will also be made in much the same way as now. Simplifications will be made as soon as possible, subject to the terms of the overall Brexit implementation period. There will then be an agricultural transition period in England between 2021 and 2027 as payments are gradually phased out.

During consultation, there was a widespread support for applying reductions to Direct Payments more widely. Most farmers will therefore see some reduction to their payments during the transition, although those who receive the highest payments will see bigger reductions initially. This will free up funds to invest in public goods.

To help new entrants get into the sector and give farmers flexibility to plan for the future, Direct Payments during the agricultural transition period up until 2027 will be "delinked" from the requirement to farm the land.

These payments, which may be calculated according to money received in previous years, can be used by farmers to invest in their business, diversify their activities or else retire from farming and give way for new people to enter.

The Bill also sets out how the government will strengthen transparency in the supply chain to help farmers get a better deal in the marketplace.

By collecting data from across the supply chain, the government will help food producers strengthen their negotiating position at the farm gate and seek a fairer return.

The introduction of the Agriculture Bill now means that all the necessary measures will be in place for the start of the agricultural transition in 2021, delivering a smooth transition to the new domestic policy.

**ENDS**

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## [News story: Corridor announced to unlock full potential of England's economic heartland](#)

A plan to link together fast-growing technology hotspots took a further step closer to fruition today (12 September 2018) as Roads Minister Jesse Norman [announced the chosen central corridor for the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway](#).

After detailed scrutiny and review by Highways England, of the 3 options A, B and C, Corridor B was judged to offer greater benefits to the region – outperforming the other options by providing better links to jobs, education, leisure and health services.

The expressway, with options to pass either west or east of Oxford, is also expected to take up to 40 minutes off the journey between the A34 south of Oxford and the M1.

Building the new link close to the east/west rail link will also offer more options for the commercial development of up to 1 million new homes, in line with proposals by the National Infrastructure Commission, and encourage more people to travel by train rather than by cars.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

The government is taking the big decisions on infrastructure, working to maximise growth and productivity across the UK.

England's economic heartland, as it has been called, already plays a crucial role in powering the UK's growth, science and innovation, but there is no single route to connect Oxford and Cambridge.

This expressway will enhance both transport connectivity and growth across the region for the benefit of the UK as a whole.

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick, said:

The Oxford to Cambridge arc is one of the greatest opportunities for economic growth in Europe. We want to realise that potential by investing in the new infrastructure the area needs and the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway is an important part of our plan.

The Expressway will provide a link between 2 of the country's intellectual powerhouses and open up vital jobs, skills and housing opportunities to transform the region's economy.

We are investing record amounts in the UK's infrastructure, including funding the largest road-building programme since the 1970s.

A full public consultation will be held next year, in which residents and businesses in and around the corridor will have their say on more detailed designs for the route.

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## **[News story: Future electric vehicles: new Faraday battery challenge funding](#)**

A £25 million funding competition will offer grants to innovative businesses with projects to develop batteries for future electric vehicles.

Funding is provided by [UK Research and Innovation](#) and delivered by Innovate UK.

### **A growing demand and global market**

There is growing global demand for fully electric and zero emission vehicles, with the market estimated to be worth £5 billion in the UK and £50 billion in Europe by 2025.

The [Faraday battery challenge](#) is a £246 million investment to bring forward the next generation of electric vehicles. These will be powered by high-performance batteries that are cost-effective, lightweight, durable and safe, and can be recycled.

Clean tech start up, [Brill Power](#) is leading a project to receive funding

under a previous Faraday battery challenge competition. Its battery control and management technology could extend the life of lithium-ion batteries by 60%, managing individual cells in a battery pack and allowing these to be replaced as needed.

### [ISCF winners. Faraday Battery Challenge – Brill Power](#)

It is part of the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#), which brings together the research base and businesses to tackle the biggest industrial and societal challenges.

This latest competition follows an announcement by the Prime Minister, Theresa May of an additional £106 million package for research and development in cleaner battery, vehicle and refuelling technology.

## **Scale up development and build the supply chain**

This competition is to support business-led research and development to improve batteries for automotive applications.

There are 2 opportunities to apply, depending on the stage of your project, which are:

- up to £23 million for industrial research and development
- up to £2 million for feasibility studies

In both opportunities projects should aim to:

- make it easier to scale up battery production and use
- build the UK supply chain

Projects should address technical and commercial challenges, including:

- reducing costs at the cell and pack level, and minimising manufacturing costs
- increasing the energy density per cell
- increasing the power density per pack
- eliminating thermal runaway risks to enhance safety
- lengthening the cell and pack life in first-life applications
- broadening the temperature ranges that a pack can efficiently operate at
- creating new models to predict range and battery health
- improving recyclability, including design, reuse and recycling, towards 95% pack recyclability

Ideas that bring new investment and businesses to the UK and have the potential to increase productivity, competitiveness and growth are particularly encouraged.

## **Industrial research and development competition**

## information

- the competition opens on 17 September 2018 and the deadline for applications is midday on 12 December 2018
- to lead a project you must be a UK-based business or research and technology organisation. You can collaborate with other businesses, academic organisations, charities, public sector or research and technology organisations
- projects can have total costs of between £500,000 and £15 million and last between 3 and 18 months
- businesses could get up to 70% of their eligible project costs
- if your application meets a quality threshold you will be invited to an interview panel between 4 to 12 February
- you can register to attend one of the briefing events taking place during September 2018 to find out more about the competition, how to make an application and meet potential partners

## Feasibility studies competition information

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## [News story: Route announced to unlock full potential of England's economic heartland](#)

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# Statement to Parliament: Oxford to Cambridge Expressway: road scheme update

England's road network is a huge national asset and a cornerstone of our present and future economic prosperity. Across the country the government is investing in this network, in order to open up new opportunities, improve productivity and connect people and businesses.

As part of this, after considerable consultation and review, the government is announcing today (12 September 2018) the preferred corridor for the new Oxford-Cambridge Expressway, accepting the recommendations of Highways England.

The expressway, which fills a major gap in the national road network, will work together with the proposed East West Rail link to revolutionise east-west connectivity. In so doing, it will help unlock the commercial development of up to one million new homes.

The expressway is projected to take up to 40 minutes off the journey between the A34 south of Oxford and the M1, so that hundreds of thousands of people will be brought within reach of high quality jobs in centres of rapid growth such as Oxford Science Park. The preferred corridor identified today runs alongside the planned route of East West Rail, so that consumers have a variety of road and rail travel options.

This decision determines the broad area within which the road will be developed: the process of designing a specific route will now get under way, involving extensive further consultation with local people to find the best available options. Members of the public will be able to comment on the full set of front-running designs in a public consultation next year, and the road is on schedule to be open to traffic by 2030.

The choice of this corridor means that the government has ruled out construction in the area of the Otmoor nature reserve, underlining its desire to protect the natural environment.

The government also recognises that no one corridor can support every proposed development across the area. It is therefore commissioning England's economic heartland to carry out a study of how to provide better connectivity across the wider area, so that places outside of the preferred corridor enjoy the benefits of growth as far as possible.

Between 2015 and 2021 the government is investing £15 billion to improve the UK's busiest roads. Already, it has opened the first all-motorway link from Newcastle to London; and after 45 years without change the Department for Transport is working with [Transport for the North](#) to develop 3 upgrades to capacity across the Pennines.

The government is also spending billions to transform connectivity in the south west with the dualling of the A303 and A30, and to create better access to and from our ports and airports through projects such as the Lower Thames Crossing and upgrade of the A14 link between the Midlands and Felixstowe.

The common theme linking all these projects is the need to create and upgrade the UK's infrastructure. So too it is here with the new Oxford-Cambridge expressway.