



## WHAT THE FINAL ROUND OF THE FARMING EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY FUND MEANS FOR YOU

The Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) 2026 marks the last opportunity for farmers in England to access significant grant support before the scheme undergoes major changes in 2027. For many businesses navigating tight margins, volatile markets and rising input costs, this round is a timely chance to modernise, improve efficiency and invest in long-term resilience. Meg Caine, part of the Ludlow Admin team looks into this FETF more and explains what is in it for you.

Farmers stand to benefit significantly from the FETF 2026 grants, which make adopting new technology far more affordable. By supporting items that improve decision-making, cut waste and streamline daily tasks, the scheme helps reduce fuel, fertiliser and labour costs. On farms already using these tools, precision irrigation sensors have boosted watering accuracy, weighing and EID systems have reduced medicine waste through accurate dosing, and automated equipment has taken over repetitive jobs so labour can be used more efficiently. The scheme also encourages investment in better animal health and welfare technology—improving monitoring, reducing stress, enabling earlier detection of illness and supporting stronger long-term performance.

Alongside productivity gains, FETF 2026 offers substantial support for environmental improvements through modern slurry-management solutions. These upgrades help farms meet regulatory requirements by improving nutrient availability, reducing ammonia emissions and producing a more consistent slurry product that reduces blockages and downtime—ultimately lowering reliance on costly artificial fertilisers. With grants covering 40–50% of the cost of eligible items, the scheme provides meaningful financial relief at a time when margins are tight, making it easier for farmers to invest in equipment that delivers both immediate savings and long-term resilience.

There are 3 grant themes available to help you buy items that will:

- Improve Productivity
- Manage Slurry
- Improve animal Health & Welfare

(Each theme has a £1,000 – £25,000 cap, you can apply for more than one theme up to a combined limit of £75,000. Only one application per theme per business is permitted)

### Criteria for Items Purchased Using the Fund

- Be new or ex-display (with stipulations)
- If an item meets 2 or more specification requirements, you can only get funding for *one* specification
- Items are expected to last 5 years from the claim paid date

If successful you will receive around 40% or 50% towards either the cost of the item or the average cost of the item. Funding will be allocated to highest scoring applications first. An items score can be found in the specification list next to the item.

If you need any help with you application please ask the team today and we will do what we can to help.

**APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN AND CLOSE 28TH APRIL 2026 AT MIDDAY.**

### WHY APPLY NOW?

FETF 2026 is the final round before the scheme is significantly redesigned for 2027. Farmers who wait may find that eligibility criteria, payments or item lists change—and not necessarily in your favour.

Applying now gives you the chance to:

- Benefit from known and proven funding rules
- Make vital upgrades while funding is still available
- Strengthen your business's performance before the next policy changes

In an increasingly demanding industry, the right technology can improve efficiency, resilience and profitability for years to come.

## FUEL SURCHARGE

Due to the current global situation, we will be introducing a fuel surcharge on all visits — both routine and out-of-hours — from 1st April 2026. We have held off applying this charge for as long as possible, but unfortunately the ongoing increase in fuel costs is no longer sustainable for us.

The surcharge will be £1.50 + VAT per visit.

Clients who bring animals to the surgery will not be charged this fee.

We will continue to monitor fuel prices closely and remove the surcharge as soon as costs stabilise.

## COMPETITION WINNER!

Thank you all for your entries in our recent competition. This lovely mum selfie was from our winner Isla McCowan.



Special well done to the Kirton entry of the prized empty shed as they have finished!

We always love seeing your pictures so please do keep sending them in to us!

## HYGIENE IN YOUR MATERNITY WARD: WHAT CAN GO WRONG

Good hygiene in the lambing or calving shed is one of the most effective tools farmers have to safeguard newborn animals. The first hours of life are when lambs and calves are most vulnerable to infection, and a clean, well-managed maternity environment can make the difference between strong, healthy youngstock and devastating losses. This article outlines practical, achievable hygiene measures for the maternity ward and explains why particular attention must be paid to E. coli, one of the most common, but also most dangerous, bacteria affecting newborn animals.

### Why Maternity Ward Hygiene Matters

Newborn lambs and calves enter the world with no functioning immune system. Their first line of defence comes from colostrum, and their second line comes from a clean, low-pressure environment that limits early exposure to disease-causing bacteria. Poor hygiene conditions; dirty bedding, heavily stocked pens, dampness, and poor ventilation, allow harmful bacteria to build up quickly. This disproportionately affects later-born lambs and calves, as the pathogen load in housing rises throughout the season.

A well-managed maternity area reduces:

- Scours
- Joint/navel infections
- Pneumonia
- Septicaemia
- Mortality in vulnerable youngstock

However, even excellent hygiene cannot stop E. coli numbers increasing as lambing progresses. As the pressure builds, later-born lambs face much higher risk. Many of the conditions caused by E. coli are difficult to treat and often lead to high mortality. An important question every farmer should ask this spring is whether the antibiotic being used is actually effective against E. coli. Data from SAC Veterinary Services, taken from 295 E. coli isolates, showed that 1 in 4 (25%) were resistant to four or more antibiotics, meaning treatment with those drugs would not work. Because of this, any disease problems during lambing should be discussed with your vet early. Identifying which antibiotics remain effective on your farm could save many lambs later in the season.

### For Calving Sheds: Extra Considerations

While many principles are shared with lambing, calving environments require:

- Larger, well-bedded pens to prevent contamination during labour
- Plenty of space for safe handling
- Clean udders and clean gloves during assisted calvings
- Immediate calf colostrum feeding, since delays increase disease risk dramatically
- Monitoring of umbilical cords—navel infections are a significant source of septicaemia in calves too

### Spotlight on E. coli: A Major Threat in the Lambing Shed

E. coli is present on every farm, but in maternity environments it can become a serious threat. It causes multiple diseases in young lambs including:

- Watery mouth
- Navel ill
- Joint ill
- Septicaemia
- Meningitis

The best defence a lamb has against E. coli is a full belly of good quality colostrum as soon as possible after birth, ideally within the first hour of life. Treating navels immediately and keeping pens as clean as possible are also essential.

However, even excellent hygiene cannot stop E. coli numbers increasing as lambing progresses. As the pressure builds, later-born lambs face much higher risk. Many of the conditions caused by E. coli are difficult to treat and often lead to high mortality.

The maternity ward is the foundation of calf and lamb survival. Clean bedding, good ventilation, proper disinfection, and strong colostrum management are the most powerful tools farmers have to prevent disease. Due to E. coli levels rising steadily throughout the season, early discussion with your vet about treatment options and antibiotic effectiveness is essential. A small amount of preparation now can prevent large losses later on.

## TB CORNER

Silly season has well and truly arrived! Spring has sprung and we're certainly feeling it, as we are sure you are too. While our whole team continues to work extremely hard, we want to thank you all for your patience as TB testing has had to continue throughout this busy period.

As some of you may know, our popular TB tester Jon has unfortunately had to take some time off due to an injury outside of work (sadly he lost a fight with a circular saw!) We're all wishing him a smooth and speedy recovery, and we know he's eager to get back into the swing of things as soon as he can.

In the meantime, being one person down means that we occasionally need to adjust our diary. We are doing everything we can to keep disruption to an absolute minimum, and your patience and understanding are greatly appreciated. Thank you for bearing with us.

