

Innovative and Disruptive Technologies for Agri-  
food Supply Chains

# Putting farmers in the driving seat

Dr Kate Pressland, Programme Lead - Innovative Farmers

# Innovative Farmers



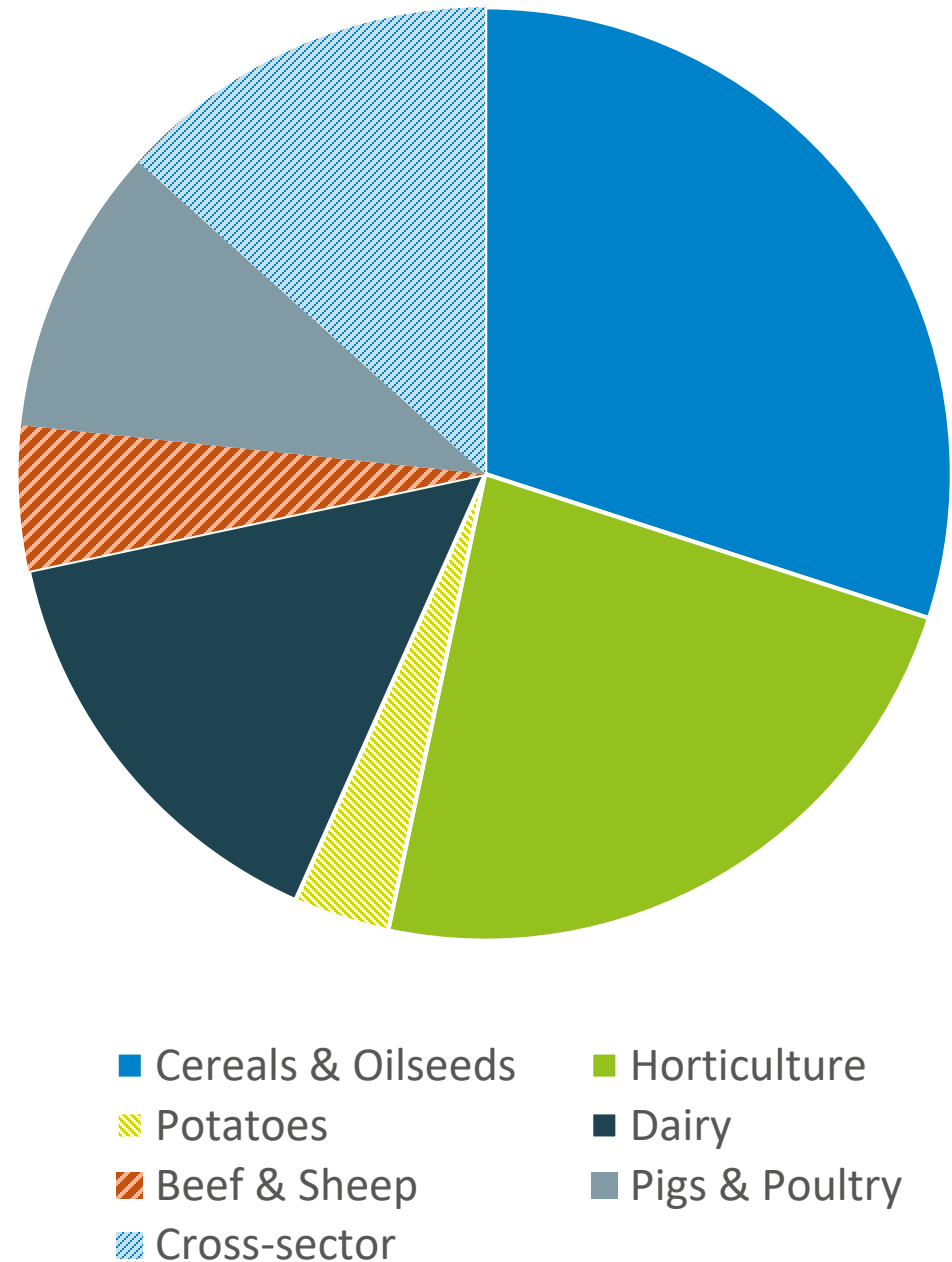
*farmer-led research network and innovation  
support service*

## Partnership



## Field labs

- Open to *all*
- About practical on-farm experimentation
- Enabling farmers to investigate their priorities
- Farmers collaborating, with research support
- Small grants scheme to lower risk
- Positive feedback to research
- Encouraging innovation on-farm



# Sponsors and collaborations



the land gardeners



I Know Food



GREATSOILS





# Top-agri research organisations



IBERS



Harper Adams University



Food Security + Land Research Alliance



# Command paper

a) Focus on near-market applied agri-R&D

b) Research syndicates

c) 'Innovation accelerators'



d) Influence on research funding strategy



put farmers in the driving seat

How can industry and government put farmers in the driving seat to ensure that agricultural R&D delivers what they need? Please rank your top three options by order of importance:

- a) Encouraging a stronger focus on near-market applied agricultural R&D
- b) Bringing groups of farms together in research syndicates to deliver practical solutions
- c) Accelerating the 'proof of concept' testing of novel approaches to agricultural constraints
- d) Giving the farming industry a greater say in setting the strategic direction for research funding
- e) Other (please specify)

# Are field labs working?

## Engagement

- >1,000 farmers
- 90% learning
- 100% recommend to peers
- Mainstream farming orgs involved

## Change on-farm

- >50% reporting change
- Groups doing successive field labs
- Increasing confidence of innovation on-farm
- Improving trust in research

## Research

- MSc students
- Proof of concept to larger grants
- Researcher enthusiasm
- Influential Steering group

e.g. BBSRC, NERC, AHDB, NFU, Profs. Benton and Scollen

# Farmer case study – John Pawsey

- Shimpling Park Farm, organic
- Recently elected Chairman of *NFU Organic Forum*
- Well respected amongst peers and policy
- Engages – monitor farms, social media, advocacy
- **5 field labs**
- Prior to field labs, *never* involved in organised research – now regularly contacted by projects
- Demonstrates innovation journey





# Summary

- Opportunity to bridge gap
- Farmer-led research works alongside current system
- Disruptive
- Build trust in Defra

## Contact

[kpessland@innovativefarmers.org](mailto:kpessland@innovativefarmers.org)

0117 987 4572

0777 583 5086

