



All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science and Technology in Agriculture

George Freeman MP hails £250m bio-economy boost

Mid-Norfolk MP George Freeman has hailed today's announcement of £250m in new funding for agriculture and biosciences research by Science Minister David Willetts as *'the launch pad of a new era of UK leadership in the Bio-economy Revolution sweeping the globe'*.

As life sciences adviser to David Willetts and chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Science & Technology in Agriculture, George Freeman has been instrumental in raising the profile of the UK agri-science sector within Government and the media since his election to Parliament two years ago.

Describing the new funding boost as marking a historic shift in the Government's recognition of the importance of the UK agricultural science sector, Mr Freeman also called for a renewed debate about the potential of GM crop science to help deliver sustainable agriculture solutions, and to unlock the full potential of the UK agricultural science base in support of the world's food needs.

Speaking this morning on BBC *Farming Today*, George Freeman spoke out in support of the GM wheat research taking place at Rothamsted, and criticised anti-GM campaigners for seeking to destroy access to the very evidence needed to make informed decisions on the technology. To listen again click [here](#).

To read George Freeman's Innovation Blog, click [here](#)

UK to lead new Green Revolution with £250m Government funding for UK Bio-economy

George Freeman MP, Thursday 24 May 2012

Today's announcement of £250m of new funding for the UK Bio-economy is a historic shift in the development of a new Industrial Policy for Science and Innovation and paves way for the UK to lead a new Green Revolution in crop science.

Conservative MP George Freeman, newly elected after a 15 year career in bioscience, and appointed last year by the Prime Minister as Life Science Adviser to the Government today hailed the announcement by Rt. Hon. David Willetts MP, Minister for Universities and Science, of £250m new

funding for the bio-economy as the launch pad of a new era of UK leadership in the 'Bio-economy Revolution' sweeping the globe.

George said, "We face an urgent challenge of global sustainable development. Explosive growth of population and emerging economies in the developing world creates urgent problems of food security, public health and clean energy. As the recent Foresight Report warned, we need to double global food production by 2050 with half the land, water and energy. This is driving a massive demand for new technologies in the 3 key 'life sciences' of Biomedicine, Cleantech and Agri-science. Breakthroughs in genetics, synthetic and systems biology and plant breeding techniques are driving a new Green Revolution in which a new generation of crops will allow us to feed the world. The UK's world leading research base in biomedicine is well known, but for too long we have neglected our world-beating Agricultural Research.

"Breakthroughs in GM crop science are fundamental to this Green Revolution, and today's announcement of major new funding for the UK Agri-science base marks a historic shift in the Governments recognition of the importance of the UK Agricultural Science sector.

"We need a new debate about the potential of GM crop science to help low carbon, low pesticide and low impact agriculture in the developing world, and how we can unlock the full value of the UK Ag Science base in support of the world's food needs, whilst ensuring choice for UK consumers in our home market."

ENDS

Funding Totals

The institutes being funded and the total* amounts allocated are:
Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences, Aberystwyth University (IBERS) - £13M

The Genome Analysis Centre (TGAC), Norwich - £19M

The Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh - £23M

Institute for Animal Health (IAH), Pirbright - £38M

Institute of Food Research (IFR), Norwich - £29M

Babraham Institute, Cambridge - £37M

John Innes Centre (JIC), Norwich - £42M

Rothamsted Research, Harpenden - £41M

£7M has also been allocated for university grants linked to these institutes.

*Figures have been rounded to the nearest million.

About George

Conservative MP George Freeman, newly elected after a 15 year career in bioscience, was appointed last year by the Prime Minister and David Willetts as Life Science Adviser to the Government, in which role he has been closely involved in the development of the Government's Life Science strategy announced by the PM in December 2011.

Chairman of the All Party Group on Agricultural Science and PPS to the Minister for Climate Change he is a passionate advocate of the importance of the UK science base in driving an Innovation economy.

A founder of the 2020 Group of Conservative MPs, he is an active advocate of a more activist industrial policy for an innovation-led recovery.