



## THE NEED FOR COMMERCIAL ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

*In this edition, we welcome Duncan Botting, outgoing chair of the Energy Council, to share his reflections on the development of the Local Area Energy Plan addressing the challenges of energy cost and sustainability in the food chain and the food sector.*

The exponential rise in food prices at a faster rate than we have seen in decades is clear to consumers, producers and the food industry alike, but the reasons remain complex. It is now just over a year since the start of the war in Ukraine, leading to major disruptions in the global energy and food markets, with energy cost pressures now being felt acutely across food retail prices.

In their consumer price inflation [report](#) for March 2023, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that the Consumer Prices Index rose by 8.9% in the 12 months to March 2023, slightly down from 9.2% in February. Despite an improved headline rate, ONS reported that the slowing in the headline rate was partially offset by an upward effect from food and non-alcoholic beverages, where prices rose by 19.2% in the year to March 2023, resulting in the annual rate for this category in March 2023 being the highest seen for over 45 years.

**Continued...**



## SECTOR PROGRESS & HIGHLIGHTS

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# THE NEED FOR COMMERCIAL ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

The evidence suggests that food price inflation is likely to peak later than mainstream inflation, later this summer. This is because of the delay between input cost rises and the cost of food on the shelf - and critically because food production costs are directly connected to energy costs. The fall in energy costs we have seen in the last six months should therefore now start to help reduce food cost rises, but of course this does not mean that energy costs concerns will end.

Every tractor, food production line and food distribution vehicle is a major energy user. Additionally, most fertilisers are produced using large amounts of energy, with nitrogen fertiliser prices increasing by over 400% at their highest peak last year, but now thankfully falling back as energy costs moderate. The same is true for plastics used in food packaging, as well as the cost of the cool chain which is essential to retain maximum food freshness. Carbon dioxide is not only needed to be sequestered but also, we are short of food and drink grade level CO2 as was proved when the only company producing 80% stopped production due to energy costs in 2022.

As a result, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Energy Council has been looking in detail at the challenges of energy cost and sustainability in the food chain and the food sector has been the focus of this work on a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). As we near the end of the first phase of this work, much more needs to be done to understand how we measure energy use and efficiency across the food chain, and more importantly, how we embrace new sustainable energy sources.

But our Local Area Energy Plan is not just about identifying problems. It is vital that we work with the food industry to accelerate the take-up of energy solutions which are commercially and environmentally sustainable. After a decade in which most businesses were focused on more pressing issues, energy costs were relatively stable and represented a significantly lower percentage of turnover. Since then, last year's cost rises have been shocking. However, there are still genuine reasons to remain optimistic, as you will see demonstrated throughout this newsletter, with some of our leading businesses now investing heavily in energy efficiency.

Major potato processor Branston, which has been working with us on the LAEP, has recently committed to be a Net Zero business by 2030 and is investing in AD, solar power and actions to reduce and reuse waste to optimise production.

And in early April, along with colleagues from the university and the UK Food Valley team, I visited Magnavale's new cold store complex at Easton, near Grantham. This development which will add over 100,000 additional pallet spaces, is prioritising energy efficiency and is on track to deliver world-class leading sustainability.

These projects show that it is possible with investment and a targeted innovation, to help manage food chain energy costs and to deliver a low-carbon food chain at the same time.

***Continued...***

# THE NEED FOR COMMERCIAL ENERGY SUSTAINABILITY

## *Continued...*

As I pass over the baton of chairmanship of the LEP Energy Council to Shaun Povey, I will be urging everyone in the food chain to continue to work with the UK Food Valley team and Energy Council to deliver a more commercially viable and sustainable energy supply to underpin food production.

We now need to focus on both investing more in energy supply and harnessing innovation to deliver new, more efficient energy systems. The Greater Lincolnshire LEP is very keen to bring different sectors of our economy together and would welcome input from anyone who thinks that they can help deliver this agenda to merge development and expertise across the food and energy sectors.

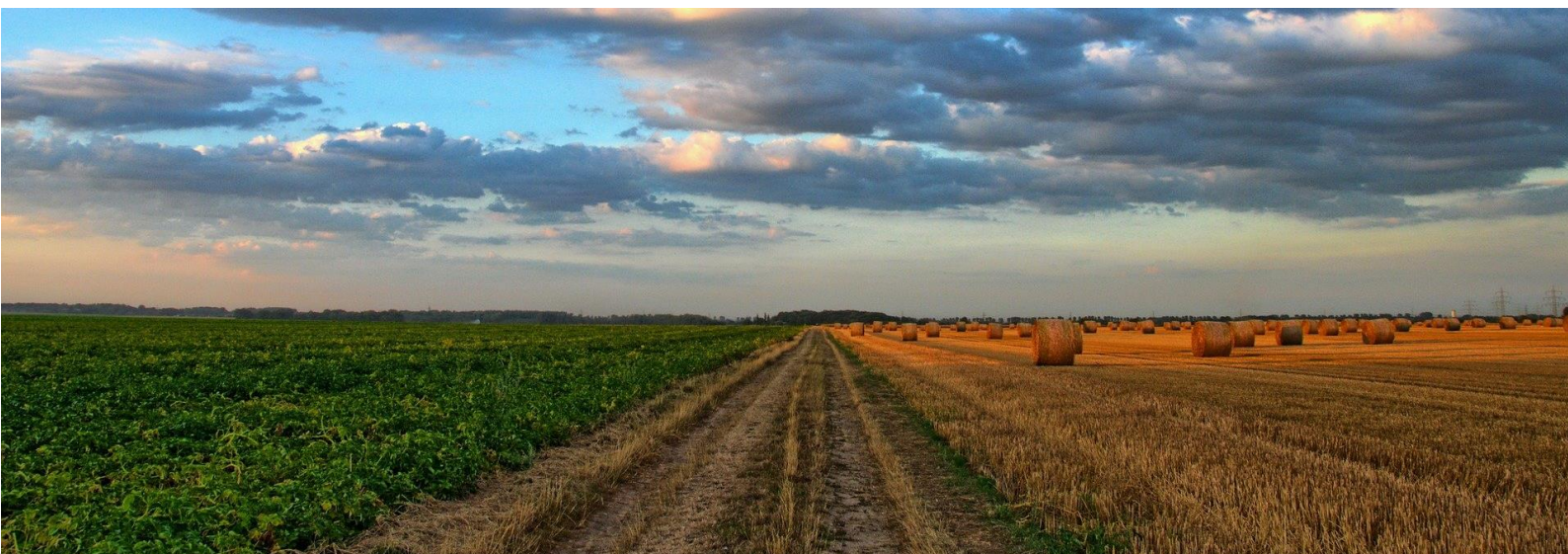
Thank you.

**Duncan Botting**

**Chair, Greater Lincolnshire LEP Energy Council**

**University of Lincoln**

*The UK Food Valley, Greater Lincolnshire LEP, and Energy Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Duncan Botting, outgoing Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP Energy Council, for his incredible efforts and progress in this sector, and for spearheading the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) alongside university colleagues Shweta Kamat, Chris Bingham, and Ibrahim Albayati, for their energy and expertise across sectors to drive sustainability in the food chain and the food sector.*



## NEWS

### PEEL PORTS ACQUIRES THE HES HUMBER BULK TERMINAL

On 20<sup>th</sup> March Peel Ports announced that it has acquired the HES Bulk Terminal on the Humber. Peel Ports bought the business from specialist bulk terminals operator HES International (headquartered in Rotterdam), to expand its presence to the UK's east coast. It now operates across eight locations in the UK and Ireland: Liverpool, Heysham, Manchester Ship Canal, London Medway, Clydeport, Great Yarmouth and a container terminal in Dublin complete its portfolio.

The new bulk terminal, on the South Bank of the Humber Estuary, will be operated by Peel Ports Logistics, a division of Peel Ports Group specialised in one-stop-shop logistics solutions. The acquisition is Peel Ports Logistics' third UK site and its first on the east coast. The division is led by Managing Director Sebastian Gardiner.

The terminal has an open storage capacity of 6,200m<sup>2</sup> and a covered storage facility of 275,000 m<sup>3</sup>. With an automated conveyor-fed import and export system, the terminal delivers safe and efficient handling and storage of a variety of dry bulk products, including agricultural. Bulk customers will be able to benefit from the expertise, experience and streamlined operations with the expansion of Peel Ports Logistics' one-stop-shop solutions to the region.

The HES Humber Bulk Terminal currently employs 29 people, all of whom will be retained as part of the acquisition.

Claudio Veritiero, CEO of Peel Ports Group, said: "The acquisition of HES Humber Bulk Terminal is an important investment for Peel Ports Group, expanding our presence into the East of England and bringing Peel Ports Logistics' one-stop-shop service to the east coast.

"The modern facilities at HES Humber Bulk Terminal guarantee fast and efficient loading and unloading of vessels and trucks, while the excellent water and road connections enable quick and smooth operations. This, combined with trans-shipment and extensive storage capabilities, will make the site a key addition to Peel Ports Logistics, helping us to deliver efficient and cost-effective port services for our customers."

For further information please visit: [Peel Ports expands into East Coast with acquisition of HES Humber Bulk Terminal](#)



## NEWS

### CARBON REDUCTION AT BRANSTON LTD

Branston Ltd is a large potato packer and processor based near Lincoln with additional packhouses near Perth and Taunton. It employs over 900 people and supplies large retailers, wholesalers and food producers across the UK with fresh and prepared potatoes and sweet potatoes.

Washing, grading and further processing over 300,000 tonnes of potatoes every year means a considerable amount of electricity usage and so Branston has always been an early adopter of sustainable investments that can reduce energy consumption. Branston has recently committed to be a Net Zero business by 2030.



Read the full story [here](#).

### SEAFOOD ALLIANCE BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH THE UK SEAFOOD DECARBONISATION INITIATIVE

Seafood Grimsby & Humber Alliance held its inaugural seafood decarbonisation workshop in London on Tuesday 18th April. Hosted by The Fishmongers' Company, the workshop was attended by the UK's major retailers, food service providers and seafood processors.

Facilitated by The Fishmongers' Company Court Member and carbon industry specialist Dr Henrietta Boyd, the workshop focused on decarbonisation of the global supply chain from catch to the UK's first point of landing and delivery.

The invited guests heard from major seafood processors including Young's Seafood, owned by Sofina Foods, along with Chessington and Grimsby based processor New England Seafoods, about the initiative to identify and measure decarbonisation actions that all UK retailers and food service organisations can collaborate with.



Read the full story [here](#).

## NEWS

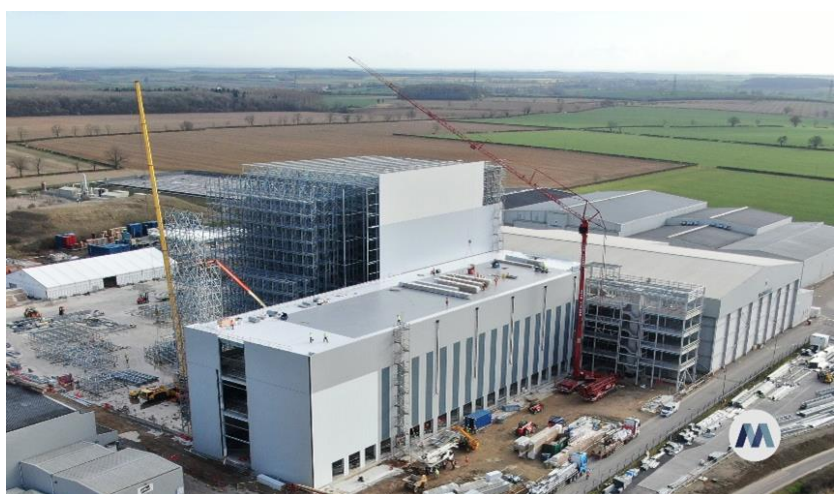
# MAGNAVALE DEVELOPS NEW COLD STORE AT EASTON

Magnavale, one of the UK's leading providers of temperature-controlled storage and value-added services to the food sector, is currently constructing what will be the Europe's most efficient cold storage facility in Easton, Grantham. The fully automated facility will be a game-changer for the cold storage sector, operating entirely on renewable energy, making it one of the most sustainable cold stores in the world.

With a capacity of 101,000 pallets, the Magnavale Easton development will play a crucial role in the supply chains of many food manufacturers and distributors across the UK, Europe, and overseas. Magnavale is one of a handful of cold storage operators in the UK with a forward-thinking approach to creating innovative cold storage solutions that aim to reduce cost, risk and complexity within their partners' cold chains while also reducing carbon emissions and improving operational efficiencies.

The new development in Easton, currently making steady progress, will feature state-of-the-art automation and the best-in-class security and safety systems. Since breaking ground in September 2022, Magnavale is pleased with the progress of construction, with several aspects of the development already complete including the concrete slab, the low bay cladding and the steelwork for the staircase and new office block.

Magnavale's Easton development, which is expected to be complete in Q2 2024, will have a significant impact on Lincolnshire's economy, inviting further investment into the region and creating jobs. Furthermore, Magnavale is actively investing into its other existing facilities in Chesterfield, Scunthorpe, and Warrington, with the mission to drive efficiencies and reduce carbon emissions.



## NEWS

# AGRITECH BRIDGE PROGRAMME LAUNCHED – DIGITISING THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

Barclays Eagle Lab and Codebase, supported by the University of Lincoln, are launching a new bridge programme to connect early-stage digital startups with potential end users in the food chain to accelerate the creation of digital tools for agriculture and food chain businesses.

The AgriTech Bridge programme is powered by Barclays Eagle Labs and funded by UK government and works in collaboration with CodeBase, which has run similar programmes in other sectors.

The AgriTech Bridge programme will bring together some of the UK's leading corporations and most promising startups with digital solutions.

Whether it's farm gate solutions, supplier forecasting, waste management or sustainable packaging - data and digitisation are key to understanding and securing the food supply chain. In today's fast and sometimes volatile food supply chain, disruptive innovation is necessary from field to fork to help industry to thrive.

The programme will be delivered via a combination of virtual and in-person sessions once a month over 10 months, through themed meetups that bring together business and industry experts with leaders from established food supply or agriculture companies and startups to work towards a sustainable food supply chain. Each of the ten modules is designed to expose food supply chain businesses and the agritech start-ups to core strategic thinking and best practices to deliver innovation.

Technology can help redefine food production

systems, but we understand how hard it is for larger food supply chain companies and startups to work together to help tackle some of the challenges the industry faces. The Eagle Labs AgriTech Bridge programme will help surface these challenges to come up with new collaborative solutions. The programme is aimed at both corporates and startups involved at any stage of the food supply chain, from field to fork.

If you are a food supply or agritech startup whose products, services or innovations can be applied to the food supply chain, you will be able to build expertise and meet larger businesses to expand your network and potentially provide solutions or proofs-of-concept for larger businesses.

If you are an end user business the programme will introduce you to new technologies, practices, skills and cultures to help transform and accelerate innovation in your business.

While this is a national programme, the University of Lincoln and UK Food Valley are keen to recruit as many Lincolnshire businesses as possible to the programme. Applications opened on the 19<sup>th</sup> April and close on 5<sup>th</sup> June - find more details [here](#).



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## NEWS

# AGRI-OPENCORE PROJECT SUCCESS FOR HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN

On 24<sup>th</sup> March the government announced that three cutting-edge projects will receive a share of £9.13 million in government funding to carry out research and development on proposals to boost agricultural productivity, sustainability and climate resilience.

The funding support projects developing robotic crop harvesting for horticulture, an autonomous system to change cows' bedding to improve their health, welfare and productivity, and a more environmentally friendly approach to potato cultivation.

The three projects are large R&D partnership competition winners in the £270 million Farming Innovation Programme (FIP), part of the government's commitment to spend around £600 million to provide support for farmers to invest in productivity, animal health and welfare, innovation and research and development over three years.

The successful projects include the Agri-Opencore project, led by APS Produce, which has been awarded over £3.8m to accelerate the delivery of robotic crop systems for horticulture, with the University of Lincoln as their academic partner.

Read the full story [here](#).





## NEWS

### REVERSE COAL FEATURED IN POWERING UP BRITAIN - THE NET ZERO GROWTH PLAN

The Net Zero Growth Plan, published in March, is about how the UK can meet its energy needs while simultaneously delivering Net Zero. It features a case study on North Lincolnshire based Lapwing Estate which is pioneering the Reverse Coal project. The case study reports:

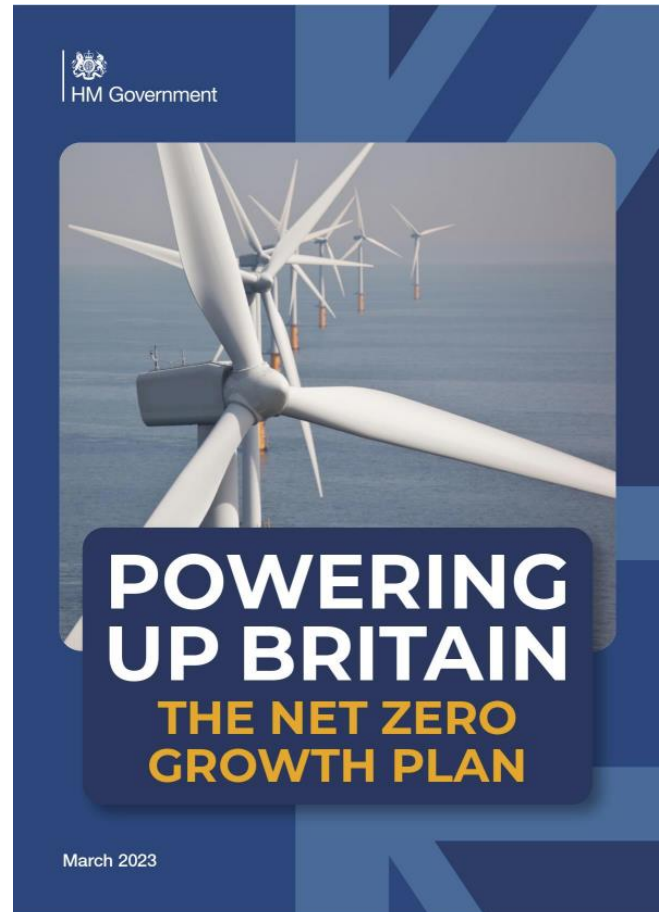
Lapwing Reverse Coal Project: Novel engineering of a natural solution will enable the removal of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere to lock it back in the ground. The Lapwing Estate sits on lowland peat which has been historically drained and farmed for food production. This has degraded the soil and led to GHG emissions as the peat oxidises (lowland peat is responsible for 3% of UK GHG emissions).

Reverse Coal was awarded nearly £3 million through the NZIP. To capture carbon dioxide and abate existing emissions, they will rewet the peat and establish fast-growing willow crops which will be chipped and dried and then fed into a high-temperature pyrolysis plant.

This plant converts the willow (biomass) into a solid form of carbon akin to coal, called 'biochar'. The biochar is buried underground for long-term stable carbon storage with the heat and power directed into controlled environment agriculture for more sustainable and secure food production. This first-of-its-kind project is exploring an innovative new way to sustainably intensify production of high quality, healthy food, while at the same time supporting the government's target for Net Zero by 2050.

Full details of the Powering Up Britain plan are at: [Powering Up Britain - The Net Zero Growth Plan](#)

For more information on Reverse Coal please visit: [Reverse Coal – Reversing the impact of coal](#)



## NEWS

### GREATER LINCOLNSHIRE LEP PODCASTS

We were delighted to launch our first LEP podcasts featuring illuminating discussions on our economic priorities. From nurturing the next generation of leaders in the food sector through fantastic collaborations with schools, to the importance and benefits of school careers teams collaborating with local businesses to raise the profile of their sector - the importance of transferable and learnt skills, and routes into the workplace are the key focus across these new podcasts.



***Sarah Louise Fairburn, Deputy Chair of the Greater Lincolnshire LEP, Chair of the Food Board, and founder of Imp & Maker, talks to Jane Spurden, Careers Lead for Bakkavor and Enterprise Adviser supporting Bourne Grammar School.***

In our first ever pilot podcast, Sarah Louise Fairburn talks to Jane Spurden at Bakkavor - leaders in bringing innovative fresh food to consumers - about nurturing the next generation of leaders in the food sector through fantastic collaborations with schools.

Great for: Teachers, parents, students, business leads, skills stakeholders and worth sharing

To view our new webpage, click [here](#) or listen directly:

- [Podcast 1](#) Food Sector Myth Busting & Careers: Sarah Louise Fairburn – Chair LEP Food Board and Jane Spurden - Bakkavor
- [Podcast 2](#) Businesses & Schools together driving Career Opportunities: Jen Vincent – UTC and Hayley Beardmore – Greater Lincolnshire Careers Hub

## SKILLS BOOTCAMP CASE STUDIES

*Last year the LEP, working in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and the Department for Education, commissioned a series of Skills Bootcamps with local training organisations to help raise skills levels in the area. Skills Bootcamps are flexible, free courses for learners that give them new skills for new jobs, or to progress further in work.*

*The National Centre for Food Manufacturing started delivering Food Manufacturing Skills Bootcamps last autumn, and they have been a great success. Professor Sharon Green is delighted to announce that they have secured additional funding for more Skills Bootcamps over the next 12 months.*

*On hearing the news this week Sharon said: "I'm very excited to receive further funding for Skills Bootcamps because they help employers who might not otherwise be able to engage with skills, to get involved. There are great benefits for the food sector, and we'll be announcing details about the next round of Skills Bootcamps very shortly."*

*If you would like to find out more, please contact Sharon on [shgreen@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:shgreen@lincoln.ac.uk)*

### EWAN CRUICKSHANK, FOODCLEAN

Saxilby-based Foodclean supplies hygiene equipment and chemicals to the food industry. Its Technical Support Manager Ewan Cruickshank was looking for some training for himself and his colleagues that would provide an insight into their customers' requirements and challenges.

"I was in touch with Sharon Green at the University of Lincoln and she let me know about the opportunity to attend Skills Bootcamps," said Ewan.

"Because we supply the food industry but we're not directly involved in food manufacture, I thought it would be a good idea to take some courses in order to understand our customers and their requirements and issues on a daily basis.

"By undergoing food safety and hygiene courses we aimed to develop our business and find solutions to our customers' problems at the same time."

Ewan and two colleagues from Foodclean attended the nine-day Skills Bootcamp on Food Safety and Compliance (Level 4) at the National Centre for Food Manufacturing in Holbeach.

They were pleased to get the opportunity to network with people working in food manufacture and to benefit from the knowledge of the tutors based at the university.

"The course was very helpful for anyone involved in food manufacturing or food production," said Ewan. "I'd highly recommend it – it gets into quite a lot of topics related to the food industry based around food safety.

"It's benefited Foodclean because we've gained a deeper understanding of the issues our customers are facing on a daily basis. Also, as it was a face-to-face course it gave us the chance to interact with people from the food industry, so outside the classroom it was a networking opportunity too.

"The facilities at the NCFM are fantastic and the breadth and depth of knowledge that those tutors have is absolutely phenomenal. I'd definitely recommend it 100%."

**foodclean**  
SUSTAINABLE FOOD HYGIENE

# SKILLS BOOTCAMP CASE STUDIES

## JULIE THOROLD, WORLDWIDE FRUIT

When Lincolnshire firm Worldwide Fruit wanted to deliver improved in-house food safety courses, Compliance Manager Julie Thorold approached the University of Lincoln about Skills Bootcamps.

She agreed a tailored 'train the trainer' L4 Skills Bootcamp in Food Safety and Compliance, which met the company's needs, and is now responsible for delivering in-house food safety courses at her workplace.

"I'm responsible for food safety compliance at Worldwide Fruit Ltd, and as part of our Food Safety Culture Improvement Plans, we identified an opportunity to deliver better in-house food safety training courses," said Julie.

"I have a passion for teaching food safety, and I knew that this opportunity would allow me to develop my skills and meet a business need at the same time.

"Although I had sufficient levels of food safety training, making me qualified in the subject I would be delivering, I had never attended a formal 'train the trainer' course."

Julie and her employer chose the Skills Bootcamps as they offered some practical training as well as a theoretical element. Julie had an initial meeting with Sharon Green to discuss the format and delivery of the course, and together they agreed how the hours would be utilised to meet Julie's needs.

"The course was designed very much around what I wanted to get out of it," she said. "I had access to other lecturers and was able to observe the delivery of short courses, allowing me to get a practical insight and ask questions around planning and delivery of courses.

"I also had the opportunity to deliver some short courses for the National Centre for Food Manufacturing in Holbeach, which gave me valuable hands-on experience of delivering to a range of delegates.

"Finally, I spent time with the admin team to understand the requirements relating to enrolment and assessment of accredited courses."

Having completed the Skills Bootcamp, Julie is now looking forward to using her training to develop her career.

"I chose the Skills Bootcamp because, unlike other standard 'train the trainer' courses, this course offered me the flexibility to get real, hands-on experience," she said. "It also gave me the confidence to know that I can deliver courses successfully.

"Since completing the course I've taken on responsibility for delivering in-house food safety courses at Worldwide Fruit, and I've also pursued a full-time career as a lecturer in Food Quality Assurance and Technical Management."



## INSPIRATIONAL INNOVATIONS

With over 45 years' experience in beverage technologies, Roger Yaldon, founder and CTO of Pfizics, shares this innovation journey with us in his exclusive blog, with additional comment from Dr Ali Aliyu, specialist in sustainable energy at the University of Lincoln School of Engineering.

Pfizics Ltd in Lincolnshire has developed a new technology that will revolutionise how gases and liquids can be combined instantaneously and bring incredible environmental and efficiency credentials to the global drinks industry. Supported by the Greater Lincolnshire LEP's Clean Growth Accelerator Fund, this project is now progressing with support from the University of Lincoln's School of Engineering to advance development and bring this revolutionary technology to market.

Pfizics' Reverse Infusion Technology (RIT) brings a complete transformation of how gas is infused into liquids across a wide range of applications, bringing ground-breaking impacts to the sector including the removal of single-use plastic bottles and mitigating the need to transport high levels of water content, reducing the carbon footprint and cost of packaging and logistics.

Read the full blog [here](#).



***Working with the University of Lincoln, the Greater Lincolnshire LEP has co-commissioned the creation of a Local Area Energy Plan for the UK Food Valley and is working with regional partners to explore ways of supporting circular economy practices to drive this agenda forwards. The low carbon and energy economy is worth £1.2bn locally and holds exceptional potential and a private investment level of £60bn over the next fifteen years, with major opportunities in offshore wind alongside decarbonisation, Hydrogen, and carbon storage projects in the transforming fossil fuel industries.***

Visit the [www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk](http://www.greaterlincolnshirelep.co.uk) or click direct for the [Green Energy page](#) or contact [Caroline.Illingworth@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Caroline.Illingworth@lincolnshire.gov.uk) for energy queries.

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF)

The Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) has been allocated to unitary and district councils with significant rural areas and will be managed alongside the broader UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The Rural Fund is a top-up to the UKSPF and targeted at the challenges for rural businesses and communities. It is the successor programme to the EU Leader and Growth Programmes which were part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

The two-year, £110m Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) provides capital grants to support new and existing rural businesses to develop new products and facilities which benefit the rural economy. This will include farm businesses looking to diversify their income as well as support for other smaller businesses and community projects. The REPF will be delivered by the unitary and district councils and will in most cases be launching the programmes in April or May 2023.

North Kesteven District Council is opening an Expression of Interest for its Rural Business Grant in the last week in April, targeting new and existing rural businesses to develop products, services and facilities of wider benefit to the local economy. This includes farm businesses looking to diversify income streams, growth in the visitor economy and investments in power and energy efficiency to help the district reach Net Zero. The first window for Expressions of Interest is open until Thursday 1st June and the digital Expression of Interest forms will be available on the council's [website](#) and [here](#). The minimum grant available through the Rural Business Grant is £5,000, and depending on the project and investment needed applicants may be required to provide match funding.

*Continued...*



# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND (REPF)



### *Continued...*

Meanwhile, Sally Grindrod-Smith, Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities at West Lindsey District Council, commented: "I am delighted to confirm that DEFRA has approved West Lindsey's allocation of and approach to distributing the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

"Our £320k allocation will provide capital grants to support both non-agricultural farm diversification projects and the development of agri-tech businesses in the district. We are also providing an additional £150k locally funded revenue grant scheme to support agri-tech business development.

"Our approach acknowledges the critical need to support primary farming businesses to establish new and sustainable income streams.

"It also reflects our commitment to directly support agri-tech sector development which is a key component of our strategic approach to levelling up the West Lindsey economy - creating new, higher value, high skilled jobs in growing technology sectors."

Grants will be made available to eligible businesses from May 2023 and administered on a first come, first served basis (subject to eligibility). For more information regarding scheme launch please sign-up to our business [newsletter](#) or visit our dedicated [web-page](#).

The REPF allocations for Greater Lincolnshire for the two financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 are:

- Boston £429,355
- East Lindsey £1,791,546
- North Lincolnshire £789,520
- North Kesteven £747,556
- Rutland £400,000
- South Holland £699,884
- South Kesteven £540,460
- West Lindsey £795,821

This totals just under £6.2m (£6,194,142) has been allocated to the UK Food Valley area for projects over two years from April 2023.

Each local authority is able to target the fund to meet their own local needs and the UK Food Valley newsletter will bring you more details when each authority launches its programme.

## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### ANIMAL HEALTH AND WELFARE FUND OPENS UNDER THE FARMING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY FUND (FETF)

In late March DEFRA launched a new call for projects to support animal health and welfare, and bids need to be submitted by 15<sup>th</sup> June.

DEFRA is encouraging anyone applying for a grant to discuss this with their vet first, to get advice on which items would best help their livestock. These grants are part of the Animal Health and Welfare Pathway. Just like other parts of the pathway, such as the funded annual health and welfare review by a vet, they have been developed through careful co-design work with farmers, academics, vets, and industry groups.

The grants can be used to support improvements in livestock health and welfare, offering between £1,000 and £25,000 towards the cost of items from the list of equipment set out in the guidance [here](#).

In announcing these new grants DEFRA noted that: “Farmers have the opportunity to bring new equipment onto their farm that has been shown to have a positive impact on health and welfare. That means happier, healthier and more productive livestock – great for the animals, and great for the farmer.”

The application portal is open from 23rd March until 15th June [here](#).

UK Food Valley commented: “With surveys consistently showing that UK consumers are amongst the most focused on animal welfare globally, it is pleasing to see DEFRA supporting investment in this area and we encourage farmers to apply.”





# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## WATER MANAGEMENT GRANT GUIDANCE RELEASED

As part of the new [Plan for Water](#) DEFRA is supporting a second round of the [Water Management Grant](#) which is now open for applications.

The plan for water recognises that: “Clean and plentiful water is vital for food security. We are supporting farmers to build their resilience to drought by increasing their on-farm storage and developing more efficient methods of using water on their land. This will support our commitment to, at a minimum, maintain the current level of food we produce domestically.”

The plan also states that the government is:

- Aiming to increase the amount of water stored by the agriculture and horticulture sectors by 66% by 2050 to support food production and protect the water environment.
- Providing £10 million in grants to help around 100 farmers with the costs of building on-farm water reservoirs and irrigation equipment.
- Allowing farmers access to water when needed in drought and enabling farmers to refill their reservoirs at more times in the year, while still protecting the environment.
- Making it easier and quicker for farmers to get abstraction licences and prioritising abstraction permit applications for farm storage reservoir grants and associated habitat risk assessments.

The Water Management Grant will provide £10 million in funding to help farmers manage their water use through more efficient irrigation and securing water supplies through on-farm reservoirs.

Part of the [Farming Investment Fund](#), the Water Management grant will be for businesses growing irrigated food, ornamental or forestry crop nurseries. Capital grants support improvements to farm productivity through more efficient use of irrigation, adopting best-practice irrigation application equipment and by securing water supplies through construction of on-farm reservoirs.

Grants of between £35,000 and £500,000 will be available, with a maximum grant rate of up to 40%. Larger projects are welcome but the maximum grant is capped at £500,000.

Greater Lincolnshire has been active on water management for a long time, launching the Greater Lincolnshire Water Management Plan in 2015. The challenges of climate change and constraints on water impact economic development and the environment and recent years, notably 2022 which saw a 1:500-year drought event in much of Europe, reminds us all how important water resource management is. The UK Food Valley welcomes the proposed new grants and will continue to lobby for more investment in this precious resource.

The LEP encourages businesses to think about what investments they need to make in water security and to be ready for when this, or potentially future, rounds of funding open to support investment in water resources.

## EVENTS

### INNOVATE UK EVENTS IN LINCOLNSHIRE JUNE - JULY 2023

Over the summer the [University of Lincoln](#) is hosting three events with [Innovate UK](#) and the [Greater Lincolnshire LEP](#) to support innovation by providing an insight into funding, opportunities and academic support. The UK Food Valley is committed to innovation and has been very pleased to see growth in the number of Lincolnshire based businesses working with partners to deliver innovation projects.

In agri-food the growth in projects linked to the University of Lincoln's Lincoln Institute of AgriFood Technology (LIAT) and National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM) has been particularly strong, with over £85m of new investment in innovation projects since 2016, with over 115 projects involving over 200 partners from industry and the innovation community.

Despite this, data continues to show that the East Midlands and the UK Food Valley and Greater Lincolnshire underperform in terms of investment in innovation and government funding support for innovation. The [UK Innovation Survey 2021](#) reported Lincolnshire as the area with the smallest percentage of innovation-active businesses in 2018-20.

With innovation at the heart of all three of the priorities for the UK Food Valley - automation and digitalisation, low-carbon food chains, and naturally good for you foods - it is vital to continue to broaden the number of businesses involved in innovation. These events are designed to help demystify the process of developing an innovation project and applying for funding.

- Lincoln 6<sup>th</sup> June: this event will cover businesses across all sectors seeking to accelerate their growth through R&D. For full details please see: [Innovate in Greater Lincolnshire - Lincoln Tickets, Tue 6 Jun 2023 at 09:00 | Eventbrite](#)
- Holbeach 4<sup>th</sup> July: this event will have an agrifood focus but is still relevant to businesses across all sectors seeking to accelerate their growth through R&D. For full details please see: [Innovate in Greater Lincolnshire - Holbeach Tickets, Tue 4 Jul 2023 at 09:00 | Eventbrite](#)
- Grimsby Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July: this event has an energy focus but is still relevant to businesses across all sectors seeking to accelerate their growth through R&D. For full details please see: [Innovate in Greater Lincolnshire - Grimsby Tickets, Th 13 Jul 2023 at 09:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Find out more and book your place [here](#).



## EVENTS

### BUSINESS LINCOLNSHIRE EVENTS

Business Lincolnshire continues to run a wide range of events with partners to support businesses with short courses and events to help navigate the challenges facing businesses.

From support from the Made Smarter programme to help businesses integrate digital tools, to how to use social media effectively, address the threats from cyber-crime or start a new business, there are topical and relevant courses for all businesses.

To keep up to date on the events on offer and to book please visit: [Find Events in Lincolnshire | Business Lincolnshire | Business Lincolnshire](#)





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