



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture

A MESSAGE FROM GEORGE FREEMAN MP

Dear colleague

Today marks the publication of the UK Agricultural Technologies Strategy, a key part of the Government's commitment to a progressive Industrial Strategy to support key sectors with the potential to drive long-term growth in the UK economy.

The Strategy is available on-line at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-agricultural-technologies-strategy>

I am also delighted to announce that the All-Party Group will host the Parliamentary launch of the Agri-Tech Strategy at Westminster on the afternoon of Tuesday 10 September, with Defra Science Minister Lord de Mauley as guest speaker alongside a member of the new Agri-Tech Leadership Council. A more detailed invitation will be sent out in due course but in the meantime please do save the date in your diary.

The emerging global challenges of population growth, climate change and sustainable development present key opportunities for the UK to exploit its world-class strengths in farming, food production and agricultural research to play a leadership role in this key economic sector.

The Agri-Tech Strategy seeks to transform the way Government works with industry and the scientific community to become a world leader in agricultural technology, innovation, productivity and sustainability.

Overseen by the Agri-Tech Leadership Council, the Strategy sets out a framework for industry-led implementation and co-investment, with a clear focus on:

- Identifying the right Government research priorities;
- Developing and investing in the right skills;
- Establishing new funding mechanisms for translational research and business start-ups;
- Regulatory barriers to innovation and accessibility of EU funding;
- Using the UK's aid and trade missions to unlock new opportunities in emerging markets and international development.

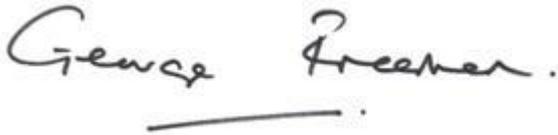
On top of the £450m currently spent on agricultural R&D, the Government has secured new money to help accelerate the development and uptake of innovation in the UK agri-tech sector, including £90m investment in a network of Centres for Agricultural Innovation, and £70m in an Agri-Tech Catalyst fund to improve the translation of research into practice.

The Strategy also announces the Government's plans to establish a new Centre for Agricultural Informatics and Sustainability Metrics, providing a new resource to harness the power of big data to benchmark, monitor and drive improvements in sustainable efficient production within the UK farming and food supply chain. The significance of this rapidly advancing area has been a recurring theme at All-Party Group meetings over the past year, and presents an exciting opportunity for the UK to demonstrate genuine global leadership.

Taken together, the Agri-Tech Strategy provides the platform for the UK to play a leading role in the next agricultural revolution. It places our food and farming industries at the heart of the UK's economic growth agenda, and sets a framework to accelerate and exploit the translation of cutting-edge science into farm-level innovation in the UK and overseas.

I am grateful to Members and Stakeholders of the All-Party Group who have played a key role in helping to shape and set the agenda for this major initiative.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Freeman." The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

George Freeman MP
Chairman
APPG Science & Technology in Agriculture