



Rural and Farming Network

October 2014

News from Defra

- Elizabeth Truss, new SoS
 - Ambition
 - Flooding resilliance a priority
 - Champion for countryside and rural services

News from Defra

- Growth Board
 - ERDF, ESF & EAFRD – partnership documents EU sign off
 - Broadband and flood defence should now be included
 - Operational plans now being developed
 - Business incubators not favoured
 - Fisheries Fund – draft operational plan – feedback identifies gaps
 - ERDF funding not available until sept/dec 2015

Issues from the floor

- Businesses will need signposting to know where to go
- Encouragement for big and small schemes, but what about market towns?
- Gaps in LEADER coverage
- Who can bid for and manage flood defence funding?

RFN Review

- RFN active for 2½ years
- Seeking views from members
 - Focus on farming and food
 - Communication
- Suzanne will feedback on behalf of ERP

George Eustice

- Activity following wet winter
- CAP – greening policy
- Environmental Land Management Scheme more targeted than HLS
- RDP development
 - LEADER
 - LEPs / growth programme
 - Farm and forestry competitiveness
- Progress on broadband and mobile

Issues from the floor

- Delay in SUDS legislation
- Can we have a new Rural White Paper? (Rural Chapters in Manifestos)
- LEADER redundancy issues
- TB
- Clarity regarding changes to SP scheme
- Confusion about broadband improvements / timing
- Flooding
- Agri-tech strategy
- Impact of school holiday restrictions on rural tourism
- Shale gas
- 4G rollout

Agri-Tech Strategy

- Strategy launched July 2013
 - *BIS, Defra and Dept for International Development*
- £70million catalyst fund
 - 1st round – 26 projects
 - 2nd round
 - 3rd round – open to bids
- Arable farming most pro-active
- Agri-tech is not just about GM!
 - Bovine mastitis, aquaponics, etc

Agri-Tech Strategy

- £90million for centres of agricultural innovation
 - Informatics centre, consortium
- Lessons from abroad
 - Netherlands and New Zealand
- Information to be disseminated in January

RDP Programme Development

- Hoping EC will approve Partnership agreement by Nov
- Hoping to include:
 - Flood risk
 - Broadband
 - Environmental protection
- RDP Programme document submitted 25 June
 - Hoping for approval by end of December
 - £3.1bn environment schemes
 - £171m LEPs
 - £141m farming
 - £138m LEADER

RDP Programme Development

- Medium and SME support £96m
- Broadband and renewables £37m
- Tourism £20m
- Training and skills £24m

- Other funding should be used before RDP – RDP can be used as top-up funding

RDP Programme Development

- Role of RFN and its members:
 - RFN rep on RDP monitoring committee (Defra)
 - RFN growth rep on RDP Structural Programme Monitoring Committee (DCLG)
 - Rural interests rep, overseeing delivery in each area, on local growth programme committee (local LEPs)
 - *Defra is on sub-committees as the managing authority and not representing rural interests*