

## News story: Environment Secretary opens £40 million fund to boost farm productivity

Farmers will get a £40 million productivity boost today as the Environment Secretary Michael Gove announces the opening of a new grants scheme for investment in cutting edge technology and new equipment.

Speaking at the 2017 World Dairy Summit in Belfast, the Secretary of State will invite farmers and food processors to apply for grants under the Countryside Productivity scheme.

Under the scheme, grants are available to help livestock, dairy, arable and horticultural farmers improve farm productivity through investing in new technology, such as robotics, to reduce cost or improve product quality. The funding can be used on diverse investments, from robotic milking machines to green technology.

The scheme also offers funds for farmers and food processors to invest in new equipment and machinery to improve the processing of milk, meat and fruit.

Speaking ahead of the summit, Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Farmers truly are the backbone of our rural economy and as the original friends of the earth, we want to support them to grow more, sell more and export more great British produce – all while doing good for our environment.

This new funding is a wonderful opportunity for our farmers and food processors to invest in the technology they need to boost productivity, competition and, of course, sustainability as a key factor in future proofing our world leading food and farming industry.

The Countryside Productivity scheme is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and this latest announcement is the second phase of the [Large Grants scheme](#) announced in July 2017.

The first phase of the scheme included a £6 million fund for Improving Forestry Productivity and a £14 million scheme for Water Resource Management.

The Government also recently announced a £30 million [Rural Broadband Infrastructure grant](#) and a new [Bovine TB Advisory Service](#) supported by more than £1 million of RDPE funding.