

AGRI-FOOD CO-OPERATION SCHEME OFFERS £30,500

The Agri-Food Co-operation Scheme offers farmers and food producers the opportunity of developing a new project idea in collaboration with others in their supply chain. £30,500 of support along with 50 days Facilitation is available under the scheme to help progress the project as well as enriching each group member's skill set.

One of the groups currently availing from support under the Agri-Food Co-operation Scheme is the East Sperrins Potato Group which is made up of several local potato growers. Fred Chambers is the Lead Applicant for the group and explains why he decided to get involved in the scheme.

"With the ever increasing demands of customers and indeed the requirements from food accreditation boards, we always knew that we needed better collaboration with our suppliers to have uniformity of product and more efficient traceability in place."

How has the Agri-Food Co-operation Scheme helped the Group?

"When we saw the Agri-Food Co-operation Scheme advertised offering £30,500 support to groups of farmers and those further along the supply chain, we submitted our application to seek funding for a Management Information System under the Business Tools section - incorporating our growers, us as processors and a chip shop as a pilot outlet to test the system. This system not only allows us to trace back from customer to supplier and vice versa, but it also provides our growers with detailed information about their produce and performance at the touch of a button. Continual feedback from the MIS will allow the farmers to adapt quickly to evolving customer requirements, and with facts and figures on yields from specific varieties of potato and even performances of individual fields with different climatic and soil types, over time the farmers can adjust their growing programme to optimise the product specifications to suit individual customer orders.

One aspect of the scheme which we would say is invaluable is the expert help offered under the Facilitation support. John, our Facilitator, has guided us through each stage of the process with diligence and encouragement.



Pictured: Fred Chambers, Lead Applicant of East Sperrins Potato Group.

It's never easy joining up with others in the supply chain, but the Facilitator is always there to keep us on track and is such a necessary component for any group trying to develop and complete a project over time."

What other support measures are you availing of?

"As a group we hope to avail of some Specialist Mentoring and related Training from an agronomist with regards to best practice growing and bench marking, and a Study tour to Yorkshire in England is also in the pipeline where we will see similar potato groups in action and learn from their experiences."

The Agri-Food Co-operation Scheme is open for Expressions of Interest. For forms please call 02887788207 or email agrifood@countryrideservices.com

Countryside Services is the managing agent on behalf of DAERA for the Agri-Food Co-operation Scheme

AGRI-FOOD CO-OPERATION SCHEME

DO YOU HAVE A NEW IDEA, PRODUCT OR PROCESS FOR YOUR AGRI-FOOD BUSINESS?

STILL OPEN FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

**UP TO
£30,500
SUPPORT AVAILABLE**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONTACT COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES:**

028 8778 8207

**agrifood@countryrideservices.com
countryrideservices.com**

