

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

GRAB TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION OPPORTUNITIES NOW, FARMERS URGED



Pinpoint accuracy in farming will become essential as emphasis grows on environmental protections and benefits and farmers are being urged to seek ways to fund what is likely to be expensive kit.

“Agriculture has undergone many changes over the last three centuries and it doesn’t look as if further massive change will be avoided as farming as the industry faces up to its future under new political thinking,” believes Andrew Bays, of BCM Rural Property Specialists in Winchester.

“At the moment, access to essential technology is prohibitively expensive for all except those who farm on the largest scale but as support for growing crops diminishes and funding turns instead to environmental gains, no matter what the outcome of Brexit, even small scale farmers will need to tackle how they manage their land to be more efficient.

“Luckily, advances in satellite, drone, and automated farming are driving down costs although they still threaten to overwhelm those who are not prepared.

“In the long term, applying chemicals via systems that have mapped the needs of the land down to the nearest meter will not be a luxury for large estates but a necessity for every farm not only to reduce the use of expensive pesticides and growth promoters but also to ensure accurate records are kept for official examination.

“It is essential that these efficiencies are applied as soon as possible but with so much uncertainty over future grant aid from central Government - applications for the last round closed in May 2018 and decisions from Defra are still awaited - it makes sense to explore the opportunities in the private funding sector but to do this requires a detailed business plan that underlines both the need for the investment and the payback that will make financing viable.

“As rural land agents of long standing, with many of the firm’s partners also active farmers themselves, BCM can provide farm business management reviews that suggest how technology could help drive efficiency and savings to support applications where there would be proven benefit. An alternative to these potentially expensive processes might be in contract farming arrangements, an area where we have particular expertise through our many farm reviews. It needs a detached sense of judgment to come to the best decision.



“Future Government grants may be a potential route to help fund the technology upgrades. But in a number of cases they only partially pay for schemes and are likely to be delivered via a competitive process that sees many applications fail, risking delaying improvements at a time when subsidy withdrawal makes them essential. It may be wise to therefore plough ahead while interest rates are low and gain the advantage over those who wait for grant aid that might never arrive.”

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