



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Supporting farmers ahead of the coming growing season



On 30 March, Defra announced a number of steps to support farmers ahead of the growing season. With agricultural commodities closely linked to global gas prices, farmers are facing rising costs for inputs including manufactured fertiliser.

Firstly, the planned changes to the use of [urea fertiliser](#) will be delayed by at least a year, helping farmers manage costs and giving them more time to adapt to pressures on the supply of ammonium nitrate fertilisers.

Defra is also encouraging farmers to make use of organic fertilisers – revised and improved statutory guidance has been published on how to manage the use of slurry and other farmyard manure during autumn and

winter. [This guidance](#) will provide more clarity and has been developed in partnership with farmers and farming bodies.

Farmers will be further supported by new slurry storage grants introduced this year, helping the industry meet requirements for the [Farming Rules for Water](#) and reducing dependence on artificial fertilisers, by storing organic nutrients until needed or for onward processing.

Defra has also published further details of the early rollout of [Sustainable Farming Incentive](#). The scheme will help farmers move towards more sustainable farming practices over time; supporting farmers to build the health and fertility of their soil, and to reduce soil erosion which are essential for food production, helping to bolster food security and the longer-term resilience of the sector.

Defra is also opening more farming grants, worth more than £20m. The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund has recently been almost trebled to over £48 million, and last October the Government launched the [Farming Innovation Programme](#) to help farmers and growers boost R&D. A further £20.5 million of these [R&D grants](#) has been announced which will help fund projects aimed at increasing productivity.

Projects could include tackling a crop pest or disease that is affecting productivity or a business may work in partnership with researchers to breed new crop species which are more resilient to a changing climate.
