Powering the farms of the future with £50 million tech investment

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A dozen breakthrough technologies are set to reach farms faster, boosting productivity and sustainability.

Cutting-edge technologies from robotics to AI will be fast-tracked into practical tools for farmers, backed by around £50 million of public and private investment, Farming Minister Dame Angela Eagle announced today.

The funding will deliver up to 12 innovative tools to farms, helping farmers produce more while cutting labour, energy and fertiliser use, backed by £8 million in government funding and £40 million in private investment.

Several of the technologies focus on delivering practical, nature-based solutions for farmers. FA Bio’s project is developing a “living” biopesticide that uses beneficial fungi to protect wheat and oilseed rape from destructive pests like aphids and cabbage stem flea beetle. Applied at planting, it could provide season-long protection while reducing the need for repeated chemical spraying.

The investment also backs innovations to boost the resilience of trees and landscapes. Rhizocore is identifying the most effective native fungi to help trees establish and thrive, improving survival rates in forestry and agroforestry while accelerating carbon capture and supporting woodland recovery.

Farming Minister Dame Angela Eagle said:

> Farmers know the right tools can make all the difference.
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> This investment is about getting practical, proven technology into their hands faster – whether that’s improving animal health, cutting costs or making day-to-day jobs easier.
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> By backing innovation with both public and private funding, we’re supporting farm businesses to boost productivity, strengthen resilience and help secure the future of British agriculture.

Head of Agrifood at Innovate UK, Chris Danks, said:

> The success of this latest round shows how Investor Partnerships help high-potential UK businesses grow and scale by combining public grant funding with private investment, turning great ideas into commercial success.
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> By launching a new round, we are continuing to back innovation that gives farmers

> access to practical, scalable technologies that improve productivity, resilience and sustainability, while also supporting long-term economic growth.
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> This approach accelerates commercialisation, builds investable businesses, and helps crowd in private finance for the benefit of the UK economy.

On top of this funding, and speaking at the Agricultural Engineers Association Conference, the Minister also confirmed a further £5 million Government springboard funding round for 2026 to 2027, seeking to drive more private investment into Agri-Tech growth.

Opening this spring, it will support the next generation of high-potential agri-tech businesses to scale up and deliver for farmers, helping to build a more profitable, productive, resilient and sustainable farming sector.

Delivered through the Government's Farming Innovation Programme in partnership with Innovate UK, the Investor Partnerships initiative uses public funding to co-invest alongside private backers, helping to unlock greater overall investment in agri-tech businesses.

Notes to editors

- Projects are funded through the Farming Innovation Programme, Defra's flagship innovation scheme, delivered by Innovate UK as part of UK Research and Innovation.

- This is a blended finance initiative; projects must secure private investment as a condition of receiving Defra funding

Project quotes

Rhizocore founder and CEO, Dr Toby Parkes, said:

> The investor partnership grant will accelerate our data collection on the performance of different fungi in different soil environments.
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> This data will enable us to improve our products by selecting the right fungi for our customers' sites, resulting in more trees surviving and growing faster, increasing the ROI we return to our customers and the benefit our products provide to the environment.

CEO and Co-Founder of Fa Bio, Dr Angela de Manzanos, said:

> The Investor Partnerships programme enables us to fast-track a biological alternative to chemical insecticides for two of the UK's most important crops.

By aligning public funding with private investment, it supports the commercialisation of biological innovation that reduce reliance on synthetic inputs, protect yields, and improve farm sustainability.

This approach will strengthen UK food security while building a competitive, innovation-led agri-tech sector.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/powering-the-farms-of-the-future-with-50-million-tech-investment