

Worcestershire Rural Hub

DEFRA / RDPE UPDATE

1. RDPE GRANTS 2007 - 2013

1.1 Farming and Forestry Improvement Scheme (FFIS).

This is a small grant (£2,500- £25,000) to help farmers, foresters and horticultural businesses improve their competitiveness. FFIS priorities included Animal Health and Welfare, Nutrient Management, Water Resource Efficiency, Energy Efficiency and Forestry. The first round closed on 17th January 2012. The intervention rate is 40% and 50% for upland farmers in severely disadvantaged areas; therefore the minimum project size for a grant of £2,500 is £6,250.

1000 applications have been received across the country with the West Midlands receiving the 2nd highest number of applications. A large number of applications have been received from Worcestershire and we are encouraged by numbers of beef and sheep farmers applying for high welfare cattle crushes, mobile handling facilities, rainwater harvesting and nutrient management applications for GPS systems.

Round 2, of FFIS subject to funding, will be launched in May 2012. Applicants should only apply for items listed in the handbook; this will be updated for the next round.

If farmers are looking to apply we recommend they start pulling the information together for this round i.e. planning, quotes, nutrient management and farm health plans. Most farmers have successfully completed the application themselves and the Worcester team are on hand to give support where needed. Please pass any enquiries directly to RDPE team in Worcester jo.jury@defra.gsi.gov.uk

1.2 Rural Economy Grant (REG)

REG will be launched at the end of February with grants from £25,000 up to £1 million or more for micro and SME businesses to boost farm competitiveness, and support significant growth particularly in the agri-food, rural tourism, forestry, renewable energy, and other high-potential sectors (e.g. ICT and creative) .

Please pass any enquiries to RDPE team in Worcester jo.jury@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Other RDPE programmes include:-

1.3 Skills and Knowledge Transfer

To be launched in August 2012 following completion of existing local programmes, currently led in the West Midlands by Lantra.

1.3 Rural Community Broadband Fund

A joint fund with Broadband Delivery UK , to provide grants to communities to establish superfast broadband in 'hard-to-reach' locations.

Please pass any enquiries to RDPE team in Worcester Joseph.ling@defra.gsi.gov.uk