

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

FARMERS URGED TO GRASP £35M OPPORTUNITY



Farmers are being urged to take advantage of a £35 million grant scheme that will help develop opportunities to find new income streams.

Up to £750,000 is available for food processing enterprises, with a maximum of £180,000 for all other rural businesses, through EU-funded Growth Programme which the Government re-opened on November 4th.

“Farmers face a time of real uncertainty, not just with Brexit but with the whole new approach to how the industry should receive support from the State,” says Andrew Bays, of BCM Rural Property Specialists based in

Winchester.

“Diversification is a surefire way to increase income, especially where value can be added to existing farm outputs through processing to create products than can be sold at a premium rather than just supplying raw materials for others to do the same. Other ideas could involve tourism ventures that make better use of buildings or areas of a farm with recreational potential.

“Expressions of interest are being invited by farms minister George Eustice and there’s a cut-off date of February 16th, 2020, after which schemes deemed eligible will be invited to submit a full application.

“Here at BCM we have a wide experience of supporting diversification with a team member who spent several months in New Zealand studying how farmers there coped when state subsidies were withdrawn and we have also worked with clients to develop projects such as farm shops, cafes, milk processing plants, glamping pods, and major tourist attractions supported by our complementary BCM teams in planning and architecture.

“New income streams mean keeping more of the farm’s earnings within the business and it doesn’t have to be a grand plan to win support; the minimum grant has been reduced from £35,000 to £20,000.

“What is essential is to design a scheme that has quality to back it up – real planning at the initial stage is critical to win initial eligibility and this detail can then be utilised to support a scheme that is invited to participate in the next stage. Come up with a good scheme and the effort will not be wasted.

“We are ready to assist farmers who think they may have a scheme or who want an outsider to review their business and advise where it can be developed.”





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