**Leader Funding (2015-2020**)

Approved Local Action Groups (LAGs) in Eastern England are:

Leader funding is controlled by a Local Action Group (LAG) led by business and community representatives.

Projects typically:

* Funded at 25-40%
* Grants of £10-100k

Focus is on jobs and economic growth and each LAG has circa £1.9m to spend

Your project must help the LAG deliver their Local Development Strategy (LDS) and each LAG has their own LDS which sets out what they want to achieve

All Leader groups focus on a mix of grants for:

* Farm productivity
* Farm diversification
* Rural business investment
* Rural tourism
* Rural services
* Culture and heritage
* Forestry productivity

**Contacts for Leader Groups are:**

Essex Rivers: Suzanne Harris suzanne.harris@essexrcc.org.uk (01376) 574 330, [www.essexrivers.co.uk/](http://www.essexrivers.co.uk/)

Heritage Coast: Emily Manser emily.manser@suffolk.gov.uk (01473) 260 184

Wool Towns: Gavin Talbot gavin.talbot@suffolk.gov.uk (07734) 540 707

Norfolk County Council administers the: Brecks, Broads, Waveney Valley, Wensum & Coast and West Norfolk Leader groups, team contacts are:

* Eliska Cheeseman, Programme Manager (01603) 228 827
* Carol Allen, Facilitator (01328) 850 541 carol.allen@norfolk.gov.uk
* Paul Mace, Facilitator (07584) 600 816  paul.mace@norfolk.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire Fens: Keiran Carr, (01353) 865 047, keiran.carr@cambsacre.org.uk

Eastern Plateau: Paul Pullin, (01992) 531 606 paul.pullin@eastherts.gov.uk

**Other Grant Schemes for Farm Investment**

* **Countryside Productivity Scheme** is a national grant scheme (RDPE) which focuses on improving farm and rural productivity. It has £140m to spend (2015-2020) and will issue calls on specific projects e.g. there is a current call for £5m (bids by 30th June) focuses on water management, LED lighting, poultry litter drying, crop storage etc. <https://www.gov.uk/how-to-apply-for-grants-countryside-productivity>
* New Anglia LEP (Norfolk & Suffolk) Rural Development Programme (all LEPs have similar programmes) is also called the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**. New Anglia has £13m to allocate to projects over the period 2015-2020 and will be launched later in 2015 <http://www.newanglia.co.uk/our-programmes/europe/>
* Later this year new funding for skills training will be launched (e.g. ‘Landskills’ programme)

**Technology and Innovation**

There is a wide range of support to help businesses embrace new technology and to help get science out of the lab and onto farms. The ***UK Strategy for Agricultural Technologies*** has positioned agricultural technology as one of the ***Eight Great Technologies*** championed by the government’s ***Industrial Strategy***.

* **European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Operational Groups**: £5-150k to help farmers work with others (e.g. advisors, researchers, technology companies) to solve a specific farm problem. The first call (for £5m) opens in summer 2015 and details are at:

<https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-the-eip-agri-grant-countryside-productivity-scheme>

* **AgriTech Catalyst Fund**: supported as part of the ***UK Strategy for Agricultural Technologies*** to help commercialise new agricultural technology. A range of grants for every stage of project development with a focus on technology which can be sold either in the UK and/or globally. Details are at: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/business/collaborative-research/innovate-uk-competitions/agri-tech-catalyst/>
* **Eastern AgriTech Initiative** is a regional programme which gives grants to either develop new technologies (50% up to £60k) or to adopt new technology (25% up to £150k), it is linked to ***AgriTech East*** and closes in March 2016. Details are at: <http://www.gcgp.co.uk/agri-tech-grants/>
* **EU Horizon 2020** includes a €4billion funding programme for collaborative R&D projects in agricultural productivity and sustainability. Details at: <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

**Tips for Accessing Grants**

Don’t chase grants and sort out any issues with your core business first. Before you apply you need planning permissions and your share of the funding in place. You must be clear on: the idea; your objectives; your input to the project. Funders will want to understand: ***‘Market Failure’*** – why can’t you fund it privately & ***‘Additionality’*** – what extra outputs will funding ‘buy’ (outputs = jobs, profits, added value, exports etc.)

**Project Benefits** - the chance of winning grant aid is improved if: your project aligns with funders aims – read their guidance & speak to them before you apply; the benefits extend beyond your business and, for some grants, collaboration is essential

**Project Delivery** - the project must be well presented & set out: clear steps to deliver the project including a cashflow & business plan; a plan to sustain the project after funding ends; a sound track record (this can include advisors) – funders have to trust you to deliver the project ….