



Innovate
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Farming Innovation Programme ADOPT Project Facilitator Database

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FIP Accelerating Development of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT)

The Farming Innovation Programme Accelerating Development of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) scheme targets smaller-scale, farmer-led R&D projects to trial and demonstrate the on-farm viability of new and existing technologies, processes and practices to address immediate on-farm productivity and sustainability challenges.

All projects applying for ADOPT competitions must include a Project Facilitator to support project delivery and management. Innovate UK Business Connect have compiled this directory of individuals who have the skills to carry out this role.

The Farming Innovation Programme is part of Defra's investment in innovation, research and development. Defra is partnering with Innovate UK to fund projects that benefit farmers, growers and foresters in England.

If you have any questions, please contact:

ADOPTfacilitator@iukbc.org.uk

0330 106 6400



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How a Project Facilitator could support your application

The role that the Project Facilitator is expected to play in the projects that secure funding will vary depending on the individual project, the input required and project budget available for remuneration. The role may include, but is not limited to:

- Acting as a project manager for the duration of the project
- Helping to prepare administrative documents (i.e. reporting documents)
- Ensuring that the project remains on track and that communication is maintained
- Providing expertise in order to help ensure the project is a success

[→ Request to connect with a Project Facilitator](#)

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How to use the database

This Database features individuals who are registered Project Facilitators.

Search by Sector

Click on any section of the contents page to be taken to the Project Facilitators for that Sector

Search by keyword

If you'd like to search for a key word you have in mind, use the shortcut "Command (cmd) + F" (Mac) / "Control (ctrl) + F" (Windows) on your keyboard and enter your keyword in the search box that will appear.

Summary table

The summary table is organised by Sector. Individuals are displayed in alphabetical order.

[Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

If you would like to be connected to any of the FIP ADOPT Project Facilitators listed in the database please fill the form and someone from the Innovate UK Business Connect team will put you in touch shortly.

Disclaimer

The text provided in this directory has not been amended by Innovate UK Business Connect.

If a Project Facilitator is selected by an applicant outside of this database, the Project Facilitator is still required to register on the database in order to be eligible to apply for both the Support Grant and the Full Grant and is subject to approval of meeting all the required criteria.

Summary Table

Full Name	Topic area	Organisation	Region
Alice Mauchline	Broadacre	University of Reading	South East
Ana Reynolds	Broadacre	Oakbank	East Midlands
Aoife O Driscoll	Broadacre	NIAB	East of England
Apostolos Papadopoulos	Broadacre	Crop Intellect Ltd	East Midlands
Arran Redman	Broadacre	Innovation for Agriculture	South West
Becky Howard	Broadacre	Processors and Growers Research Organisation	East of England
Betty Bonnardel	Broadacre	Farmer Charlie Ltd	London
Bruce Napier	Broadacre	NIAB	East of England
Caroline Hobson	Broadacre	Soilplan Ltd	Yorkshire & the Humber
Caroline Wellon	Broadacre	O3T Ltd	West Midlands
Clive Blacker	Broadacre	Agrivation Ltd	Yorkshire & the Humber
Colin Peters	Broadacre	Niab	East of England
Daniel Kindred	Broadacre	ARC Agronomic Sciences Ltd	East of England
David Clarke	Broadacre	Niab	East of England
David Farley	Broadacre	AgriEnable	West Midlands
David Redpath	Broadacre	Redpath Environmental Solutions LTD	Northern Ireland
Deborah Crossan	Broadacre	Innovation for Agriculture	West Midlands
Dominic Amos	Broadacre	Cope Seeds & Grain Ltd	West Midlands
Elizabeth Stockdale	Broadacre	Niab	East of England
Ellie Roberts	Broadacre	NIAB	Yorkshire & the Humber
Emily Pope	Broadacre	Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF)	West Midlands
Emma Powlett	Broadacre	Powlett & Associates Ltd	East of England
Eric Ober	Broadacre	Niab	East of England
Erin Matlock	Broadacre	PGRO	East of England
Guido Drago	Broadacre	Polygenyn Ltd	Cymru Wales
Hannah Jones	Broadacre	Niab	East Midlands
Harry Henderson	Broadacre	BASIS Registration Ltd	West Midlands
Harry Parsons	Broadacre	SRH Agribusiness Ltd	North West
Hassan Awashra	Broadacre	Niab	East of England
Hassan Bagheri	Broadacre	B-Hive Innovations	East Midlands
Heather Sanders	Broadacre	Agrisound Ltd	South East
Henry Birt	Broadacre	The University of Manchester	North West
Jack Pierce	Broadacre	Terrafarmer	South West



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Full Name	Topic area	Organisation	Region
Jack Wrangham	Broadacre	Drone Ag Limited	North East & Cumbria
James Fortune	Broadacre	Vegetable Consultancy Services (UK) Ltd	East of England
Jonathan Gill	Broadacre	Agronomic digital innovation ltd	Cymru Wales
Joseph Martlew	Broadacre	NIAB	North East & Cumbria
Julia Cooper	Broadacre	Organic Research Centre	North East & Cumbria
Katie Slawson	Broadacre	SRH Agribusiness LTD	West Midlands
Khalid Mahmood	Broadacre	sawie Ltd	South East
kirstie speed	Broadacre	CLM Trading Company Ltd	South East
Kiryon Skippen	Broadacre	TEAM Ag UK	South East
Laura Beaumont	Broadacre	British On Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN)	West Midlands
Lesley Boyd	Broadacre	National Institute of Agricultural Botany	East of England
Lindsay Hargreaves	Broadacre	Lindsay Hargreaves Limited	East of England
lydia smith	Broadacre	Programme Leader	East of England
Mark Fletcher	Broadacre	Niab	Yorkshire & the Humber
Mark Lindley	Broadacre	Hartpury University and College	West Midlands
Mary Dimambro	Broadacre	Cambridge Eco Ltd	East of England
Megan Vasko	Broadacre	AbacusBio International Limited	Scotland
Nathan Morris	Broadacre	NIAB	East of England
Nial O'Boyle	Broadacre	Dallan Consultancy Ltd	East Midlands
Nicolas Gosman	Broadacre	Gosman Ag Consultants	East of England
Paul Laidler	Broadacre	Phoenix Performance Solutions	North East & Cumbria
Rachel McGauley	Broadacre	British Apples and Pears	West Midlands
Raymond King	Broadacre	Flynt Technology Ltd	South West
Richard Meredith	Broadacre	Dyson Farming Ltd	East Midlands
Richard Weightman	Broadacre	R and H Weightman	East of England
Rob Meadley	Broadacre	Brown & Co	Yorkshire & the Humber
Robert Misselbrook	Broadacre	Mylor Ventures Ltd	South West
Sarah Roberts	Broadacre	Niab	East of England
Scott Kirby	Broadacre	Harper Adams University	West Midlands
Stephan Haefele	Broadacre	Rothamsted Research	South East
Stuart Knight	Broadacre	Niab	East of England

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Full Name	Topic area	Organisation	Region
Tim Isaac	Broadacre	Ceres Research	East of England
Tom Allen-Stevens	Broadacre	British On Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN)	South East
Amanda McMurray	Forestry and bioeconomy	Amanda McMurray Limited	East of England
Andrew Stacey	Forestry and bioeconomy	Avgo Biotech Ltd	East Midlands
Anna Alessi	Forestry and bioeconomy	Biorenewables Development Centre	Yorkshire & the Humber
Catherine Allinson	Forestry and bioeconomy	Director	London
Catherine Birch	Forestry and bioeconomy	AgriFoodX Limited	Yorkshire & the Humber
Chris Eaglen	Forestry and bioeconomy	chris eaglen improvement projects	South East
Claire Flanagan	Forestry and bioeconomy	Kene B Corp	North West
Colin Tosh	Forestry and bioeconomy	Senior Agroforestry Researcher	North East & Cumbria
Harriet Bell	Forestry and bioeconomy	Riverford Organic Farmers Ltd.	South West
James Barnard	Forestry and bioeconomy	J & K Barnard (Farms) Ltd.	South West
James MacFarlane	Forestry and bioeconomy	Grantwise	Outside of the UK
Jen Vanderhoven	Forestry and bioeconomy	FREY Consulting	Scotland
Jonathan Thacker	Forestry and bioeconomy	University Of The West Of Scotland	Scotland
Kirk Siderman	Forestry and bioeconomy	CEO, Take Root Bio Limited	North East & Cumbria
Lucy Bates	Forestry and bioeconomy	Harper Adams University	South West
Marianne McHugh	Forestry and bioeconomy	West Devon Business Information Point Ltd	South West
Mariela Paz Aguilera Miranda	Forestry and bioeconomy	SilviBio	East of England
Paul Rhodes	Forestry and bioeconomy	Future Food Solutions Ltd	Yorkshire & the Humber
Po Yang	Forestry and bioeconomy	The University of Sheffield	Yorkshire & the Humber

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Full Name	Topic area	Organisation	Region
Rory Harding	Forestry and bioeconomy	Kent Wildlife Trust	South East
Sarah Buchanan	Forestry and bioeconomy	University of Strathclyde	Scotland
Sarah Faulkner	Forestry and bioeconomy	Faulkner and Mayne Sustainable Agriculture Ltd	West Midlands
Sean Dobbs	Forestry and bioeconomy	Forged Innovation Limited	Northern Ireland
Trudie Cooper	Forestry and bioeconomy	Bagshaws LLP	East Midlands
Victoria Herbert	Forestry and bioeconomy	Business Information Point	South West
Will John	Forestry and bioeconomy	Principal Consultant RSK ADAS Ltd	West Midlands
Will Simonson	Forestry and bioeconomy	Organic Research Centre	East of England
Alex Fisher	Horticulture	Hydronomy	West Midlands
Alicja Dzieciol	Horticulture	SilviBio Limited	Scotland
Charles Whitfield	Horticulture	Niab at East Malling	South East
David May	Horticulture	Hubl Logistics Limited	East of England
Edwin Moorhouse	Horticulture	G's Fresh	South East
Edwin Reyes	Horticulture	Promar International	North West
Emma Jane Garfield	Horticulture	Emma Garfield	East of England
Flora O'Brien	Horticulture	NIAB	South East
Francis Wamonje	Horticulture	Niab	South East
Graham Dow	Horticulture	Niab	East of England
Greg Crawford	Horticulture	NIAB (National institute of agricultural botany)	Yorkshire & the Humber
James Stevens	Horticulture	Innophyte Consulting	East of England
Jan Redpath	Horticulture	Angus Soft Fruits Ltd	Scotland
Katia Zacharaki	Horticulture	InnoPhyte Consulting ltd	West Midlands
Kevin Stephens	Horticulture	Agroceutical Products Ltd	Cymru Wales
Lauren Abraham	Horticulture	Promar International	Northern Ireland
Louisa Robinson Boyer	Horticulture	NIAB East Malling	South East
Mandy Lloyd	Horticulture	Cleobury Project Management	Cymru Wales
Martin Goodchild	Horticulture	University of Bedfordshire, retired from Delta-T Devices Ltd	East of England
Matevz Papp-Rupar	Horticulture	NIAB East Malling	South East
Olaf Swanzy	Horticulture	PNO Innovation	South East
Ralph Noble	Horticulture	microbiotech ltd	West Midlands
Rebecca Beveridge	Horticulture	Grow Partners	South East

Full Name	Topic area	Organisation	Region
Richard Harnden	Horticulture	Roseaceae Consulting Ltd	South East
Rob Merrall	Horticulture	Merralls Consulting Ltd	West Midlands
Stephen Bradstock	Horticulture	First Base Solutions Ltd	West Midlands
Sushma Shankar	Horticulture	Deep Planet	London
Sven Batke	Horticulture	Edge Hill University and Flavour Fresh Ltd	North West
Victoria Cooper	Horticulture	Merralls Consulting Ltd	West Midlands
Agatha Wildblood-Hawthorne	Livestock	Self. Hawthorne Dairy and Wildblood Farm	North East & Cumbria
Alamgir Hossain	Livestock	Digital Readiness and Intelligent Systems Ltd	North East & Cumbria
Alasdair Cook	Livestock	Mujika Ltd	East Midlands
Amy Cooper	Livestock	Chandler Watson Consultancy Ltd	West Midlands
Andrew Hardcastle	Livestock	Hardcastle Rural Surveyors Ltd	Yorkshire & the Humber
Andrew Walton	Livestock	WTMS	North West
Andy McGowan	Livestock	United Pig Cooperative	Scotland
Annie Rayner	Livestock	Evolving Agriculture	South West
Bethan John	Livestock	UK Agri-Tech Centre	West Midlands
Colin Potts	Livestock	Cottagequinn Enterprises Ltd	Northern Ireland
Conor Brown	Livestock	ICBF	Northern Ireland
Dave Ross	Livestock	Agrifood Investment Advisory LLP	Scotland
Douglas Bowden-Smith	Livestock	Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society	Scotland
Emily Mosley	Livestock	Bagshaws LLP	East Midlands
Emma Hawkins	Livestock	TBAT	South East
Greg Ricketts	Livestock	GSC Grays	Yorkshire & the Humber
Hannah Jones	Livestock	Farm Carbon Toolkit	South West
Harriet Scott	Livestock	RAFT Solutions Ltd	Yorkshire & the Humber
Holly Shearman	Livestock	Innovation for Agriculture / Royal Agricultural Society of England	South East
James Hague	Livestock	Dairy Club	East Midlands
James Stretton	Livestock	Black Sheep Technology Ltd (t/a FlockFinder)	South East
Jayne Brookman	Livestock	ElentecBio Ltd.	North West
John Stones	Livestock	Self employed consultant	East Midlands
Lindsay Whistance	Livestock	Organic Research Centre	Cymru Wales
Lisa Morgans	Livestock	Royal Agricultural University	South West



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Full Name	Topic area	Organisation	Region
Lizzie Downes	Livestock	Promar	West Midlands
Marta Ruano	Livestock	ABVista	Scotland
Matthew Sharman	Livestock	Devenish Nutrtrition (Retired from)	Yorkshire & the Humber
Matthew Sheehan	Livestock	Promar International Ltd	West Midlands
Peter Hoyle	Livestock	Promar International Ltd	North West
Peter Williams	Livestock	AG Bio Ltd	North West
Rachel Hayton	Livestock	Synergy Farm Health Limited	South West
Richard Hooson	Livestock	Agri- Eco Solutions	West Midlands
Richard Pearson	Livestock	Oxcel	Yorkshire & the Humber
Ruth Clements	Livestock	Restore Nature Ltd	South West
sam Hoste	Livestock	Quantech Solutions (UK) Ltd	Yorkshire & the Humber
samantha Green	Livestock	Hudson and Sanders	East Midlands
Siwan Howatson	Livestock	Mentera	Cymru Wales
Tabitha Acton	Livestock	Soil Association	North East & Cumbria
Will Dallimore	Livestock	Ngage Solutions	South East
Campbell Scott	New systems	Atomictractors Limited	West Midlands
Christine Adams	New systems	Mayflower Innovation	South East
Claire Rose	New systems	Graveltrack Consulting	East of England
Davina Fillingham	New systems	Partner Dee Atkinson & Harrison	Yorkshire & the Humber
Jack Farmer	New systems	LettUs Grow	South West
James Barsby	New systems	Intercil	South West
James Willcox	New systems	Mott MacDonald	South West
Julian Knight	New systems	www.fairmanknightandsons.com	East of England
Lyndsey Starr	New systems	PNO Consultants Ltd	North West
Muhammad Imran	New systems	Aston University	West Midlands
Paul Huggett	New systems	IUK-Business Connect (retired part time)	East Midlands
Paul Smith	New systems	Board Adviser to Aquagrain and IRTL	East of England
Richard Rampton	New systems	RuralAdvice Ltd	East of England
Tim Chater	New systems	Phoenix Ventures Ltd	South West

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Broadacre

Alice Mauchline | University of Reading

Organisation Website: University of Reading

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an agricultural ecologist and I have worked on a variety of research projects at the University of Reading since 2003. My PhD was in integrated pest management in oilseed rape and since then my research has broadened out into developing sustainable farming systems using participatory approaches. I've been awarded >£2M in funding as part of multi-disciplinary research collaborations with international consortia (as Co-Investigator). I have project leadership experience of international projects including grant budget and staff management (total budget as Reading Principle Investigator £361K).

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: BA(Hons), PhD

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Ana Reynolds | Oakbank

Organisation Website: oakbankgc.co.uk

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: Experienced agricultural professional and mixed farmer, with a strong track record in facilitation and knowledge exchange, research delivery and grant-funded project applications and management. Managing Director of Oakbank, supporting farmers and landowners across the UK to deliver habitat creation, stewardship schemes, and carbon and biodiversity-focused projects, and integrate nature-based solutions with productive arable systems. Previously Head of Engagement and Sustainable Farming & Research for Cereals & Oilseeds at AHDB, commissioning and managing R&D projects, overseeing a national network of strategic research farms and developing and implementing strategies to disseminate agricultural research, best practices and market insights to and between farmers and stakeholders. Strong track record of securing and managing successful R&D and innovation grant-funded projects, with funding from government, key industry bodies and commercial partners - ensuring compliance, timely reporting, and delivery of outcomes.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Plant breeding

Qualifications: MA (Cantab), BASIS (MBPR(Agric), Certificate in Sustainable Land Management)

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Aoife O Driscoll | NIAB

Organisation Website: www.niab.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I lead the development of farmer-focused research and associated contract trials business for crop protection and variety/agronomy interactions. I liaise with industry organisations / commercial companies at national and international level to develop proposals and secure funding for this work, and to ensure effective delivery. While working at Niab and ADAS, led and managed 30+ applied agriculture and horticulture focused projects and grants funded by Interreg Europe, Horizon 2020, AHDB, DEFRA, BBSRC and confidential commercial research. Commissioned 10+ on-farm trials and projects while working at Life Scientific

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Biostimulants; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Regulation / policy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc, MSc, PhD, BASIS

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Apostolos Papadopoulos | Crop Intellect Ltd

Organisation Website: www.cropintellect.co.uk

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been the lead for an EIC Accelerator project £1.4m and 5 Innovate UK grants worth £4m. I obtained a BSc in Agriculture from Plymouth University, MSc in Crop science and management and PhD in crop and soil research.

Skills: Agronomy; Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD in crop and soil sciences

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Arran Redman | Innovation for Agriculture

Organisation Website: <https://www.i4agri.org/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages; Salad crops; Tree crops; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Raised on Sycamore Farm in Derbyshire, I've been immersed in agriculture my entire life. Professionally, I bring over 8 years of sector experience, beginning in 2017 as a crop researcher with ADAS. Over the past 5 years, I have led and managed projects focused on nutrient and waste management, climate adaptation and mitigation, farm resilience, regenerative agriculture, and farmer-led innovation. My technical background is in soil science, though my career has required me to work across a wide range of thematic areas with adaptability and strategic oversight. Since joining Innovation for Agriculture, I have been responsible for the delivery of multi-stakeholder projects involving grant writing, project design, reporting, financial oversight, coordination, and delivery planning. Recent projects include: Climate Farm Demo (EU Horizon), Climate Smart Advisors (UKRI), Farm Net Zero (NL), the SOIL programme, Farm of the Future (RASE), and the DECIDE project (data-driven decision support tools). These initiatives span knowledge exchange, practical demonstration, and strategic dissemination—all underpinned by strong stakeholder relationships, on-the-ground impact, and long-term systems thinking. My combined experience in farm practice, technical knowledge, and project delivery places me well to lead, contribute to, and coordinate complex agricultural programmes.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables



Qualifications: BSc Environmental Science, MSc Environmental Soil Science, FACTS, BASIS

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Becky Howard | Processors and Growers Research Organisation

Organisation Website: www.pgro.org

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have worked in Agriculture and Environment for 35 years, with expertise in pulse and vegetable legume agronomy, pathology and entomology. I have managed multiple large co-funded projects including those supported by Innovate UK, Defra, EIP-Agri (RPA) and AHDB. I have also worked in EU Horizon projects, working with farmers to provide on-farm data to those projects. I currently manage one of the larger projects within the Farming Innovation Programme (NCS IUK10043778), which PGRO leads – this project has, as part of the work, farmer trials to evaluate the climate benefits and ecosystem services provided by increasing pulses and legumes in rotations, as well as improving knowledge of pulse agronomy. I have 30 years of experience conducting trials at all levels, including small plot trials, strip trials and field scale farmer trials, and have worked closely with farmers during my whole career, both as a triallist and as an advisor. I provide on-farm agronomy, IPM and pest, disease and weed management advice and I am on the BASIS and FACTS register.

Skills: Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc Environmental Science, MPhil Agriculture and Environment, PhD Agriculture and Environment, BASIS. FACTS, Seed Analysis

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Betty Bonnardel | Farmer Charlie Ltd

Organisation Website: Farmer Charlie Ltd

Region: London

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Viticulture; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: An award winning system engineer, fellow of the IET, expert in satellite, telecommunications and applications to agriculture, forestry and climate change. Through Farmer Charlie, I have developed communication systems and IOT sensors for a range of agritech and agrifood applications, including plug and play soil sensors.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Automation; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Circular economy; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Irrigation; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy; Regulation / policy; Renewable energy; Robotics; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: MSc and MBA, Prince 2 project manager

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Bruce Napier | NIAB

Organisation Website: NIAB

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Bruce is a Research Scientist with 34 years of experience in the contract management and delivery of applied crop research; collaborating with academic and industry partners; delivering knowledge exchange; and providing technical advice to farmers and agronomists. He is responsible for the contract management and delivery of vegetable and salad research trials advising on varieties and agronomy; managing and delivering research; contract trial services; reporting and presenting results to clients, the public and press. He works closely with funders (Defra, grower associations, seed companies, etc.) in identifying research projects, designing protocols and ensuring commercial applicability. He works on vegetable crops including onions, leeks, courgettes, pumpkins, brassicas, and leafy salads. This extends to speciality crops e.g. celeriac, radish, beetroot, winter squash, dwarf French beans, etc. he is involved in projects investigating the utilisation of emerging technologies in vegetable and salad production. He is a specialist in paludiculture, especially in the production of vegetables on lowland peat soils.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc

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Caroline Hobson | Soilplan Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.soilplan.co.uk/>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced agricultural professional with over a decade of expertise in agronomy, soil science, business development, and agricultural consultancy. I began my career with a degree in Biology (with research) before joining a commercial agricultural analytical laboratory. In my role within business development, I designed and coordinated trials in collaboration with the laboratory's network of stakeholders, leading to the creation of new service offerings and significant business enhancements. These services were developed in response to emerging opportunities within the agricultural sector. My particular areas of expertise include soil science, soil health, crop nutrition, soil carbon, ecology, biodiversity, and agricultural schemes and policy, such as ELMS and SFI. Following my time in the laboratory sector, I gained further experience working with agricultural business startups, where I contributed to grant applications and managed projects aligned with business growth and strategy. Building on this experience, I went on to establish my own company, specialising in soil services and agricultural consultancy, where I continue to deliver practical, science-led solutions to the farming industry. Alongside running my business, I have also embarked on a Soil Science and AI PhD at Cranfield University, further expanding my skills, research capabilities, and professional network within this evolving sector.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

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Qualifications: Bsc, FACTS, PhD (In study)

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Caroline Wellon | O3T Ltd

Organisation Website: O3T.co.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Salad crops; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: 20+ Years in agriculture covering most aspects of agriculture. Previously an agronomist and now managing director of small start up company specialising in innovation surrounding the use of oxygen to enhance the health and welfare of animals, specialising in chickens at present but keen to get into other sectors of agri food production specifically monogastric animals. 100% success in grant application

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Agronomy; Animal health & welfare; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: HND, BSc, BASIS, AMTRA

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Clive Blacker | Agrivation Ltd

Organisation Website: NA

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Tree crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I bring extensive expertise in precision agriculture, automation, and applied innovation, with a proven track record of delivering impactful R&D projects across the UK and internationally. My work spans the integration of advanced sensing technologies, hands free farming, and drone-based data capture to support improved agricultural decision-making and resource use efficiency. I have led and contributed to numerous Innovate UK and international funding programmes, driving the development and deployment of scalable agri-tech solutions in collaboration with industry, research, and policy stakeholders. My approach is grounded in practical, on-farm innovation, combining soil science, geospatial mapping, and agronomic insight to develop actionable, data-driven tools. This includes the design and implementation of smart farm trials, the application of machine learning to yield and spectral datasets, and the development of systems to assess soil variability, crop emergence, and pest activity. I have experience managing complex trials, analysing high-resolution data, and translating findings into commercial and environmental impact. With strong links to UK Agri-Tech Centres, research institutions, and industry networks, I am well positioned to support innovation projects. I am committed to using technology to address key challenges in productivity, sustainability, and climate resilience in agriculture.

Skills: Agronomy; Automation; Crop nutrition; Imaging / satellites; Robotics

Qualifications: HND Agriculture (Crops), Basis, Facts

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Colin Peters | Niab

Organisation Website: Niab

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Forages; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Many years experience as a commercial farm manager with Sentry Farming and trials farm manager for BBSRC based at Rothamsted. Currently work within the Farming System team at Niab as a Break Crop Specialist. Currently project managing various projects including Innovate projects. I also project manage the coordination of the Sugar Beet VL and RL system as well as the PGRO Descriptive List. I have recently completed work on Catchment Sensitive projects and training as well as scoping work for Paludiculture.

Skills: Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Natural capital; Renewable energy

Qualifications: BSc (Hons), EMBA, BASIS, Facts, Prince 2

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Daniel Kindred | ARC Agronomic Sciences Ltd

Organisation Website: ARC Agronomic Sciences Ltd

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Farmers son, Agriculture degree from University of Nottingham, PhD in Agronomy from Reading University. 18 years as Crop Researcher in ADAS. Led and managed multiple proposals & projects for AHDB, Defra, LINK, TSB, Innovate UK, EU. Co-founded the Yield Enhancement Network (www.yen.adas.co.uk). Led development of Agronomics approach for robust on-farm trials. Developed FarmPEP platform. Joined Anglo American in 2023 as Crop Scientist, developed concept of the Agronomy Research Circle (ARC) to connect & develop networks, tools and resources for on-farm research globally. Made redundant in December 2024 due to major strategic change in Anglo American. In 2025 set up independent consultancy and working with TEAM Ag UK delivering on-farm research.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Imaging / satellites; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc, PhD, FACTS

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David Clarke | Niab

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/about/people/david-clarke>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots;
Fieldscale vegetables

Skills and Experience

Experience: Specialising in spatial data analysis and on-farm applications of models, field trials, and long-term experiments focused on soil nutrition, health, and crop rotations. With extensive experience in spatial data analysis, crop modeling and supporting on-farm research. I have successfully secured and managed research funding from key industry bodies, including AHDB, Innovate UK, commercial partners, and charitable organisations with expertise across project design, implementation, and stakeholder engagement, ensuring effective research outcomes.

Skills: Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Data / AI / machine learning; Imaging / satellites; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, MSc, MRes, FACTS, PhD

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David Farley | AgriEnable

Organisation Website: www.agrienable.co.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Other livestock; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Passionate about all things food & farming, David graduated with an Honours degree in Agriculture from Harper Adams in 2001. He subsequently enjoyed a successful career that saw him working at senior levels across pretty much every stage of the supply-chain – literally from field to fork, on behalf of companies such as Greenvale, AM Fresh and Del Monte. This included stints in arable farm management, supply-chain management, plus commercial and business leadership across arable, fresh produce and CEA sectors.

Since 2016 he has been working as an independent consultant, trading as AgriEnable. David now applies his extensive end-to-end knowledge to enable a holistic and objective evaluation of both opportunity and challenge for stakeholders across food, farming and Agritech. He has a commercially pragmatic approach built upon an understanding of real-world food production challenge and robust knowledge of the true economics of food production that sees him work with innovators and technology developers to align their development with real ‘need’.

Much of his consultancy work lies with helping food & farming businesses create a workable strategic plan – supporting delivery where required. Recent relevant work includes the delivery of 4x FIP competition applications and the accelerated commercialisation of Agritech innovation for several different clients both domestically and internationally. Above all-else, David takes great satisfaction in working collaboratively with food & farming stakeholders to ‘make things happen’.

Skills: Agri-business management; Circular economy; Diversification & transition management; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc.(Hons) in Agriculture with Land & Farm Management.
Professional Membership of the Institute for Agricultural Management.

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David Redpath | Redpath Environmental Solutions LTD

Organisation Website: www.resniltld.com

Region: Northern Ireland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Viticulture; Bioeconomy; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over the past 17 years, I've led and supported a diverse portfolio of agriculture-related research and development projects, combining renewable energy, nutrient recovery and novel farming systems. With a PhD in Solar Thermal Engineering and an MSc in Renewable Energy, I've designed, modelled and optimised solar-driven processes—from evacuated-tube collectors to solar-assisted anaerobic digestion—to improve energy efficiency on farms. As Research Fellow at Queen's University Belfast, I co-managed the Limelight project (Green Innovation Fund) to integrate nutrient recovery from animal wastes, and contributed to the Northwest Hydrogen H2M feasibility study for BEIS. I've investigated vertical farming synergies with the hydrogen economy, and evaluated treatment and valorisation of AD digestates to close nutrient loops. In consultancy at Redpath Environmental Solutions, I oversee renewable energy system optimisation and nutrient-neutrality assessments for agricultural clients. My project management skill set encompasses grant proposal development and budget oversight (EPSRC, BEIS, Green Innovation Fund), resource procurement, multi-partner coordination, and impact analysis. I've authored 30+ peer-reviewed publications, supervised students, delivered international lectures, and consistently translated scientific findings into viable, farm-scale solutions.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Circular economy; Natural capital; Renewable energy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD, MSc, BSc (Hons) Soil Nutrient Health Scheme (NI)

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Deborah Crossan | Innovation for Agriculture

Organisation Website: l4agri.org

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over 20 years working in agriculture across sectors and organisations including FWAG, Agricultural College, Rural Support Network, Rase and Innovation for Agriculture. from a background in practical agriculture, conservation and allied industries. Recent projects include: NE, Horizon Europe, UKRI, National Trust and projects for grant making trusts. covering soils, GHG audits, mitigation plans, study tours and demo events

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Circular economy; Diversification & transition management; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc Hons Land Management, National Education Board Supervisory Studies, Teaching Cert in Further Education,

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Dominic Amos | Cope Seeds & Grain Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://copeseds.co.uk/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I worked at the Organic Research Centre managing research projects and grants, including EIP and Horizon 2020. I have vast experience of on-farm research networks, including a long established organic variety trial network, and a significant contribution to various Innovative Farmers field labs. We have a published a paper in Agronomy for Sustainable Development, and a major contribution within the Defra funded LiveWheat project.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, PGDip

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Elizabeth Stockdale | Niab

Organisation Website: www.niab.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have over 25 years applied soil and nutrient management research experience, largely on farms, rather than in laboratories. I have carried out a wide range of research projects connected with the study of nutrient cycling in soils and with the environmental impact of farming systems. I moved to Niab and became head of the integrative interdisciplinary Farming Systems research team in 2017 where I regularly work with Niab's farmer members to design and deliver on-farm monitoring and research. Between 2017 and 2022, I led the AHDB-BBRO-funded Soil Biology and Soil Health Partnership and worked with farmer groups around the UK to develop farmer-focussed approaches to measurement of soil health and on-farm toolkits for improved soil management. Most recently I have been working with farmers in the Fens to capture their local soil knowledge to feed into land use planning. I am also leading engagement activity for paludiculture to create a community of interest around funded projects that explore options for more sustainable management of lowland agricultural peat, including novel crops and wetter farming systems. I have also recently co-ordinated provision of business resilience support with the transitional removal of direct payments and the introduction of Environmental Land Management schemes.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Enhanced management / decision support; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, PhD, MSc Development Management

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Ellie Roberts | NIAB

Organisation Website: NIAB

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Defra funded research projects in opportunities to increase utilisation of underused forage crops. APHA forage crop technical expert. Programme manager for UK National Variety Listing and Descriptive listing trial programmes and decision meetings for forage crops. Centre for High Carbon Capture Cropping Herbal leys and grasslands. Advice and consultancy on herbal leys and diverse swards, agrienvironment, SFI, knowledge exchange and publications

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc, DTLLS, MSc, PgDip, MBA, FACTS

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Emily Pope | Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF)

Organisation Website: <https://leaf.eco/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: Dr. Emily Pope is an experienced agricultural professional with a strong background in project and grant management, research communication, and sustainable farming systems. She is currently based at LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming), where she contributes to the delivery of innovative farming projects, knowledge exchange, and the advancement of sustainable agriculture through the LEAF Network and partnerships. Previously, Emily held a key role at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), where she was instrumental in managing a portfolio of research projects and ensuring the effective translation of scientific knowledge into practical tools for farmers. Her work involved close collaboration with researchers, farmers, and industry stakeholders, and she played a leading role in developing strategic programmes, including farmer-facing events and communications. Emily holds a PhD from Harper Adams University, where her research focused on applied agricultural science. Her academic and professional career has consistently centred on bridging the gap between science and practice, with a strong emphasis on delivering impact at farm level. Emily brings a combination of technical expertise, strategic thinking, and operational experience to agricultural research and innovation programmes, particularly those that foster collaboration, sustainability, and practical outcomes for the farming community.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD in sustainable agricultural soil and water management

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Emma Powlett | Powlett & Associates Ltd

Organisation Website: Powlett & Associates Ltd

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise:

Skills and Experience

Experience: Emma Powlett has 30+ years of experience in rural project/grant management and agricultural development, working with public agencies (Defra/MAFF) and as an independent consultant. **Project/Grant Management:** Managed large-scale programmes, including Defra's £24M ERDP (2000-2006), resulting in £70M economic impact through farm diversification. Advised local authorities on the Rural England Prosperity Fund (2022-2024), drafting programmes and overseeing delivery. Secured £8M in public grants (2017-2024) for rural projects valued at £22M, including business diversification and environmental schemes. Authored 7 Local Development Strategies for the LEADER Programme (2014-2020) and appraised 200+ grant applications. **Agriculture:** Led a project for Defra's Farm Resilience Programme (2021-2022), 'Soils for Sugar', to improve soil management for sugar beet farmers. Developed regional ERDP policies and technical guidance, aligning with national strategies. Managed Objective 5b Programme (1993-1999), supporting rural business innovation. **Collaboration:** Chair of Anglia Rural Consultants; member of CLA committees. Co-authored reports (e.g., Norfolk Environmental Skills Gap Analysis, 2024) and regional strategies to engage stakeholders. Proven ability to deliver rural economic growth through grant administration, policy development, and cross-sector partnerships.

Skills: Agri-business management; Circular economy; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: MRICS; Cert Business Management (Aston University); Diploma in Rural Estate Management, Royal Agricultural College.

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Eric Ober | Niab

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots

Skills and Experience

Experience: Have worked in agriculture and plant science research for 30+ years; experience with budget, staff and project workflow management, writing business cases; employed working on farms in younger years

Skills: Agronomy; Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Irrigation; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: PhD, MS, BSc

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Erin Matlock | PGRO

Organisation Website: pgro.org

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have professionally been in the agriculture business for over 15 years, primarily working in technical and knowledge transfer roles. I have always had projects that involve farmers, which were not always externally funded, that include product development, introducing new technology and expanding current offerings/knowledge geographically. In my currently role I am managing a few projects. One of the internally funded projects is working with a farmer network monitoring impacts of tight legume rotations. One of the externally funded projects that I have coordinated and managed with multiple farmers is a Bean variety trial in Scotland, that is partially funded by Innovative Farmers. I am also involved in the NCS project that has 17 different partners and my role is work alongside and support the Pulse Pioneers, which is the farmer component of the project.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Natural capital

Qualifications: BASIS, B.Sc in Agriculture, M.Sc. in Plant Science

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Guido Drago | Polygenyn Ltd

Organisation Website: Polygenyn Ltd

Region: Cymru Wales

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been responsible for writing or managing 20 projects over 20 years. The first was an EU project in 2001, Other grants include: A4i, SBRI: Innovative Environmental Sensors, TSB: Formulated Products, 2 Spark Awards, Local Investment Fund, Innovation Voucher, Single Investment Award, US Marketing Scholarship Programme, 2x Technology Exploitation Programmes, DTI BLOWISE Demonstrator Award, British Heart Foundation Junior Research Fellowship, Royal Society Research and The National Heart Research Fund Travel Fellowship. More specifically in the Agritech sector I was responsible for writing the PathoScout Field Trial application which scored in the top 3 applications for that round. I have also been heavily involved as project partner in Agritech Innovate UK grants between 2011 and 2025, Syeild, LactDetect, Spraysaver and Pathoscout. I am familiar with the grant application process on multiple platforms including Innovate UK and SBRI. I am also familiar with project and partner management on the IFS system and familiar with uploading and managing documents on this platform. I am familiar with working within the Agritech sector specifically communicating with farmers and growers to organise field trials for the detection of mastitis in milk and the detection of pathogens in cereal crops, potatoes and vineyards.

Skills: Agri-business management; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: BSc, MSc Forensic Science, PhD Biochemical Genetics, Cert. Business Marketing Strategy Kellogg Graduate School of Management,



P.G.Dip.Business Enterprise & Development.

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Hannah Jones | Niab

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/>

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am the Weed Management Specialist at Niab, responsible for managing research projects on weed control methodologies, developing grant proposals, and communicating findings to growers and other stakeholders. We run field trials and glasshouse experiments, working on behalf of members of Niab's agronomy programme, commercial customers, and as part of grant-funded research consortia. Before joining Niab, I spent five years investigating photoperiodic flowering genes in winter barley as part of an iCASE BBSRC-funded PhD in partnership with Syngenta Seeds. The research involved a multi-year programme of field trial and laboratory work and required careful project management. Prior to this, I worked on grant-funded research projects at the University of Sheffield, contributing towards published research outputs in crop physiology and towards future funding applications.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc Biology, PhD in Crop Science

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Harry Henderson | BASIS Registration Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://basis-reg.co.uk/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages

Skills and Experience

Experience: Working at John Deere UK Ltd, 2005 to 2013 I was tasked with running product development and product focus groups involving farmers and factory engineers from all parts of the world. At AHDB 2013 to 2023 I was heavily involved in the launch of the knowledge exchange platform; Monitor Farms. Arable Business Groups with budget responsibly and reporting. Here at BASIS I create and deliver the NRoSO program to over 200 trainers annually.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Crop protection; Natural capital

Qualifications: BASIS Certificate in Crop Protection (full) March 2002 to date. FACTS December 2003 to date. BASIS Soil and Water Management. BASIS Certificate in Environmental Management January 2024 to date. Level 3 Award in Education and Training 2024. Cranfield University Senior Management training.

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Harry Parsons | SRH Agribusiness Ltd

Organisation Website: <http://www.srhagribusiness.co.uk>

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Forages; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: My experience in agriculture began with part-time weekend work on a 3,000-acre beef and sheep farming system, where I worked most weekends and school/university holidays between the ages of 12-22, learning through practical application the ins and outs of the farming system and agricultural industry, and fostered a true passion for the sector. At age 18, I began a degree in agriculture with farm business management at Harper Adams University, and during the placement year of this degree, I worked as a trainee rural business adviser at SRH Agribusiness LTD, advising a myriad of farming businesses, from arable to dairy, across the northwest of England. During this year, I worked with farmers successfully applying, delivering, and managing a cumulative total of £2,700,000 worth of grant and scheme applications within schemes including FTF, IETF, CS, SFI, FIPL, and FETF. Since graduating with a First Class Honours at HAU, I returned to SRH, and my work has included managing a £2.2 million innovative IETF project for an Agri-Food business, delivering on three contracts of the FFRF (including delivering workshops with large groups of farmers), and providing strategic business advice including producing financial forecasts for bank funding applications.

Skills: Agri-business management; Data / AI / machine learning; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Natural capital

Qualifications: First Class BSc (Hons), BASIS Cert in Sustainable Land Management, BIAC Foundation 1, Land App Accredited Professional - SFI & CS, Microsoft Specialist in MS Word

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Hassan Awashra | Niab

Organisation Website: www.niab.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced agricultural researcher with a strong academic and practical background, focused on crop protection, pest management, and sustainable farming systems in potatoes and arable crops. My work integrates scientific research with practical implementation to enhance crop productivity and food security. With a BSc in Plant Science, I specialised in improving IPM strategies. I led NGO projects on wastewater irrigation for olives and forage crops, and developing a more efficient system for farmers' compensation. I hold an MSc in Plant Biotechnology and Enterprise at Durham University, focusing on plant pathology, pathogen attack mechanisms, and the translation of scientific knowledge into products to optimise crop protection. My career includes managing field trials in Northeast England, specialising in biopesticides, disease control, and IPM strategies for potatoes and cereal crops. I have extensive experience in grant writing, securing over £250,000 in funding, and leading research teams in agribusiness and environmental consultancy. Currently, as a Potato Research Agronomist at Niab, I manage potato fertilisation, disease, and farming systems trials, coordinating research projects, industry collaborations, and conference presentations. My expertise in funded research, trial management, and agricultural innovation enables me to provide significant advice for sustainable crop production and food security.

Skills: Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Imaging / satellites; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc in Plant Science, MSc in Plant Biotechnology and Enterprise, BASIS in Crop Protection - Agriculture, (ongoing)

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Hassan Bagheri | B-Hive Innovations

Organisation Website: <https://www.b-hiveinnovations.co.uk/>

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have extensive experience in project and grant management within the agricultural R&D sector, currently serving as a Project Manager at B-hive Innovations. I oversee a diverse portfolio of Innovate UK and commercially funded projects, supporting the full lifecycle—from proposal development and budgeting to delivery, reporting, and exploitation. I have a strong track record of coordinating multi-partner consortia, managing relationships between growers, researchers, and industry stakeholders to ensure successful project outcomes. My background is rooted in crop science, and I have worked on a range of projects focused on potatoes, sweet potatoes, brassicas, and other horticultural crops. These projects span precision agriculture, gene editing, disease detection, and sustainable farming practices. I work closely with growers to trial and implement practical, data-driven solutions on-farm, ensuring innovations are aligned with real-world agricultural needs. I'm well-versed in Innovate UK's processes and compliance requirements, and I bring a collaborative and structured approach to project facilitation. I am passionate about supporting farmer-led innovation and enabling knowledge exchange that results in tangible, sustainable improvements in farm productivity and environmental impact.

Skills: Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Enhanced management / decision support; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD

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Heather Sanders | Agrisound Ltd

Organisation Website: agrisound.io

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Bioeconomy; Monogastrics; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Plant molecular biology and physiology research. Project and grant management, particularly on Innovate UK projects, implementing industry-led research projects worth over £2M in aggregate in the last 3 years.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Diagnostics & sensors; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: Bsc, MRes, PhD Environmental and Plant Biology

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Henry Birt | The University of Manchester

Organisation Website: <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/>

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Soft fruit; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I possess advanced expertise in agricultural and ecological research, supported by a PhD in Agricultural Science. I have demonstrated proven interdisciplinary project management abilities through roles as a Research Associate at The University of Manchester and previously at Penn State and the University of Queensland. I have experience leading research projects, supervising students and technical staff, and managing project logistics across international collaborations. I have successfully secured over £125,000 in competitive research funding, highlighted by a recent £60,000 Impact Accelerator Award for a soil health project. This demonstrates strong grant management capabilities, from identification of funding opportunities to successful application and award management. My agricultural expertise covers soil science, plant microbe interactions (beneficial or pathogenic), and sustainable farming practices, evidenced by numerous peer-reviewed scientific publications and knowledge exchange activities with diverse stakeholders. My collaborations have included government (Natural England, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries), community groups (Manchester Urban Diggers), and industry (Farm Urban, Australian Banana Growers Council). I have strong skills in data analysis, communication, and managing both research execution and funding acquisition.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Data / AI / machine learning; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD in Agricultural Science (University of Queensland), BSc Hons Environmental Science

Jack Pierce | Terrafarmer

Organisation Website: <https://terrafarmer.co.uk/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Jack, a Harper Adams University graduate in Agriculture with Farm Business Management, is an agribusiness consultant at Terrafarmer. He advises on sustainable and profitable farming, drawing from his experience from previous roles. With hands-on farm work and strategic consultancy experience, he helps clients navigate agricultural transitions and adopt innovative technologies. Jack has worked across England and Scotland and understands the challenges farmers face. Jack's passion is driving innovative practices and technologies on farm. This has been shown through his track record of funding success and project deliverables. Jack takes a proactive approach to projects and enjoys problem-solving.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Biostimulants; Circular economy; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Robotics; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BASIS soil and Water qualification, Qalsafe Level 3 Award in Mental Health First Aid.

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Jack Wrangham | Drone Ag Limited

Organisation Website: www.droneag.farm

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots;
Fieldscale vegetables

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over the last 8 years I have worked in an agtech focused company, with a high spend on R&D, especially around drones and AI, but also satellite and robotics. I work closely with a number of farmers and agronomy companies. I have also written two successful grant applications, which we have completed over the last 3 years.

Skills: Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Enhanced management / decision support; Imaging / satellites; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: na

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James Fortune | Vegetable Consultancy Services (UK) Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.vcsagronomy.com/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Viticulture

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am project lead on one UKRI project - INSPeCT - <https://chapsolutions.co.uk/news/rooting-for-innovation-project-set-to-explore-novel-post-harvest-solutions/>, and a work package lead on another - <https://britishgrowers.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/INNOVATE-UK-FUSED-Press-Release.pdf>. I also manage many research and development trials for commercial clients. I am an agronomist.

Skills: Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Biostimulants; Crop protection; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching

Qualifications: BSc, PhD, BASIS, MRSB and IAGrM. I am also an ambassador for the BSPP and part of the AAB Plant Pathology Group.

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Jonathan Gill | Agronomic digital innovation ltd

Organisation Website: <https://agdigitalinnovation.com/>

Region: Cymru Wales

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Salad crops; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: At UPL I had a digital budget for R&D projects and implemented 3 projects in budget time at HAU i was Responsible for identifying and writing technical sections of project bids, both government and privately funded for a diverse range of engineering projects which contribute towards profitability of the National Centre of Precision Farming.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Automation; Crop protection; Data / AI / machine learning; Imaging / satellites; Robotics

Qualifications: BEng robotics and automated systems, NSCH 2019 "how do we embrace automation in agriculture, MIAgrE and soon to be Chartered. C&G PA2

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Joseph Martlew | NIAB

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/>

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Forages

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an applied researcher, leading a portfolio of applied research and knowledge exchange activities across the agricultural sector with a diverse range of stakeholders. I have successfully co-led and delivered numerous grant-funded and commercially-funded projects within this space.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Biology (Plant Science); MPhil "Traffic and tillage management for row crops in Sub Saharan Africa"; PhD "Quantifying and alleviating subsoil compaction in arable soils"; BASIS Agriculture (R/E/7506/IFM); FACTS (FE/5938); BASIS Advanced Plant Protection Award; BASIS Advanced Soil and Water Management

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Julia Cooper | Organic Research Centre

Organisation Website: www.organicresearchcentre.com

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Biomass; Forages; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have an extensive history of applied research in agricultural soils management. I have worked in academia and taught soil science, as well as managing a range of European and UK projects linked to nutrient management, crop rotations, composting, and greenhouse gas emissions. I currently work directly with farmers on a number of co-created projects linked to regenerative and organic farming in the UK.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc Soil Science, MSc Compost Science, PhD Soil Carbon and Nitrogen Cycling in Agricultural systems

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Katie Slawson | SRH Agribusiness LTD

Organisation Website: <http://www.srhagribusiness.co.uk>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: With a lifelong background in agriculture and a strong foundation in dairy farming, I bring hands-on experience and deep sector knowledge to my work. I have successfully project managed several large-scale Farming Transformation Fund grant projects, delivering innovative, high-impact outcomes that have significantly benefited clients. Additionally, I have contributed to three Future Farm Resilience Fund contracts, where I facilitated webinars for large groups of farmers focused on financial management and business planning. My current work also includes involvement in multiple major landscape recovery projects. As a passionate and committed adviser, I pride myself on offering honest, practical guidance with a personable, down-to-earth approach. I am confident, approachable, and genuinely invested in helping farming businesses thrive. My expertise covers rural grant and scheme applications, project delivery, and strategic business management—supporting clients in navigating complex funding systems and building long-term sustainability and resilience.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Robotics

Qualifications: BSc, BIAC Foundation 1 Course, BASIS Principles of Sustainable Land Management Course, BASIS Certificate in Sustainable Land Management Course, Member of BASIS Environmental Advisers Register

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Khalid Mahmood | sawie Ltd

Organisation Website: www.sawie.co.uk

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tree crops; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I've helped projects at Rothamsted with values upto £5million. I've excellent project management skills. I've experience of using project management tools. I've good sense of planning and budgeting. I've worked on delivering projects with in budget an times.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: PhD

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Kirstie Speed | CLM Trading Company Ltd

Organisation Website: CLM Trading Company Ltd

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Soft fruit; Viticulture; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have previously worked on the Opti-Oat project funded through Innovate UK whilst working at PepsiCo, followed by the Potato-LITE project application. I left the company as the project began. In Opti-Oat I supported data collection and interpretation, supporting the production of the Oat Growth Guide. In the Potato-LITE project I spearheaded the consortium development and study design, culminating in the application. Since then I have been working on Countryside Stewardship, Sustainable Farming Incentive and Landscape Recovery applications. My main role is facilitating 6 farmer groups from Kent to Shropshire, supporting project development to deliver environmental outcomes. The groups work collaboratively to deliver countryside stewardship schemes, develop bespoke projects (we are currently working on a water infrastructure project) and engage with the general public. In these schemes I manage everything from organizing meetings to developing projects, sourcing funders, grant applications, contract management, financial management and reporting.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Circular economy; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, BASIS Env Reg, BASIS foundation in Agronomy

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Kiryon Skippen | TEAM Ag UK

Organisation Website: www.teamaguk.com

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Grew up in mixed farming. After my degree worked for PBI then Bayer in EU trials co-ordination, then led R&D agronomy teams for BASF before moving into commercial strategic roles where I started and ran national farmer groups.. Joined a distributor and developed/built new service areas into the business Eg Healthy Soils as well as building up large client base for business advice. In 2017 I started up a Capital raising business into Agricultural ventures internationally. This led to the formation of TEAM Ag UK which helps develop new solutions for farmers. We work across farms and supply chains using a farmer led approach. Therefore I have experience in on the ground farming, farm group management, project management, science, finance and business management of various sizes and scale.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc Hons (Biochemistry) BASIS, FACTS

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Laura Beaumont | British On Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN)

Organisation Website: www.bofin.org.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Bioeconomy

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am Head of projects at the British On-Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN), set up to represent farmers who carry out on farm trials, seeking a more scientific approach. We are the leading providers of farmer-led trials in UK, with 70 farmers currently contracted to deliver trials across four major Defra-funded projects. BOFIN works with scientists to ensure trials results are accurate and replicable but can be practically carried out on farm without specialist equipment. We set up platforms to upskill farmers and provide a robust means of testing innovations. We develop communities around projects to help farmers share experience, best practice and knowledge to advance adoption of new technologies & the benefits these accrue for farmers. As Head of projects, I lead the management of the projects, reporting, resource management and development of processes. Due to the nature of the projects this means liaising directly with farmers to ensure that the trials will both provide results that are impactful on farm but also help to deliver the aims of the projects to ensure the project delivers outputs. I have extensive experience of the practical and administrative elements of running a farm business from years of working on my family farm.

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop nutrition; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: BA History, Prince 2 Foundation and Practitioner, currently studying MSP (Managing Successful Programmes)

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Lesley Boyd | National Institute of Agricultural Botany

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have led and participated in research and development projects related to cereal and broadleaf production for over 30 years. My main area of expertise is in cereal and broadleaf pathology. Since 2018 I have been working with industry and commercial farming organisations through Innovate projects to translate Niab research into practical applications that address current issues around arable and horticultural production. I am currently a member of the UK Mycotoxin Forum and UK Ergot Working group. I have collaborated with many UK stakeholders, including BASF, Syngenta, G's Fresh, Limagrain, KWS, RAGT, Elsoms, Bayer and AHDB, as well as farmer organisations, including LEAF and the Morley Agricultural Foundation.

Skills: Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Natural capital; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: PhD, MSc, BSc

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Lindsay Hargreaves | Lindsay Hargreaves Limited

Organisation Website: www.lindsayhargreaves.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over 30yrs front-line experience in large scale farm management prior to establishing own consultancy based on business planning, new technology and water resources for agriculture. Track record of successfully planning, delivering and commissioning large, complex capital projects in crop storage and processing, irrigation infrastructure and business reorganisation. In the past 15yrs, work with Innovate UK as project monitoring officer and grant application assessor, also work as a participant in a number of Innovate UK funded projects in various roles including project lead, consortium member, project manager and innovation manager.

Skills: Agri-business management; Automation; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Irrigation; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, FRAgS, FIAgrM, NSch, Basis, Facts

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Lydia Smith | Programme Leader

Organisation Website: www.niab.com; www.carboncapturecropping.co.uk

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Forages; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been working as a research leader in practical agricultural and horticultural projects for more than 35 years; many of which either involved farmers directly, or had a specific farmer interaction implicit in delivery. I either led or co - led 20 of over 35 projects in this space. My research has been funded by a broad range of funders including Defra (and MAFF) BBSRC, NERC AHDB, HDC, EU, plus a number of private industry and small charities such as Felix Cobbold, Agricultural Charities etc. This was preceded by a short period in university lecturing on soil science and environmental biology. In addition to research myself I have supervised more than 15 students for PhD all of which were in subjects relating to soil ecology land reclamation for agriculture and amenity use of damaged land. Having set up NIAB innovation Farm, my work often includes talking groups of farmers large and small about relevant innovations and Agritech. Recently I have also been working as a science and farmer outreach lead at the farmer-facing FarmED a PIC based in the Cotswolds (Literally looking at Farmer Education through lectures events and discussions).

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc. MSc. PhD.

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Mark Fletcher | Niab

Organisation Website: NIAB

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I've been involved in project management for the last 20 years in both agriculture and horticultural crops in both research and commercial areas. I was part of the soft fruit technology group at Reading University and our sole funding came from industry this included companies such as Berry Gardens and Marks and Spencer Plc. In addition my post doc was paid for by British Polythene Industries which again was funded by industry. I've been involved in grant writing within some of these projects and assisting in other university grant applications for Nerc and BBSRC applications.

Skills: Agronomy; Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Natural capital

Qualifications: Ph. D, M.Sc, B.Agr, Basis, Facts, Basis Diploma

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Mark Lindley | Hartpury University and College

Organisation Website: <https://www.hartpury.ac.uk/for-business/digital-innovation-farm>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: As Project Officer my current role involves liaising with farmers, government bodies, funding organisations and other key stakeholders to source and secure grants and funding. Previous roles include providing investment readiness assessments and writing investment propositions for funding and equity investors. My career in farming and farming technologies, encompasses experience of managing sales and support teams, along with participation in multi-disciplinary teams in multi-national corporates.

Skills: Agri-business management; Diagnostics & sensors; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Agriculture

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Mary Dimambro | Cambridge Eco Ltd

Organisation Website: www.cambridgeeco.co.uk and
www.youtube.com/@sustainablefoodproduction3213

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Forages; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: Mary has 20 years of project management experience, leading and coordinating projects with farmers, consultants, academics, and government agencies. She has secured 27 funding applications for diverse agricultural research projects, from novel organic biopesticide trials and reducing the use of peat in horticulture, to investigating plastics and microplastics in agriculture. Funding sources include Innovate UK, WRAP, Environment Agency, National Trust, Scottish Government, Defra and AD sites. Mary has managed scientific trials investigating the use of organic materials (digestates, composts, frass, manures) on crop production, soil quality, and plant growth across various environments, including arable land, grassland, brownfield sites, polytunnels, and glasshouses. She is dedicated to reducing ammonia emissions with livestock farmers by trialling novel materials on FYM and slurry stores. Since 2004, Mary has focused on reducing farming impacts through research and supporting farmers with applying for funding and managing projects. As a Land Management Advisor and Project Manager for Natural England (2005-2013), she gained expertise in agri-environment funding and capital grants. Her areas of knowledge include biodiversity, soil health, water quality, greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions and carbon sequestration. Mary has also facilitated >100 farm advice events, including webinars, workshops and field walks.

Skills: Diversification & transition management; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc in Environmental Biology with Italian (1997). MSc Crop Protection (1999) Institute of Arable Crop Research. PhD 'The effects of environmental change on plant growth and nitrogen metabolism in arctic and temperate vegetation' (2003). Institute of Biological Sciences, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. FACTS (since 2016). Nutrient Management Planning additional FACTS course (2017). BASIS Environmental Advisers Register.

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Megan Vasko | AbacusBio International Limited

Organisation Website: www.abacusbio.com

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an accredited programme manager with over 15 years of experience spanning both start-ups and corporate environments. My expertise includes Agile and Waterfall methodologies, stakeholder-driven project planning, and securing high-value contracts. At AbacusBio, I manage a portfolio of complex initiatives across multiple clients and geographies, ensuring successful project delivery and strong client relationships. My experience in securing funding includes several commercial initiatives, such as £12m from Bayer Crop Science. Smaller amounts have been secured through grants, such as a DEFRA Tender (£55K) on dual purpose heritage breeds assessment. In the agricultural sector, I have led projects that integrate technology and genetics to drive innovation. Previously, at Open Food Chain, I managed a blockchain-enabled anti-slavery initiative in Southeast Asian fisheries and played a key role in the design and launch of customer-facing traceability tech solution in the juice industry. I also secured sponsorship for the StrikeTwo Summit. My work has involved business development, strategic marketing, and operational efficiency improvements, all tailored to the needs of the agriculture and food industries. With a strong background in change management and stakeholder engagement, I bring a results-driven approach to project and grant management within the agricultural sector.

Skills: Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Regulation / policy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc - Medical Dietetics, MSc - Public Health Research

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Nathan Morris | NIAB

Organisation Website: www.niab.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been actively involved in the knowledge exchange and farmer training activities including the NIAB Training Programme (<https://www.niab.com/services/training/technical-agronomy-training>) and have participated in national farming events such as Cereals where over the past years the 'soil pit' has been a major attraction and involved many 1-2-1 discussions with growers. I have a particular interest and expertise in farming systems and the impacts on soil structure and fertility whilst maintaining crop productivity. I have been actively involved with many projects funded through AHDB, Defra, EU Seventh Framework programme which have included the dissemination of results to groups of farmers, agronomists and allied businesses.

Skills: Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD, FACTS

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Nial O'Boyle | Dallan Consultancy Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://cattleeye.com/>

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Experience delivering complex agricultural infrastructure projects across large-scale dairy and feedlot operations, from initial concept to operational handover. Proven ability to manage multidisciplinary teams, budgets, timelines, and risk. Dairy management • Managed and trained staff, expansion of dairies in Michigan and Iowa from 2010-2016 Project management examples • Start up of 8000 head dairy company in South Dakota and Iowa (2012-2016) • Genomic testing project for 50,000 head • Records and delivery of shipments for export from several dairies to Middle East • Initiated dairy welfare training program, adopted by 100s of dairy employees across several dairies • Largest GEA robot dairy , Michigan 2018 o 1500 cow, 24 robot stall dairy o Managed start-up phase to completion Grant applications • Team member for UK machine vision agtech company application in 6 UKRI grants EU grants, with 1 successful UK and 1 successful European grant 2021-2024 • Coordinated the proposal as lead applicant on a successful Farming Innovation Program grant in 2022 in collaboration with UK University

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Automation

Qualifications: BVSc MS MBA (PhD viva passed, currently completing corrections) The MBA

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Nicolas Gosman | Gosman Ag Consultants

Organisation Website: Www.gosmanagconsultanssolutions.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: 37 years in commercial plant breeding and academic plant science. Highlights: leading R&D teams with NIAB, Bayer Crop Science and R&D manager reporting to the board in biotech spinouts in UK and Australia

Skills: Agri-business management; Agronomy; Biostimulants; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: Bsc Hons. Botany & Genetics, MSC Seed Technology, MSC Plant Genetics, PhD Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions

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Paul Laidler | Phoenix Performance Solutions

Organisation Website: [linkedin.com/in/paullaidlerntd](https://www.linkedin.com/in/paullaidlerntd)

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Salad crops; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Specifically, I have worked in the dairy industry, come from a mixed farming background (Cattle, sheep, pigs and arable) and have experience of AD systems from the food industry. I have worked previously in the many areas of sustainability and waste recycling, with direct experience with three companies involved in converting food waste into digestate fertilizer, bio gas and carbon black. Also, converting farm manure into pelletised fertilizer for Hydroponic farming and field crops. I have operated in the Clean Tech space for over 15 years and managed hydroponics projects to minimise water use in food production and solar irrigation projects to make best use of rain water for more efficient farming. This includes the design and implementation of solar powered crop irrigation and drying systems to improve produce yields and increase the efficiency of farms and agribusiness enterprises as well as to ensure sustainability of natural and renewable resources.'

Skills: Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Renewable energy

Qualifications: BSc, MBA

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Rachel McGauley | British Apples and Pears

Organisation Website: <https://www.britishapplesandpears.co.uk>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Tree crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have a PhD from Harper Adams on plant physiology. I was a research manager at AHBD for 9 years. I worked in horticulture for 8 years and cereals and oilseeds for one year. From the start of my PhD to my current role, I have worked closely with farmers to deliver research solutions to their problems. My areas of expertise are fruit, horticulture, cereals and oilseeds, IPM and crop protection. I now manage the BAPL research programme. As part of this I write calls to tender for research, assess applications and grant funding. I manage the R&D research budget for BAPL. I also build project consortia and write funding applications to access funding from elsewhere. I am also a research application assessor for Innovate UK.

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Biostimulants; Crop protection; Irrigation; Natural capital

Qualifications: PhD, BcC, NAHort

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Raymond King | Flynt Technology Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/flynt-technology/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a Chartered Engineer with over 10 years experience in Agricultural Engineering, designing, developing, testing and manufacturing a range of machinery in robotics, energy, livestock, aerospace and construction. I have worked with notable companies such as Small Robot Company, Teagle Machinery, Claydon Drills, BioFactory and JCB. I have also successfully managed Innovate UK grant funded projects in the agtech sector delivering technology such as autonomous spot spraying robots and novel interrow mowing robots. I managed team workload, materials budgets and timelines as well as being responsible for updating and engaging internal and external stakeholders in each project. I am used to working directly with farmers to help them turn their ideas into reality and access the full value of the innovations. I have extensive contacts throughout multiple engineering disciplines including AI, electronics, software, robotics as well as the mechanical engineering skill set that I can bring to the table.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Renewable energy; Robotics

Qualifications: BEng(Hons) Agricultural Engineering

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Richard Meredith | Dyson Farming Ltd

Organisation Website: www.dysonfarming.com

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: As the Head of Research at Dyson Farming Ltd, I oversee the management of seven Innovate UK funded projects. My role also includes facilitating knowledge exchange for 11 farmer groups across the UK, ensuring effective communication between Dyson Farming and its farmer network. This involves conveying key technical messages to a diverse audience of growers, agronomists, and industry professionals. I am passionate about translating farmer-led research into practical applications on commercial farms. I see the value that Innovate UK funded projects bring to the industry, driving innovation and progress. I focus on identifying future challenges in our rapidly evolving industry and implementing solutions through using a comprehensive Knowledge Exchange programme. This programme includes on-farm trials, events, written reports, and digital formats. Before joining Dyson Farming in 2022, I served as the Head of Knowledge Exchange at AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds. In that role, I led and implemented the knowledge exchange and transfer programme for the Cereals & Oilseeds sector across the UK.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Biostimulants; Circular economy; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: M.A. degree

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Richard Weightman | R and H Weightman

Organisation Website: NA

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced research scientist with a special interest in crop quality and utilisation, food safety and crop improvement. I led the crop utilisation area within ADAS until 2014, and have over 20 years experience as a crop scientist. I prepared proposals for, and managed three projects for Innovate UK, including Triticale for bioethanol (101093), Reducing waste in fresh produce by hydraulic shock washing (101389) and Production of leaf protein concentrate. I have delivered a range of other projects for Defra, AHDB and the Food Standards Agency

Skills: Agronomy; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Crop nutrition; Regulation / policy; Renewable energy

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Agricultural Science, PhD

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Rob Meadley | Brown & Co

Organisation Website: <https://www.brown-co.com/>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Bioeconomy

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have experience working in UK agriculture, 15 years with Brown & Co as an agri-business consultant and 20 year's experience of practical farming. With involvement in trials and knowledge exchange projects throughout this time. My specialisms include business finance, biomass supply chains, labour and machinery including the adoption of technology, plus environmental scheme and services. Over my career I have worked on a large number and wide range of grant applications and projects from EU Rural Development Programme grants to the more recent UK Agricultural Transformation Fund. I was the project lead for B&Co's delivery of the AHDB Farmbench Facilitation Fund whereby groups of farmers came together to benchmark performance. I was part of the delivery team within B&Co for the Defra Future Farm Resilience Fund, working with over 2,500 farmers in 2.5 years. I worked as the project coordinator for a successful Rural Community Energy Fund for a community based renewable energy feasibility project. Managing the grant application, delivery and claiming from start to finish. I have experience and knowledge in writing success bids / tenders for grants and private contract tenders.

Skills: Agri-business management; Circular economy; Data / AI / machine learning; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Regulation / policy; Renewable energy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc (Hons), MSc

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Sarah Roberts | Niab

Organisation Website: Niab

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots

Skills and Experience

Experience: From my PhD onwards I have spent my career designing, bidding for, managing and delivering potato physiology and agronomy research projects. I lead the development and delivery of grower-focused potato experiments at Niab with projects ranging from improving varietal seed rate recommendations to assessing the efficacy of novel plant protection products. My work includes managing and delivering both more academic projects (developing a descriptive model for quantifying canopy growth during my PhD, useful for identifying differences in the rates of aboveground potato development), confidential commercial projects (e.g. optimising application timings of novel biostimulant products) and business-research collaborations funded through the IUK Farming Innovation Pathway (fibre production and nutrient uptake). For example, I have led Niab's collaboration with Fibe Ltd to ensure that the project data collection strategies generate the necessary data to inform strategic business decisions (such as identifying which farm crops have the highest quality feedstock for fibre extraction).

Skills: Agronomy; Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Natural capital

Qualifications: BA, PhD

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Scott Kirby | Harper Adams University

Organisation Website: www.harper-adams.ac.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Forages; Bioeconomy; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a land management professional with over 30 years of experience managing sustainable land-based businesses and organisations, both as a consultant and an estate manager within the higher education sector. Driven by a passion for innovation and sustainability, I transitioned from business consultancy to higher education to explore new opportunities for advancing sustainable land management practices. My work focuses on developing ways to attain commercial viability while reducing the environmental impact of agricultural operations and leveraging the regenerative potential of natural systems. My contributions to farm management have been recognised through accolades such as being a finalist in the 'Farm Manager of the Year' category at the Farmers Weekly Awards. Additionally, receiving a Nuffield Scholarship enabled me to further research and advocate for a sustainable land-based sector. With a well-established reputation in the industry, I am privileged to collaborate with leading companies and organisations. Currently, I am pursuing Chartered Environmentalist status and have founded my own company to develop land management and restoration initiatives.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc Agriculture, BASIS, FACTS, Nuffield Scholar, Fellow of the Institute of Agricultural management

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Stephan Haefele | Rothamsted Research

Organisation Website: <https://www.rothamsted.ac.uk/>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I studied soil science and agronomy and spent a considerable part of his career in international research in Africa and Asia. I worked now for +8 years in the UK, and my main research interests as a systems agronomist are focused on plant nutrition, soil health, and the relation between crop nutrition and crop quality for human consumption. Apart from my own research in a team of ten colleagues and PhD students, I am heading the Soil Science Section/Department at Rothamsted Research. He is also leading the spectral laboratory at Rothamsted which investigates new methods for soil and plant analysis. Currently, I am contributing to several ongoing projects funded by the BBSRC (Growing Health, Resilient Future Farming), ESA (Earth Observation for estimating and predicting crop nutrients), and INNOVATE UK (Ferti-Green-Coating" a greener biodegradable polymer for a new generation of Controlled release fertilizer).

Skills: Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Diagnostics & sensors; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD

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Stuart Knight | Niab

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a Research Agronomist with 35 years of experience in applied crop management research; combinable crop trials; authoring research reviews; collaborating with academic and industry partners; delivering knowledge exchange; and providing technical advice to farmers and agronomists. I have broad expertise in combinable crop performance and agronomy. My research interests include management of soil and fertiliser nutrients within arable rotations; monitoring and controlling cereal fungal diseases; novel or alternative crops and farming systems; managing within-field variation, and decision support for combinable cropping. I have led or collaborated on more than 25 R&D projects and research reviews, most of which have involved grower participation or interaction. These have ranged from small agronomy-focused collaborations (£25K or less) to multidisciplinary consortia with 20+ partners spanning industry and academia (£2M or more). I have extensive experience in the design, delivery, and interpretation of small plot and larger-scale arable crop field trials for evaluating the efficacy of plant protection products (including fungicides, insecticides, herbicides, and plant growth regulators), manufactured fertilisers and foliar crop nutrients, and new crops, varieties, or growing systems.

Skills: Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Enhanced management / decision support; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc

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Tim Isaac | Ceres Research

Organisation Website: <https://ceresresearch.com/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Agroforestry; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have extensive experience in project and grant management within the agricultural sector, spanning industry organisations and private consultancy. As East Region Surveyor for the CLA, I advised and represented members on all aspects of land and farm business management, developing a strong foundation in agricultural policy and rural business support. I then joined AHDB as a Regional Manager, pioneering the Monitor Farm programme in East Anglia before leading the national Arable team. As Director of Knowledge Exchange at AHDB, I managed an £11 million budget for a UK-wide network of Strategic Farms, Monitor Farms, discussion groups, and technical events. I also oversaw further funding for some of these projects via grants from other organisations such as the Scottish Government and EU programmes. They were all focussed on supporting farm innovation and knowledge exchange and enhancing grower resilience through research-led demonstration. Since joining Ceres Rural as a Partner, I secured and led the £1.5 million DEFRA-funded Future Farming Resilience Fund (FFRF) project, providing business support to farmers navigating policy and market changes. This involved project planning, stakeholder engagement, financial oversight, and ensuring delivery on time and within budget. I have a strong track record in securing and managing publicly funded agricultural projects, delivering measurable impact for farmers and the wider industry.

Skills: Agri-business management; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc Agricultural Business Management, Diploma in Rural Surveying, CAAV, Professional Fellow of the Institute of Agricultural Management, PRINCE2 Project Management, Worshipful Company of Farmers Rural Leadership, BASIS Principles of Sustainable Land Management, BASIS Soil & Water

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Tom Allen-Stevens | British On Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN)

Organisation Website: www.bofin.org.uk

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Broadacre

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Biomass; Forages; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I lead the British On-Farm Innovation Network (BOFIN), set up to represent farmers who carry out on farm trials, seeking a more scientific approach. We are the leading providers of farmer-led trials in UK, with 70 farmers currently contracted to deliver trials across four major Defra-funded projects. These focus on introducing innovations in slug control, soil & root health, pulse crops and precision-bred crops. Most of the trials are on arable systems, in combinable crops. BOFIN works with scientists to ensure trials results are accurate and replicable, but can be practically carried out on farm without specialist equipment. We set up platforms to upskill farmers and provide a robust means of testing innovations. We develop communities around projects to help farmers share experience, best practice and knowledge to advance adoption of new technologies & the benefits these accrue for farmers. I have 30 years' experience in farming innovations, working with commercial and research partners & building networks. The BOFIN team includes Laura, head of projects, PRINCE2 qualified, who leads on all aspects of project management; Clemmie, head of communications, who amplifies farmer-led innovation, builds connections, and bridges science and practice; Skye, community manager, who ensures farmers and trialists are well-supported.

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop nutrition; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: MSc in advanced farm management

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Horticulture

Alex Fisher | Hydronomy

Organisation Website: www.hydronomy.net

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have successfully delivered over 10 Innovate UK agricultural innovation projects over the last 13 years, including multiple on farm and in collaboration with farmers, combining to multiple millions of pounds. I won the InnovateUK cross-sector award for Productivity Improvement. I run R&D projects in multiple geographies, have obtained over 25 patents and a registered trademark, and collaborated with more than 10 leading academic institutions in the UK and Europe. I have a deep understanding of and experience in the complete process from early-stage R&D through to the commercial realities of farming and the onward supply chain.

Skills: Biostimulants; Crop nutrition; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Irrigation; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BA MSc

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Alicja Dzieciol | SilviBio Limited

Organisation Website: www.silvibio.com

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Forestry; Bioeconomy

Skills and Experience

Experience: I founded my company SilviBio to work directly with growers to help them grow more plants more sustainably and help solve problems that growers want solved. In doing so I created patentable agritech technologies, conducted IP management (building on my previous experience in technology transfer), secured funding for agritech innovations and managed several agritech and forestry R&D projects simultaneously. I have never once failed a project, but ensured that all project outputs are delivered on time and on budget. I've taken a grower first approach to innovation, ensuring that any R&D projects involving growers put them at the centre of the project and have outputs that are applicable to them. I've been directly involved in grower trials to ensure that the trials are achieving what they were set out to do and made adjustments as necessary. I have extensive experience interfacing with project monitoring officers from different agencies and understand how to use their systems and what their expectations are.

Skills: Agri-business management; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD

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Charles Whitfield | Niab at East Malling

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/about/people/dr-charles-whitfield>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Viticulture

Skills and Experience

Experience: 10 years experience developing and submitting R&D proposals, managing a portfolio of R&D projects in the horticulture sector, with a focus on crop protection and precision technologies. The majority of my projects have been funded by Innovate UK and I am extremely experienced in all stages of project development, management, and delivery. My experience and expertise includes spray application, precision technologies (including robotics and automation, sensors, remote sensing, machine vision, and augmented reality), novel pesticides and biopesticides (including repellents and attractants), trial design, integrated pest management, and statistical analysis. I work closely with growers and understand the challenges of running trials on commercial farms.

Skills: Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors

Qualifications: BSc, MSc, PhD

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

David May | Hubl Logistics Limited

Organisation Website: <https://www.coolrun.co.uk/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been involved in UK funded projects for most of my career. These have ranged from providing technical expertise on research to project managing an Innovate funded project on the Cool chain in Malawi. As Deputy Director of the Lincoln Institute for AgriFood Technology I managed the operational delivery of the £6.4m Research England E3 grant and supported a number of other Innovate farming Projects. I have a wide range of experience in Horticulture – mainly glasshouse horticulture, but also robotics, early pest and disease detection, crop forecasting across a range of crops. I am a trained Horticulturalist having worked with farmers and growers as a consultant. I am also an Agronomic advisor to Fotenix working with growers on the adoption of technology. At Hubl I project manage the delivery of the Malawi grant and have been involved in the product development of the pods from concept through to manufacture to improve the cool chain of fresh produce in Africa.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agronomy; Automation; Diagnostics & sensors; Robotics

Qualifications: BSc Horticulture BASIS - now lapsed

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Edwin Moorhouse | G's Fresh

Organisation Website: <https://www.gs-fresh.com/>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Viticulture

Skills and Experience

Experience: Product/process research and innovation has been a core part of all the roles that I have undertaken for the whole of my career. I have obtained experience on various public and private research projects over this time which has necessitated interactions with a wide range of stakeholders from farmers through to senior academics and supply companies to NGO's. Most of my recent experience has been with the creation, development and management of nearly 20 Innovate UK projects of behalf of various UK businesses. These have covered a wide range of targets (eg. agronomy, crop protection, robotics, automation and sensor development) with consortia comprising up to 8 commercial partners and 3 RTO partners. The majority of projects have been developed based on specific grower needs to address current or predicted commercial challenges and have been highly focused on exploitable and practical outcomes. I have also supported Innovate UK with the assessment of new project proposals or various competitions which has provided additional insight into the competitive process for these competitions.

Skills: Agronomy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: BSc, PhD

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Edwin Reyes | Promar International

Organisation Website: Promar International

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: As a Senior Agri-food Consultant for a leading agricultural consultancy company in the UK, I have been involved in a wide range of projects across the agrifood supply industry, both in the UK and overseas, including the EU, South East Asia, Gulf countries, North and Latin America. My work covers assessing and identifying markets, market trends, and business opportunities via various routes to market, including mainstream and niche retail, foodservice, and e-commerce/online retailing. Additionally, I have experience in assessing the effectiveness of agricultural projects and programs in the agricultural and food sector. My work covers different agricultural industries, including dairy, meat, fresh produce and agri-tech. My responsibilities include acting as a project manager, monitoring, budgeting, and assessing projects, and utilizing a wide range of research techniques. These techniques include business-to-business work, desk-based analysis, and online research with a combination of producers, processors, importers, retailers, agri-tech businesses and foodservice operators, as well as trade associations, levy boards, government agencies and departments. I hold a Master's in Agricultural Economics and am Prince2 certified in project management.

Skills: Agri-business management; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: MSc Agriculture Economics

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Emma Jane Garfield | Emma Garfield

Organisation Website: Emma Garfield

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Managed grant applications, project management and delivery in farming industry for > 25 years, with funding ranging from internal/grower funding through to government funding (RPA, InnovateUK, BBSRC, DEFRA)). Most recently managing a Research Starter project, Feasibility and Small R&D and KTP projects, including a current UKRI follow on project with 8 partners. Industry programme lead for CTP for Sustainable Agricultural Innovation (£3.6M PhD programme). Experienced in all areas of horticultural and crop science.

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, MSc, BASIS, FACTS

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Flora O'Brien | NIAB

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Tree crops; Viticulture

Skills and Experience

Experience: Dr Flora O'Brien is a root and soil biologist, with research interests in soil health, root-soil interactions and rhizosphere microbiology in relation to management of horticultural cropping systems. She has experience of grant and project management from her role as PI for IUK projects 10026588 "Increasing productivity and sustainability in UK viticulture: investigating the potential impact of groundcover management practices on soil health, yields and juice quality, and emissions", and current project 10115551 "Developing a holistic soil biological health assessment". She has also helped to deliver the IUK project 105534 "Developing prototype VOC sensor-based products for determining soil health on-farm". Dr O'Brien has co-authored an AHDB-funded report on carbon sequestration in UK dessert apple orchards and is the lead author of peer reviewed papers on soil microbial community-based studies. She has been the first author of several peer-reviewed publications: <https://doi.org/10.20870/oenone.2025.59.1.8089>, 10.3389/fmicb.2019.01486; 10.3389/fmicb.2018.01620. She is also the project manager for the sustainability grant and training programme Growing Green, which is funded by Growing Kent & Medway (a Strength in Places project).

Skills: Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD, MSc

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Francis Wamonje | Niab

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Tree crops; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced research and project manager with 8 years post PhD experience, the last three as a Senior Research Leader. I hold academic and practical scientific expertise in Plant Sciences, Entomology and Genomics. I have competitively won and co-won over GBP 2.5 million in grants within the past 4 years in Principal Investigator and Co-Investigator roles from a variety of funders, including IUK, Defra, UKRI and grower collectives such as British Apples and Pears and Worshipful Company of the Fruiterers. My day-to-day work is primarily 'Cradle-to-grave' project management, delivery and budget monitoring. Currently, I have 5 active projects and have project managed six to completion since joining Niab in September 202. As a research leader in entomology, I have supervisory responsibility over teams and provide scientific leadership for the different agricultural projects we do. I also serve as the resident plant health officer responsible for adherence to institutional plant health regulations. I have international experience and networks, having worked internationally in 4 countries (UK, Canada, Kenya and Tanzania) in academia and national and international research organisations. I can support strategic thinking, ideation, grant writing, and research activation. I also mentor postgraduate students.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Plant breeding

Qualifications: PhD in Plant Sciences

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Graham Dow | Niab

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Tree crops; Viticulture; Forestry; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: Have led and currently lead research grants in resource use efficiency and environmental responses of horticultural crops (apple and strawberry, to date).

Skills: Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Imaging / satellites; Irrigation; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: BSc, PhD

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Greg Crawford | NIAB (National institute of agricultural botany)

Organisation Website: <https://www.niab.com/>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: Zero Carbon Farms Ltd - Growing manager. UK Salads Ltd - Greenhouse manager, NIAB - Farm business resilience consultant. Worked on various trial projects in Horticulture to increase yields and worked on the Future Farming Resilience Fund providing business support in one-to-one and group format.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Circular economy; Diversification & transition management; Irrigation; Renewable energy

Qualifications: Agricultural business management -BSc - Newcastle university

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James Stevens | Innophyte Consulting

Organisation Website: www.innophyte.co.uk

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Viticulture; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I started working in the ag / horticulture sector in 2015 during my PhD at the University of Essex, looking at drought tolerance in barley. I have since worked in CEA as a lecturer at Essex, as a senior scientist at Vertical Future Ltd, and as a consultant with Innophyte Consulting. I am an MSP of multiple DEFRA and other agriculture / horticulture projects which all involve at least one grower. Elsewhere, I have facilitation experience at University of Essex where I ran meetings and conferences for the Essex Plant Innovation Centre (EPIC), as well as when working in the private sector at Vertical Future (for instance, coordinating round-table discussions), and at Henderson where convened work with other analysts to advise on IFRS accounting standards. I have designed, written and won grants including #10030778 - a KTP with the University of Essex, and #10089325 a collaboration with University of Cambridge. I ran #10005832 – Chronoculture as project lead. This project was so successful I was invited by IUK to apply for follow-on funding. In addition, I am currently project manager on #10134099 with NIAB, Matrex & Flex Farming. Therefore, I believe I have the project management skills required for this role.

Skills: Crop nutrition; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD, Plant Science, University of Essex

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Jan Redpath | Angus Soft Fruits Ltd

Organisation Website: www.angussoftfruits.com

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit

Skills and Experience

Experience: Currently involved in 3 grant funded agri-tech projects, as lead in 2 of those, and have a long history of project management for innovation to benefit growers and fruit quality.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Crop protection; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc Agriculture, MPhil Plant & Soil Science, Nuffield Scholar

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Katia Zacharaki | InnoPhyte Consulting Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://innophyte.co.uk/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Katia is an agricultural innovation specialist with expertise in technical leadership and strategic project management. As Founder of InnoPhyte Consulting, she delivers “Science-as-a-Service” to UK and international clients—designing experiments, conducting statistical analyses, drafting scientific reports, developing grant proposals, and managing project finances, compliance, and stakeholder engagement. She specialises in strawberry TCEA (vertical farming) at both technical and business levels and works daily across multiple IUK-funded consortia, excelling in risk and change management, stage-gate reviews, and performance monitoring. She also serves as Director of Communications for UK Urban AgriTech (UKUAT), where she leads all communications and engagement activities—including webinars, networking events, blog and social-media campaigns—to showcase UKUAT’s role in advancing urban agriculture innovation. Previously, Katia led multidisciplinary R&D teams in controlled-environment agriculture—managing glasshouse and vertical-farm trials, optimising nutrient recipes, implementing conventional and biological integrated pest-management protocols, and mentoring technical staff. She has designed and facilitated grower workshops and webinars, translating complex research into practical guidance for farmers and industry partners. Katia holds an MSc in Plant Science, an MBA in Agricultural Economics and is completing a PhD on LED-driven vertical-farm strawberry production. She has a passion for project management and deep expertise in experimental statistics, data visualization, grant writing and impact assessment—ensuring robust, deliverable-focused outcomes for R&D and innovation programmes.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy



Qualifications: MSc, MBA

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Kevin Stephens | Agroceutical Products Ltd

Organisation Website: www.agroceutical.com

Region: Cymru Wales

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Forages; Viticulture; Bioeconomy; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been designing, applying for and delivering grant programmes for 15yrs+

Skills: Agri-business management; Agronomy; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: MBA, MSc

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Lauren Abraham | Promar International

Organisation Website: <https://promar-international.com/>

Region: Northern Ireland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Salad crops; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have worked with Promar International since October 2020, where a key aspect of my role in the consulting industry has involved project management, including responsibilities of people, milestones, budgets, and client engagement. We work across the agri-food sector with clients that range from producers, to processors, to retailers, to governments and many more. I have been lucky to be involved in projects across the agricultural supply chain, involving many sectors, both looking into local and more international/global markets. I work across a range of sustainability and market research focused projects, including engaging with farmers on behalf of processors and retailers to work on emission reduction strategies and environmental improvement, as well as more research focused areas of work that might be looking at a specific niche market opportunities for the client. I have managed budgets in excess of £150,000 and regularly work in a team along with other consultants and analysts in order to delegate to best play to individual strengths and knowledge areas. I have also previously worked in the fresh produce sector, mainly in the technical department navigating supply into retail and wholesale with a host of international and UK based suppliers. This broadened by skills and expertise in the legislation side of food supply and production, as well as experience working alongside commercial and quality teams.

Skills: Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Food Technology and Nutrition

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Louisa Robinson Boyer | NIAB East Malling

Organisation Website: www.niab.com

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: An experienced research leader and consultant with over 20 years of experience transversing academia and industry specialising in sustainable agriculture and horticulture crop production, nature-based solutions and soil microbiomes. Currently, as a research project leader I manage a diverse portfolio of projects developing opportunities, themes and projects, collaborating with diverse cross-sector national and international stakeholders, underscoring the translation of novel strategies into actionable, practical strategies for growers and the wider agricultural sector. My portfolio of projects are funded by IUK, BBSRC, British council and Horizon 2020 and address global challenges such as food security, climate change, natural resource management, IMP, biodiversity and resilience of farming systems. My experience spans sustainable horticulture and agriculture, nature-based solutions, plant sciences, biotic and abiotic stress, synthetic microbiomes, soil health, climate change and extreme weather events. I manage a flagship industry-led PhD program worth £4.3 million, training future leaders in horticulture. A skilled communicator, I effectively engage with diverse audience, through written reports, scientific presentations, media and translating complex concepts for stakeholders, growers, and the wider community.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Biostimulants; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: Bsc.- Biology, Msc.- Microbiology, PhD- Molecular microbiology.

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Mandy Lloyd | Cleobury Project Management

Organisation Website: Cleobury Project Management

Region: Cymru Wales

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Viticulture; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am the founder and co-director of Cleobury Project Management, leading multiple successful Innovate UK and BBSRC-funded agricultural R&D projects, with a farming background. These have included novel fertiliser development using waste streams and botanicals as well as spray drying natural botanical supplements and ingredients.. My experience spans project development, consortium building, technical delivery oversight, commercialisation strategy, and regulatory navigation. I have worked closely with farmers and agricultural stakeholders in Wales, conducting field trials and participatory research. I bring strong skills in managing innovation lifecycles, preparing detailed reporting and compliance documents, and steering feasibility through to scalability. My grant management work includes projects under the SBRI Agri-Tech Challenge, Launchpad (Innovate UK), and collaborative academic/industry initiatives with companies and Universities.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Automation; Biostimulants; Circular economy; Data / AI / machine learning; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc, PhD

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Innovate
UK

Martin Goodchild | University of Bedfordshire, retired from Delta-T Devices Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.beds.ac.uk/irese/about/> retired from <https://delta-t.co.uk/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Project manager and principal investigator for Delta-T Devices on the following IUK projects: IUK 102124, IUK 101623, TSB 130924, IUK 101818

Skills: Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Enhanced management / decision support; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc & PhD

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Matevz Papp-Rupar | NIAB East Malling

Organisation Website: NIAB East Malling

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Viticulture; Forestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: During post-doctoral research (University of Nottingham, 2014-2017) on UV-light mediated defences in tomato and cut rose production in the UK and Kenya (TSB 101919) I led development of methodology and prototypes, explored molecular mechanisms, designed on-farm experiments, prepared reports and organised quarterly progress meetings. Since joining Niab, East Malling (2018-present) I have written 10 Innovate UK grant applications in collaboration with producer organisations, tech start-up and other SMEs of which five were funded I have timely and on budget delivered high quality research, assisted industry partners with project set up (collaboration agreements, NDAs, MTAs, etc), project management and reporting, claiming process, project change requests, and also communicated project outcomes via in-person talks, videos and written materials to academic, agri-/horti-industry and general public audiences. My research expertise include sustainable disease management, remote sensing, soil health, microbiome use in sustainable food production, climate change mitigation, net-zero and cyclic economy. I have also co-led EU-funded research on biostimulants and sustainable growing substrates (Bio4safe, Horti-blueC, SpinFert), BBSRC funded projects on apple endophytes and ash dieback (BB/P007899/1, BB/R017670/1), BBSRC follow-on projects on apple canker management, forestry cutting production (TPIF) and numerous grower levy and industry funded projects (AHDB, BAPL).

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Biostimulants; Circular economy; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors

Qualifications: Biotechnology BSc/MSc, Molecular Plant pathology PhD

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Olaf Swanzy | PNO Innovation

Organisation Website: www.pnoconsultants.com

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Forestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Director within the PNO Group (Europe's leading innovation funding consultancy) with >20 years' experience in working with farmers, growers and forestry businesses to secure innovation funding from national and EU managed funding programmes including those managed by Innovate UK, Defra, the European Space Agency and the European Commission. Core expertise in helping potential applicants navigate the funding landscape to select the most appropriate funding programme, consortium building and management, project concept development and application writing. Each year in the UK alone I support around 8-9 dedicated agri-tech focused grant projects to a range of programmes including the Farming Innovation Programme. I also have an extensive track record of project management in the sector including helping organisations in the grant reporting process supporting activities such as the preparation of quarterly grant reports, deliverable development and partner management. In addition to supporting individual businesses in the sector I have also supported organisations such as the UK Agri-Tech Innovation centre in areas such as training in the area of grant writing. I am also a mentor to a number of accelerator programmes including the UK Space Agency accelerator.

Skills: Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Renewable energy

Qualifications: BSc

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Ralph Noble | microbiotech Ltd

Organisation Website: www.microbiotech.co.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Viticulture

Skills and Experience

Experience: Currently technical Director of Microbiotech, a research and development company which specialises in the analysis and management of micro-organisms and insect pests in horticultural soils and cropping substrates. I have worked as an applied microbiologist in horticultural crop research since 1984, initially with MAFF and Horticulture Research International. I was the manager of the University of Warwick Bioconversion Unit for seven years, and until 2018, was a Principal Research Scientist at NIAB EMR (formerly East Malling Research). I have coordinated applied research projects on a diverse range of topics including suppression of soil-borne plant diseases using organic amendments, replacement of peat in horticulture, biocontrol of pests in horticultural crops, and the control of fungal and bacterial pathogens in composting and anaerobic digestion. These projects have involved consortia of grower and science partners. I have worked with growers in the UK, Europe and many other countries including the USA, Australia, New Zealand, China, South Africa and Kenya. I have written over 200 scientific papers, patents and technical publications on my research areas.

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Circular economy; Crop protection; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD (Cranfield University, Agricultural Engineering) BSc (Reading, Horticultural Science) BASIS

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Rebecca Beveridge | Grow Partners

Organisation Website: www.growpartners.co.uk

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a co-founder and Director of Grow Partners, a specialist consultancy, providing strategic and planning advice and project management services to the UK commercial agriculture and horticulture sector. We work with developers, growers, suppliers, educators and stakeholder organisations of all kinds, including delivery of marketing and research, cutting-edge tech and construction projects. We are currently project managing 3No Innovate UK R&D projects on behalf of Fargro Ltd.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Agronomy; Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Renewable energy

Qualifications: MSc Project Management, Prince2 Practitioner

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Richard Harnden | Roseaceae Consulting Ltd

Organisation Website: www.bggrowers.co.uk

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Tree crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: Since 2011, as Director of Research for Berry Gardens Growers Ltd, a soft and stone fruit grower owned co-operative, I specialised in research and innovation. In my former role, I participated in >25 project consortia researching diverse topics from automation to water use efficiency. I have also been an active participant in breeding programmes to produce new varieties of berries and cherries. Joined with NIAB and seven partner universities to successfully bid for funding of a doctoral studentship programme with >40 students. Fields of research have included automation, breeding, novel pest and disease control solutions, reduced deficit irrigation and improved nutritional management, robotics and vision systems, and manipulating plant physiology to enhance photosynthesis in order to drive yield productivity and improve fruit quality.

Skills: Agronomy; Automation; Crop protection; Irrigation; Robotics

Qualifications: HND (Comm Hort), MSc

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Rob Merrall | Merralls Consulting Ltd

Organisation Website: www.merralls.com

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: My partner Vickie Cooper and I established Merralls Consulting Ltd in 2012, building on a strong network from a career in farm machinery and agricultural engineering research. About 60% of our activity is monitoring InnovateUK funded projects - several hundred over the years. We are fortunate to monitor a range of diverse teams, but we also really enjoy delivery through project management for carefully selected groups. Our in-depth understanding of the process helps with the management of large and small projects alike, from small feasibility studies to large multi-million pound collaborative projects involving corporate manufacturers. As very practical people with a farming background, it is really rewarding to have a hand in making innovation happen, rather than just observing it. MCL are a team of four with complimentary skills, meaning we can undertake project management or project monitoring with a hands on, experienced and thought through approach. Steph provides organisation: diary management, reminders and often is a first point of contact. Helen uses her data analytics and advanced IT and presentational skills to ensure projects are accurately tracked, deadlines are met and presentations look good. This allows Vickie and I to concentrate on working directly with project teams.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Crop protection; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Renewable energy

Qualifications: Engineering Doctorate, BEng (Agricultural Engineering). The Engineering Doctorate included the taught element of the Cranfield MBA (including Project Management).

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Stephen Bradstock | First Base Solutions Ltd

Organisation Website: www.firstbasesolutions.co.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Biomass; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Bioeconomy

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been managing and delivering projects into the farming community for over 35 years in the UK & Europe, I have been managing funded & R&D projects since 2015/2016

Skills: Data / AI / machine learning; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Robotics

Qualifications: MCSE Qualifications for Software Development, numerous management training courses

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Sushma Shankar | Deep Planet

Organisation Website: www.deepplanet.ai

Region: London

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Tree crops; Viticulture; Forestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: Founder of Agri tech company, Deep Planet, Experience in grant management, agriculture projects, collaboration with farmers and technology providers

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: MBA

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Sven Batke | Edge Hill University and Flavour Fresh Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/person/sven-batke/staff/>

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am the chair of the Greenhouse Innovation Consortium (<https://youtu.be/6Nqjg96pwgl?feature=shared>), and I have been helping growers and manufacturers in the greenhouse sector to test and implement new technologies in their businesses. In particular I am doing a lot of work around glass coatings and light improvement in greenhouses. I have secured national and international funding and was awarded industry funding to support R&D and KE activities. The GIC works closely together with the British Growers Association and the British Tomato Grower Association. For example, jointly we are currently mapping the greenhouse sector for Britain and developing policy briefs. I am also an advisor for Lancashire Councils on the food sector. I have both project management and two leadership qualifications (Cambridge Alumni).

Skills: Automation; Crop protection; Diagnostics & sensors; Enhanced management / decision support; Natural capital

Qualifications: PhD

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Victoria Cooper | Merralls Consulting Ltd

Organisation Website: www.merralls.com

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Horticulture

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Salad crops; Monogastrics; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: My partner Rob and I established Merralls Consulting Ltd in 2012. Rob is well known in the agricultural machinery sector, and I brought project management experience from legal practice. About 60% of our activity is monitoring InnovateUK funded projects - several hundred over the years. We are fortunate to monitor a range of diverse teams, but we also really enjoy delivery through project management for carefully selected groups. Our in-depth understanding of the process helps with the management of large and small projects alike, from small feasibility studies to large multi-million pound collaborative projects involving corporate manufacturers. As very practical people with a farming background, it is really rewarding to have a hand in making innovation happen, rather than just observing it. MCL are a team of four with complimentary skills, meaning we can undertake project management or project monitoring with a hands on, experienced and thought through approach. Steph provides organisation: diary management, reminders and often is a first point of contact. Helen uses her data analytics and advanced IT and presentational skills to ensure projects are accurately tracked, deadlines are met and presentations look good. This allows Rob and I to concentrate on working directly with project teams.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: Law Degree (LLB) and Legal Practice Certificate. Admitted to the Roll as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court.

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Forestry and Bioeconomy

Amanda McMurray | Amanda McMurray Limited

Organisation Website: amcm-associates.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Bioeconomy; Other livestock; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have extensive experience of project and grant management, across a wide range of technology and application areas including agriculture. Examples are : as Business Development Director for the Genome Analysis Centre (plant and animal genomics) Generated £800K per annum commercial income from small commercial services; won and delivered projects of value £1M with industrial partners. As monitoring service provider have monitored (managed grants) for up to 10 agritech projects.

Skills: Biomaterials, bioenergy; Diagnostics & sensors; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc PhD MBA

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Innovate
UK

Andrew Stacey | Avgo Biotech Ltd

Organisation Website: www.avgo.uk

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Salad crops; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: Avgo Biotech - Founder and CEO. Avgo is a food waste recycling business – taking egg and seashells and converting them in high value materials for the pharmaceutical, food and industrial sectors. •Successfully developed technology from base zero to a pilot plant at TRL 7 through multiple development projects funded by IUK (£275k) and business angels (£270k). •Developed vertically integrated supply chain. •Filed patents for above technology in Europe and North America. Cellular Systems – Owner Cellular Systems is a consultancy undertaking research projects to commercialise agrifood waste streams. •Engaged, sold and built research consortia around diagnostic and food waste technologies (£500k+, 5 projects), •Project Managed multiple multi partner research projects, co-ordinating activities to apply laboratory technology to developed low TRL processes, to extract valuable raw materials for the food, supplements, healthcare and other industries, RoboScientific – Business Development Consultant Took a Leeds University technology and developed it into a functional “electronic nose” capable of detecting low levels of infectious agents in a wide range of agricultural and clinical settings. •Engaged the salad, poultry and cattle industries to build research and commercial consortia. •Built projects and wrote successful bids (9 projects - £1.5m+) •Ran projects as project manager, oSuccessful co-ordinating of awarded project set up, with members and principles, oManagement of projects, using project management tools such as gantt charts, risk registers, and regular remote and face to face meetings, oCo-ordinating project spend, financial reporting and funding claims, oFacilitating regular and timely reporting to principles, oCulminating in successful projects, with technology successively raising through TRL levels and the development of greater commercial traction and pipeline,

Skills: Biomaterials, bioenergy; Circular economy; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc

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Anna Alessi | Biorenewables Development Centre

Organisation Website: <https://www.biorenewables.org/>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Bioeconomy; Ruminants; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an skilled project manager utilising my 5+ years of a postdoctoral experience in valorising agricultural wastes, biofuel production, and anaerobic digestion. As part of the Business Partnership Team at the Biorenewables Development Centre, I have successfully managed a £5.2 million portfolio of the research and commercial projects collaborating with industry bioinnovators, farmers, and academic partners. I managed the £1.8M Newton Bhabha-funded project (completed in 2022) to reduce industrial waste in India's sugarcane industry and the £1.2M ERDF-funded ADCEY program (completed in 2023), supporting 34 Yorkshire SMEs in developing and commercializing biobased solutions, including on-farm waste valorisation, anaerobic digestion improvements, and nutrient management and retention technologies. Additionally, I oversaw three IUK-funded projects aimed at diversifying Yorkshire farming through controlled environment agriculture, geothermal heat, and biofertilizer technology from chicken manure. Currently, I manage two IUK-funded projects: one developing a circular model for low-emission food production with Kilnsey Park and another advancing sustainable farming through microbial amendments with CroBio. I also manage a £4M BBSRC-funded sLoLa research project led by the University of York Prof Gavin Thomas that further strengthens my expertise in securing and delivering high-impact research and innovation projects.

Skills: Biomaterials, bioenergy; Biostimulants; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Renewable energy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD (Microbiology, University of East Anglia, 2011)

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Catherine Allinson | Director

Organisation Website: Director

Region: London

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Viticulture; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: Qualified (Deloitte's) Project Manager since 2011. Developed and led multiple grant applications to UK government funders (DFID, EU etc). Focus on innovation and tools for improved management of resources (energy, water, waste) and building capacity for agro-ecological solutions and water management for economic diversification and produce value chain development.

Skills: Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Renewable energy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: MSc Honours; Qualified (Deloitte's) Project Manager since 2011

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Catherine Birch | AgriFoodX Limited

Organisation Website: AgriFoodX Limited

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Soft fruit; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have project managed numerous InnovateUK projects (14) over the past 4 years. Have a wide experience of completion of documentation for projects. I have also mentored numerous project partners within these projects. I also have a wide experience of writing grant proposals successfully, including IUK, BBSRC, European grant applications for Horizon 2020, ERDF projects which I have also managed.

Skills: Algal biotech/fermentation; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Circular economy; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Regulation / policy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: MB ChB PhD MSc FHEA CIMA FIFST

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Chris Eaglen | chris eaglen improvement projects

Organisation Website: chris eaglen improvement projects

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forestry; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Worked in agriculture whilst at school and after school for two years in mixed agriculture including liaising with ADAS representatives in LEEDS. Produced field experiment briefs and project briefs when seconded to Silsoe Research Institute for corn drying improvements. Undertook research review into modelling pastures to improve hay and grass yields based on biochemistry understanding of photosynthesis. Undertook review of date harvesting machine with NCAE Professor Kilgour. Reviewed soil and ground improvement with NCAE Professor Spoor for different objectives including improving National Grid Interconnect WCML. Undertook feasibility concept for reducing algae growth and fish habitats with bubbling air into lakes.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc Equivalent from National College of Agricultural Engineering Silsoe and University of Cranford MSc Project Management Construction and PhD in Control Systems Engineering also AI module from the Open University

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Claire Flanagan | Kene B Corp

Organisation Website: <https://www.kene.partners/>

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Soft fruit; Tree crops; Bioeconomy; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a highly experienced innovation consultant and grant writer in supporting SMEs secure R&D grant funding from UK national (Innovate UK, Defra, DSIT, DESNZ) and European level (EIC Accelerator, CBE JU, Horizon Europe, Eurostars) funding competitions by leading development of winning R&D project proposals. I have a demonstrable track record of successfully securing grant funding to advance development of innovative products, processes and/or services on behalf of my clients. Through my consulting work I have engaged with a wide range of established and emerging industries including those related to agriculture and agri-tech solutions as well as industrial biotech; biobased and advanced materials; resource recovery & recycling; novel proteins; cultivated meat; agri-chemicals discovery ; precision agri-approaches, sensors, diagnostic tools; imaging and analytical monitoring devices. I am well versed in the commercialisation considerations associated with bringing technical innovations to market e.g. business planning and resourcing, market analysis and research, go-to-market strategy development in line with IPR, evaluating regulatory landscapes plus funding requirements for growing deep tech start ups. My technical background is in the chemical and biological sciences. I have extensive experience of collaborating with industry and academia from the bioeconomy, chemical, biotech, agri-tech and pharma sectors and have built a broad network of connections across the UK's R&D innovation ecosystem. I am particularly interested in technologies and innovations that are aimed at improving sustainability and will contribute to the growing circular and bio-economies to achieve the UK's Net Zero ambitions.

Skills: Algal biotech/fermentation; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection; Regulation / policy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD Prince2

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Colin Tosh | Senior Agroforestry Researcher

Organisation Website: <https://www.organicresearchcentre.com/>

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Tree crops; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: Have been principle project manager on grants up to £500k

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Data / AI / machine learning; Imaging / satellites; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: DPhil (crop-pest interactions), BSc (Zoology)

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Harriet Bell | Riverford Organic Farmers Ltd.

Organisation Website: www.riverford.co.uk

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Agroforestry; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: 5 years delivering Esmee Fairbairn funded land use project exploring innovative approaches to land tenure to address social, economic & environmental challenges, coupled with additional grant application and delivery to deliver physical landscape changes. 2 years on the Dartmoor ELM T&T working with farmers to explore blended finance and payments by results models, landscape scale planning and the relationship between home farms and commons.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BA American Studies, MProf in Leadership & Sustainable Development, Permaculture Design Certificate, PDA Service Design

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James Barnard | J & K Barnard (Farms) Ltd.

Organisation Website: J & K Barnard (Farms) Ltd.

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have managed projects up to a value of £400,000 specialising in lowland management in the Somerset area. This has included appearing at government select committees, TV appearances and media and PR presentations.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Animal health & welfare; Circular economy; Renewable energy

Qualifications: B. Sc. Ph. D.

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James MacFarlane | Grantwise

Organisation Website: www.grantwise.co.uk

Region: Outside of the UK

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Bioeconomy; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over the last 15 years, I've worked with more than 300 UK organizations to secure £100M in non-dilutive funding, specializing in AgriTech, CleanTech, and Engineering Biology sectors. My expertise spans the entire innovation funding landscape, from initial concept development through to implementation and commercialization. What distinguishes my approach is my dual perspective as both funding advisor and founder. I've personally led multiple AgriTech ventures, including a circular economy startup that developed and deployed biochar technology directly on farms. This hands-on experience means I understand the technical challenges, market barriers, and commercial realities that agricultural innovators face. My experience includes: Developing technology roadmaps that align with funding opportunities Building cross-sector partnerships between academia, industry, and farming communities Structuring projects to maximize impact and commercial viability Navigating the unique requirements of agricultural innovation funding This founder's perspective transforms how I approach funding applications—moving beyond theoretical models to create proposals that address practical implementation challenges and real-world agricultural contexts.

Skills: Biomaterials, bioenergy; Circular economy; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD

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Jen Vanderhoven | FREY Consulting

Organisation Website: <https://www.frey-consulting.co.uk/>

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Bioeconomy; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: PhD in biochemistry, with Forestry Commission. Managed several projects and grants.

Skills: Algal biotech/fermentation; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Circular economy; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD

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Jonathan Thacker | University Of The West Of Scotland

Organisation Website: University Of The West Of Scotland

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Tree crops; Forestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: My area of expertise comprises the development of products for environmentally friendly pest management. I am the author of 'An Introduction to Arthropod Pest Control'. I have worked on pest management projects in Brazil, Kenya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the UK amongst other countries. I have had funding to manage these projects from industrial partners and from governments.

Skills: Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop protection

Qualifications: BSc, MSc, PhD, PgCert, SFHEA, FRSB

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Kirk Sideman | CEO, Take Root Bio Limited

Organisation Website: CEO, www.takeroot.bio

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Bioeconomy; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: With nearly three decades of experience in finance, operations, and project management, with a latter focus on agrifood. I am skilled at managing government grants, including Innovate UK and UKRI funded projects. My experience as a grant provider while at the Home Office, means I understand grants from both side as recipient and grantor. An experimental grower and founder of an agrifood start up, I also consultant for farmers and foodies in business development. My background includes senior roles in both the private sector and government, where I have successfully managed large-scale projects and driven strategic change; including being a Major Projects Reviewer. My strategic approach to finance, coupled with my ability to simplify complex issues, and my training in facilitation, negotiations and contracts, ensures I am an effective facilitator. Both on farm and in the Board room; for small projects which require meticulous oversight and innovative thinking. I hold an undergraduate degree from the University of Guelph, Canada's largest agriculture university. Raised in Niagara, Ontario, I worked in orchards, vineyards, and greenhouses, providing me with a deep understanding of the agricultural sector. This included as COO of Agri-EPI Centre, supporting agri-innovation and advancing agricultural technologies and practices.

Skills: Agri-business management; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: B.Comm, MBA, ACA, BFP, FRSA

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Lucy Bates | Harper Adams University

Organisation Website: Harper Adams University

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops

Skills and Experience

Experience: 20 years as primary producer (organic horticulture, conventional arable). Suite of 4 ELM Test & Trials for LEAF 2019-20. LEAF Technical manager overseeing LEAF Network plus Horizon project contributions including IPM Works and DiversIFY. Input to ELM co-design for LEAF and Wildlife Trusts. Local farm cluster formation and input for Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Natural capital accounting oversight for Wiltshire Wildlife Trust 2021-23. Responsibility for planning, budget & delivery of Sustainable Farm Networks initiative through Harper Adams University School of Sustainable Food & Farming.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BASIS (FACTS; Env. Adv. Reg); MSc (dist) Agroecology; APM Project Management Qualification

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Marianne McHugh | West Devon Business Information Point Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Viticulture; Forestry; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have extensive expertise in project and grant management within the agricultural sector. As Project Manager for the Defra-funded Future Farming Resilience (FFR) project (2022–2025), we supported over 2,500 farmers across Devon, Dorset, Somerset, and Cornwall. My role involved managing and coordinating seven partner organizations to deliver over 200 workshops and 15,000 hours of in-person farm business support. Through effective collaboration and regular reporting, I built strong relationships with Devon County Council (the contract holders) and successfully managed the project despite significant challenges. In the past year, I have also led the successful delivery of three agricultural innovation projects in Devon, supporting 58 farm businesses in trialling new approaches, technologies, and practices. These included initiatives in grazing management for productivity, soil carbon baselining for net-zero goals, fertilizer trials using seaweed extracts, nutrient extraction from bone, and enhancing soil microbiology to improve forage quality. My combined experiences reflect my strong commitment to driving innovation, sustainability, and impactful outcomes in agriculture through outcome-focused project management.

Skills: Agri-business management; Circular economy; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD, BA, Apprenticeship in Team Leadership

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Mariela Paz Aguilera Miranda | SilviBio

Organisation Website: <https://www.silvibio.com/our-story>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Salad crops; Tree crops; Forestry; Bioeconomy; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have over five years of experience in agricultural and forestry research and innovation management. As a co-founder of SilviBio, a biotechnology company focused on enhancing crop productivity through sustainable solutions, I have led R&D projects from concept to completion. My expertise includes successfully supporting and writing R&D/innovation grant applications and managing Innovate UK and other DEFRA-funded projects, ensuring timely delivery of milestones and maintaining compliance with funding requirements. I have successfully facilitated cross-functional collaboration between farmers, forestry nurseries, and industry stakeholders to implement and evaluate on-farm and nursery trials. Additionally, I possess strong skills in grant application writing, budget management, and impact reporting. My PhD in plant science and experience in agronomy and forestry enable me to provide scientific insight to projects and rigorously test new products in glasshouse or field environments, while my project management capabilities ensure effective coordination and communication. Through my work in both academic and commercial agricultural environments, I am well-versed in translating research outcomes into practical applications that address real-world challenges. I am committed to supporting innovative, farmer- and forester-led initiatives that drive productivity and sustainability in the agriculture and forestry sectors.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Circular economy; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: PhD in Plant Science

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Paul Rhodes | Future Food Solutions Ltd

Organisation Website: www.futurefoodsolutions.co.uk

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been working in UK agriculture since leaving Newcastle University in 1986. Firstly as a farmer until January 1st 2000- winning a number of industry awards such as Farmers Weekly Pig Farmer of the Year 1991 and runner up Farmer of the Year . I was also Executive Chairman of Yorkshire Farmers a Livestock Marketing Cooperative for 15 years. I worked as a Regional manager for EFFF for 10 years responsible for East Midlands , Yorkshire and the NE. My role was to create , support and develop farmer cooperatives and develop collaborative supply chains from farm to factory/ retail. In 2013 i set up Future Food Solutions with the aim of developing more sustainable and resilient supply chains mostly for large brands such as Heineken , Coca Cola, KP (Intersnack) , Suntory to name a few. 6 years a go we establishe Sustainable Landscapes Programme on behalf of Yorkshire Water to support farm transition to Regen-Ag. This programme has scaled to 195 farmers farming 200,000 acres in Yorkshire. we have also established a programme for Anglian Water in North Lincs. Also in 2013 I set up another business called Sustainable Food Chains which provides supply chain consultancy and applies for grants on behalf of a broad client base with 100% success with over 100 grants and grants valuing over £20M . In recent years working with a number of Universities have developed the CarbonBank a vehicle to monetise carbon sequestrated in arable soils.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) Agriculture Newcastle University

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Po Yang | The University of Sheffield

Organisation Website: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cs/people/academic/po-yang>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forestry; Agroforestry; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Prof Po Yang leads this research from the University of Sheffield's School of Computer Science, where he is Professor of Pervasive Intelligence, Head of the Pervasive Computing Group, and Deputy Director of Research and Innovation. He also serves as an Independent Scientific Advisor at the Alan Turing Institute, specialising in the BridgeAI Agri-food expert group. In the past five years, Prof Yang has secured over £3.4 million in competitive funding as Principal Investigator, leading Innovate UK Future Food and Farming projects, a BBSRC award, EPSRC grants, and multiple KE initiatives. His leadership of projects such as "Mobile Pest Management," and "Climate-Smart-Fertiliser," has underpinned advances in AI-driven, low-emission agriculture. He has published over 52 high-impact IEEE Transactions and Journal papers, with 7,400+ citations and an h-index of 43. His expertise covers precision fertiliser management, AI-enabled pest diagnostics, soil GHG quantification, and digital agronomy platforms. Prof Yang has successfully delivered cross-institutional, industry-facing collaborations with partners like Velcourt, ADAS, and Mutus-Tech, achieving on-farm pilots in Eastern England and Argentina. He is experienced in disassembling large grants into student-led projects, ensuring strong academic outputs and industry relevance, and consistently delivering scalable, sustainable agricultural solutions.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Crop protection; Data / AI / machine learning; Enhanced management / decision support; Natural capital

Qualifications: PhD in Electronics Engineering, Alan Turing Institute Independent Scientific Advisor

Rory Harding | Kent Wildlife Trust

Organisation Website: <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forestry; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I grew up working on the family beef farm in the South East. I also worked at my Uncle's nearby Organic dairy, which included habitat interventions to support biodiversity. I have subsequently shaped my career, linking conservation and farming in a wide range of roles. Within the forestry sector I worked on project development, coordination and delivery of woodland planting projects nationwide at Trees for Cities 2017-19. I currently work as lead on farmer engagement at Kent Wildlife Trust 2019- present, this includes facilitation of farmer cluster groups, developing and delivering innovative field trials and landscape scale project co-design with farmers. I am part of numerous agricultural networks, attend regular training and knowledge sharing events such as Groundswell Ag and have directly developed R&D projects with regenerative farmers including pesticide reduction trials, intercropping and most recently liquid compost extracts. This has included applying for, administering and reporting on grants from Water companies and supermarkets. The most recent field trial work, sponsored by Co-op Foundation, has been featured on BBC radio 4, through the Food and Farming Awards programme.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BASIS Foundations in Agriculture

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Sarah Buchanan | University of Strathclyde

Organisation Website: <https://www.strath.ac.uk/>

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Forestry; Bioeconomy;
Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a bid development professional and have written and managed many successful grant applications, I grew up and worked on a farm in Lanark which is our family business though the sector is not my main focus, i work in engineering at the university. However i understand the agricultural sector due to growing up on and working on our family farm.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Automation; Diagnostics & sensors; Diversification & transition management; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Renewable energy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: None

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Sarah Faulkner | Faulkner and Mayne Sustainable Agriculture Ltd

Organisation Website: www.fmagri.co.uk

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Soft fruit; Bioeconomy; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: Sarah Faulkner is an experienced environmental professional working in the agricultural sector for over 25 years. A Cranfield University graduate, Chartered Surveyor (MRICS), Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv), Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. She is also a FACTS qualified adviser and a BASIS registered Environmental Adviser. She has a passion for helping agricultural businesses thrive with detailed knowledge of biodiversity, agriculture and horticulture. She has expertise in interpreting complex agricultural and environmental policy issues for farming businesses. Sarah has extensive experience of facilitating farmer groups and of public speaking and as a chair. She has bidding and project management experience including a Defra funded Environmental Stewardship Test and Trial. Sarah worked for National Farmers Union NFU for 19 years, providing strategic leadership and managing all NFU Midlands agricultural policy activity. She has experience of change management and team management. She was the NFU West Midlands environment lead for more than 15 years developing experience in water quality, water resources, land management and planning expertise. Sarah previously worked for the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) in Shropshire and on Powys County Council's farm estate.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc, CEnv, MCIEEM, RICS, BASIS Reg Env Adviser, FACTS

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Sean Dobbs | Forged Innovation Limited

Organisation Website: <https://forgedinnovation.com/>

Region: Northern Ireland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Forestry; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I served as CTO for four years, securing over £2 million in R&D funding for large collaborative projects. I then built a team to scale these efforts, identifying and ranking emerging opportunities and markets by maturity and readiness. We also assessed project feasibility, including budget requirements. With this team, we secured an additional £6.7 million in funding. In 2019, I founded Forged Innovation to bring this expertise to SMEs and start-ups. Since then, we've helped hundreds of businesses structure their R&D pipeline, providing data-driven clarity and direction. In some cases, we've also led and managed projects from inception to completion. This skillset has enabled me to develop my own climate-tech/Agri-tech product, securing over £700,000 for a mixture of funding, government contracts, and private investment over the past 2.5 years. The business has consistently tripled in size year-on-year for four consecutive years.

Skills: Biomaterials, bioenergy; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BEng Hons Mechanical Engineering, Post Grad in Business and Management

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Innovate
UK

Trudie Cooper | Bagshaws LLP

Organisation Website: www.bagshaws.com

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forestry; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: Assisted farmers and landowners with a range of grant applications and ongoing project management for the last 15+ years. Successfully written 8 innovation grant funding applications and assisted with the management of these projects to ensure they translate from paper to action on the round. Negotiated 17 Higher Level Stewardship and 11 Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship agreements (including SSSI and Scheduled Monument designations and rare habitats), 1 Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant, 56 Countryside Stewardship Mid-Tier agreements and 46 Countryside Stewardship Capital Grants. Some larger grants can take at least a year to progress from initial meetings to agreements being in place, and I then assist all existing agreement holders with regards ongoing advice, agreement amendments, SSSI consent forms, and project managing capital works for habitat management through agreements up to 10 years in length. I am Lead Facilitator for the Peak District Estates Farmer Group (Countryside Stewardship Facilitation Fund), including over 40 farmers and covers more than 10,500 hectares, and engages farmers with all manner of environmental gains, including water quality, air quality and habitat management and considering new technologies. I have previously delivered a successful renewable technology project for farmers with the Peak District National Park Authority.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Diversification & transition management; Renewable energy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc Countryside Management (Hons)

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Victoria Herbert | Business Information Point

Organisation Website: <https://businessinfopoint.co.uk/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops; Agroforestry; Monogastrics; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I was part of the team delivering the Defra-funded Future Farming Resilience project which supported over 2500 farmers across Devon, Dorset, Somerset and Cornwall in the three years to 2025. I managed project delivery to 100 farm businesses, supporting them to achieve business resilience by considering cashflow, enterprise profitability, and the role of external revenue and grant funding in healthy business margins. I supported businesses to review and adapt land management practices to maximise productivity and profitability. In the past 12 months I have also worked with 30 innovative farm businesses. Each was investigating or trialling new approaches, technologies and practices: examples include adoption of grazing management practices to maximise productivity, soil carbon baselining to move towards net zero, fertiliser trials investigating seaweed extract, nutrient extraction from bone, and soil microbiology measurement and enhancement to influence forage quality. I was responsible for facilitating each business' engagement with funding, specialist advisors and consultants to maximise sustained progress.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Diversification & transition management; Plant breeding; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: N/A

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Will John | Principal Consultant RSK ADAS Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://adas.co.uk/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Soft fruit; Forestry; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Will has worked in the field of agriculture and environmental consultancy for over 30 years. Will has expertise across a range of disciplines including business management, soil health & water quality, environmental compliance, innovation, ecology, forestry and latterly BNG and nutrient neutrality. Will has worked on a 1:1 basis as well as in group situations, bringing together land owners and industry to improve the knowledge base in the rural sector. Will is a Prince 2 Practitioner who uses his project management skills on a daily basis to ensure projects (often grant based) remain on schedule and within budget.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Diversification & transition management; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: Bsc Geography, MSc Environmental Forestry, Member of the Chartered Institution for Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM), FACTS, BASIS Soils & Water, Member of the British Society for Soil Science (BSSS), Prince 2 Practitioner

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Will Simonson | Organic Research Centre

Organisation Website: <https://www.organicresearchcentre.com/>

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Forestry and bioeconomy

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forestry; Agroforestry

Skills and Experience

Experience: My entire career has been in the environmental sciences and specifically in agriculture over the last 5+ years working for the Organic Research Centre and previously the international environment and development agency UNE-WCMC. My day-to-day work is project development and management (including funded by Horizon Europe, Innovate UK and Defra, at any one time working on 4-5 different projects focused on agroforestry and sustainable farming more broadly

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Enhanced management / decision support; Imaging / satellites; Natural capital; Plant breeding

Qualifications: MA(hons), MSc, PhD

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Innovate
UK

Agatha Wildblood-Hawthorne | Self. Hawthorne Dairy and Wildblood Farm

Organisation Website: na

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I successfully applied for innovation grants for my companies, and won several awards in innovation in agriculture. I also managed large private estates as a surveyor, focusing on farms, and have supported businesses working for the DWP as a business growth advisor.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Diversification & transition management; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: Masters degree, RICS

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Alamgir Hossain | Digital Readiness and Intelligent Systems Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.d-ready.co.uk>

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tree crops; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Professor Alamgir Hossain has extensive experience in project and grant management, particularly in AI-driven innovations for agriculture and sustainable farming. He has successfully led and contributed to various EU, UKRI, and Newton-funded projects across multiple countries, fostering global collaboration in smart agriculture, fisheries, and disease management. His notable projects include the Newton Research-funded TB Testing Project for Humans and Animals (2018-19) with Malaysia, which integrated AI for early disease detection. He also worked on the Foot and Mouth Disease Project with Thailand (2020-21), leveraging AI-driven diagnostics to improve livestock health. Additionally, he played a key role in the Innovate UK Global Exploration Project on Fisheries with Cambodia (2021-22), supporting AI-powered solutions for sustainable fish farming. He recently secured funding for the AI Hatcheries Productivity Enhancement Project (2024-25) to optimize aquaculture productivity. Beyond these projects, he has worked on several EU-funded smart farming initiatives involving over 15 countries, collaborating with institutions such as Swansea University's Fisheries Department and the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture. His deep-rooted understanding of farming stems from his upbringing in rural Bangladesh, where he gained firsthand experience working with farmers. This background, combined with his AI and digital transformation expertise, positions him as a leader in agricultural innovation.

Skills: Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Imaging / satellites; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD in Control & Systems Engineering

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Alasdair Cook | Mujika Ltd

Organisation Website: www.mujika.org

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: Experienced in the management and delivery of projects related to livestock animal health in academic, Government and commercial sectors from small scale to long-term multidisciplinary teams including planning, resource management, data collection and analysis and reporting.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: BVM&S; MSc; CertPM; DipECVPH; PhD; MRCVS

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Amy Cooper | Chandler Watson Consultancy Ltd

Organisation Website: Chandler Watson Consultancy Ltd

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a self-employed Agricultural Consultant with over five years of experience supporting livestock farms and rural businesses. Since 2019, I have delivered tailored consultancy services specialising in grant funding, business development, and project management. I have secured over £6.5 million in grant funding since 2021, predominantly under DEFRA schemes, including the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund, Farming Transformation Fund, and the Sustainable Farming Incentive. My role covers the full grant lifecycle — from identifying opportunities and preparing applications to submitting payment claims and post-payment monitoring. I have also supported projects funded through the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), including a farm diversification venture into tourism and an oak product manufacturing business. The latter utilised grant funding to adopt new technology that enhanced the quality and product range offered by the business. My work combines hands-on agricultural knowledge with strategic planning to help farm businesses secure funding, remain compliant, and unlock new income streams.

Skills: Agri-business management; Diversification & transition management; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: 1st Class BSc (Hons) Rural Enterprise and Land Management, MBIAC (member of British Institute of Agricultural Consultants) & took FACTS examinations on 8th & 9th April 2025 - awaiting results

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Andrew Hardcastle | Hardcastle Rural Surveyors Ltd

Organisation Website: www.hardcastlerural.co.uk

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Andrew is from a Yorkshire farming family just outside Harrogate with beef and sheep and formally dairy cows. He has extensive practical experience of dairy, beef and sheep systems together with cereal and root crop production across the Yorkshire region. Having worked as a Rural Chartered Surveyor and Land Agent in the region since 2007, he established his own firm in 2021, Hardcastle Rural Surveyors Ltd, and has rapidly grown to a team of 6 surveyors specialising in Agricultural Consultancy advice covering a wide range of grant and support schemes. Andrew has advised a wide range of farmers and landowners across the region in relation to a variety of grant and support schemes including the adoption of new technologies, robotics and innovative techniques. He has prepared and managed applications under the Farming Investment Fund, Farming Equipment and Technology Fund and Farming Transformation Fund together with previous schemes operated through DEFRA and Yorkshire Forward run schemes. This has involved advice on the scheme requirements, assistance with staged applications, management of the scheme and submission of claims.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Diversification & transition management; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc HONS, MRICS, FAAV

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Andrew Walton | WTMS

Organisation Website: Believe in Science Ltd

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Within the food manufacturing and agriculture sectors, I have successfully written, managed, and delivered projects both with and without grant funding across both owner occupier businesses and large public limited companies. Through my facilitation and communication skills I ensure that projects are to time and budget and stakeholders are communicated to appropriately and in a timely manner. The projects I have overseen have improved both product quality and productivity improvement projects involving large stakeholder groups and complex reporting requirements. As a farmer and consultant I have three decades of experience spanning the entire food chain from conception to consumption, I possess transferable skills, knowledge, and experience that make me an ideal candidate for achieving the goals of an ADOPT facilitator.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching

Qualifications: BSc Hons Agriculture and Land Management; MSc Meat Science; Fellowship in Manufacturing Management, Post Graduate Certificate in Agriculture

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Andy McGowan | United Pig Cooperative

Organisation Website: N/a

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have >30 years experience across a range of positions involving innovation, supply chain development and farmer cooperation, particularly relating to livestock and meat. This started with PIC, predominantly working with commercial clients in Eastern Europe and Asia and included the bidding and successful completion of an EU development project in Bosnia Herzegovina. I spent eleven years as Head of Industry Development at Quality Meat Scotland (levy body) responsible for commissioning more than 100 different knowledge transfer and innovation projects, such as Monitor Farms and learning journeys, as well as formal research projects. More recently, I have been the Managing Director of Scottish Pig Producers, a marketing cooperative operating in Scotland and Northern Ireland which has an offshoot called Wholesome Pigs (Scotland), a not-for-profit company that delivers innovation projects, most notably relating to disease control, pig welfare, carbon measurement and meat eating quality.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) General Agriculture; MSc Pig Production; Pg Dip Development Management; Master of Business Administration

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Annie Rayner | Evolving Agriculture

Organisation Website: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/annie-rayner-228ba8259/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced project manager in agriculture, with a strong track record of securing, leading, and delivering R&D projects. These include privately funded initiatives as well as projects supported by UK research councils (BBSRC, Innovate UK). I have successfully led multidisciplinary teams, overseen project finances, and ensured delivery within time and scope requirements. My core expertise lies in sustainable livestock, with in-depth knowledge of animal behaviour and welfare. I have worked across a range of species and production systems, gaining a comprehensive understanding of both local and global challenges in health, welfare, and sustainability. I have a strong appreciation for the complexity of agricultural systems and the range of stakeholders involved throughout the food supply chain. While my primary focus has been in livestock, I have also managed projects in field-scale vegetable production, forage systems, and agroforestry, demonstrating highly transferable skills and adaptability across agricultural sectors. My experience equips me to lead complex projects, manage change effectively, build collaborative relationships, and ensure that outcomes are practical, relevant, and aligned with stakeholder and funder priorities.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal health & welfare; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc, PhD

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Bethan John | UK Agri-Tech Centre

Organisation Website: <https://ukagritechcentre.com/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Dr. Bethan John is a bioveterinary scientist specializing in livestock health and welfare, with expertise in ruminant parasitology. As a key member of the UK Agri-Tech Centre's Innovation Team, Dr. John leads advancements in penside diagnostics and preventative medicine strategies, driving responsible antimicrobial usage in farmed animals and Agri-Tech adoption across the supply chain. Previously, Dr. John led AHDB's Dairy Mastitis Control Plan and played a pivotal role managing UK Home Office-regulated studies for contract research organizations. Her work supported commercial clients in the development of veterinary pharmaceuticals and nutrition products. Dr. John has authored peer-reviewed publications, earning editor's choice awards, and has developed farmer-focused knowledge exchange resources in collaboration with UK levy boards and industry bodies. She is also a visiting lecturer at Hartpury University, contributing to the Animal Welfare, Policy, and Legislation Master's programme, and serves as a steering group member for Control Of Worms Sustainably (COWS)—an initiative promoting responsible parasite control in the UK's beef and dairy sectors. She is experienced in effective project management and efficient delivery of objectives on grant-funded projects, able to meet competing deadlines and confident in making decisions always with the end user, i.e., the farmer or wider industry, in mind.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Diagnostics & sensors; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc, PhD

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Colin Potts | Cottagequinn Enterprises Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://www.cottagequinn.com/>

Region: Northern Ireland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have 20+ years' experience in agri-food as a 'customer' of InnovateUK during my time with the red meat processor Dunbia. With particular focus since 2013 I led the preparation of funding applications and subsequent project management and governance during the delivery of funded R&D projects. I have sound understanding of the InnovateUK process which I continue to engage with through role as Principal of Juco Associates Ltd and part-time employment with Cottagequinn Enterprises Ltd, a family investment company engaged in investment to early stage business across the agri-food supply chain and as an assessor of applications for funding support currently under the Defra-led FIP. I have a long history of preparing and reviewing funding proposals in commercial environment. My financial background in both practice and industry has helped develop a strong commercial awareness and experiences at director-level management have provided platform to assess and identify strengths and weaknesses across proposals. My background has been concentrated in the food industry supply-chain in the past during which I have had experience of dealing with external stakeholders. A strategic thinker and with proven analytical skills I have been able to conduct business case assessment across a wider cross-section of industry.

Skills: Agri-business management; Automation; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: Associate Member - Institute of Financial Accountants.

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

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Conor Brown | ICBF

Organisation Website: lcbf.com

Region: Northern Ireland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Worked on the Fastbreeder project with Prof Mike Coffey and 4 large dairy farms in South West Scotland. Project has been running for more than 5 years with annual grant applications to continue the research. I am currently project Manager for the Bovine Genetics Project starting in Northern Ireland.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Data / AI / machine learning; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc Agricultural Science

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Dave Ross | Agrifood Investment Advisory LLP

Organisation Website: pending

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: Born and brought up on a farm. c30 years experience in applied agri R&D, created a number of patents and papers, and assisted new companies. Latterly (9 years) CEO of Agri-EPI Centre Ltd, one of the 4 UK Agri-tech Centres. Finally was Director of the International and Investment portfolio of the UKATC, and finished at end of March 2025.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Automation; Diagnostics & sensors; Imaging / satellites; Robotics

Qualifications: BSc(Hons) PDip AMIMechE AMIFST AMIAgrE FRASE FRAgS

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Douglas Bowden-Smith | Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society

Organisation Website: <https://saos.coop/>

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots;
Fieldscale vegetables; Forestry; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: With hands-on experience in two family farming enterprises across England and Scotland, integrating mixed rotations and livestock, I bring both practical agricultural knowledge and strategic expertise in project and grant management. As a key team member at SAOS, I specialise in agricultural supply chain strategy, agri-innovation, and cooperative development, supporting SAOS's 64 agri-cooperative members. PRINCE2-certified, I have led and managed multiple agriculture-focused projects, including sustainability benchmarking in farming, abattoir access research for livestock producers, and national mapping of deer larder facilities. My work involves farmer engagement, supporting policy development, and data analysis, and shaping industry strategies. Currently, I manage a £119k pilot fund to enhance low-ground venison supply chains, improving infrastructure for deer managers and expanding market access. I also lead SAOS's Sourcing for Growth initiative, connecting food manufacturers with Scottish farmers to strengthen local supply chains and substitute imports with homegrown produce. Additionally, I oversee agricultural grant applications, including KTIF projects involving farming cooperatives, develop agri-digital systems, and manage data-driven projects that deliver direct benefits to farmers.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Plant breeding; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: MA (Hons) & PRINCE2 certified & Attractiss trained

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Emily Mosley | Bagshaws LLP

Organisation Website: www.bagshaws.com

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Forestry; Agroforestry; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I come from a family beef farm with a dairy background and have hands-on experience in both commercial and pedigree beef, sheep, and arable farming across England and Scotland. My roles have included farm operations and secretarial work, ensuring compliance with regulations, schemes and maintaining accurate records. I hold a BSc (Hons) in Agriculture with Farm Business Management from Harper Adams University graduating in 2021. Currently, I work as a FACTS farm advisor specializing in Slurry, Nutrient & Soil Management, as well as grant applications and project management. I have successfully secured and now manage four Slurry Infrastructure Grants, overseeing stakeholder engagement, project milestones, and compliance. Additionally, I assist a broad client base with SFI and Capital Grant Applications and Agreements, ensuring adherence to scheme requirements while streamlining processes for farmers. My expertise lies in navigating complex regulations, connecting farmers with industry specialists, and delivering practical solutions for sustainable farm management.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Natural capital; Regulation / policy; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: FACTS: FE/7277. BSc (Hons) in Agriculture and Farm Business Management

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

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Emma Hawkins | TBAT

Organisation Website: <https://tbat.co.uk>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am a full time Grant Funding Consultant at TBAT Innovation, a value-led independent consultancy, with a strong interest in the agricultural sector (particularly agritech and livestock). In this role, I support clients with applications for grant funding from a range of sources including Innovate UK. I also get involved with Grants Claims Management, supporting clients with the often complicated admin and reporting involved with grant-funded projects. Prior to joining the TBAT team I worked as Project Support Officer at CIEL (Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock) which is now known as the UK AgriTech Centre. In this role I worked on a number of projects, both grant and industry funded, working with innovative farmers and agricultural businesses. I got my first taste of the funding journey when I took part in an internship with an agritech start-up developing livestock tracking technology; this opened my eyes to the complexity of grant funding and how, as a newcomer, it can be difficult to know where to start. My grant writing and project management experience is supported by an Animal Science BSc Hons degree from The University of Nottingham. I am based in South Oxfordshire and can travel as needed.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: BSc Hons. Animal Sciences from University of Nottingham. Prince 2.

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

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Greg Ricketts | GSC Grays

Organisation Website: <https://www.gscgrays.co.uk/>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise:

Skills and Experience

Experience: Greg is a director of GSC Grays and an experienced farm business consultant with 32 years' experience in the provision of farm business consultancy advice. Greg started his early career in practical farming and farm management roles in the South of England, before moving to Anderson's where he became a farm business consultant, initially based in the Midlands, moving to North Yorkshire in 1993. Greg became a director of Anderson's Northern in 2001, moving to GSC Grays in 2019 to help lead the farm business services team, which has grown to be the largest consultancy business in the North of England. Greg advises farming clients across the North of England with an emphasis on the provision of specialist farm business advice. Greg gets involved in livestock businesses with an extensive client base including dairy, pig and poultry farmers across the North of England providing both day-to-day and strategic management advice to farmers. Greg has been involved in several large diversification projects on farm and joint venture arrangements and helped lead our future farm resilience fund project the Farm Business Advice Service which has provided advice and guidance to almost 1500 farmers across the North of England

Skills: Agri-business management; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: Diploma in Farm Management

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Hannah Jones | Farm Carbon Toolkit

Organisation Website: <https://farmcarbontoolkit.org.uk>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Hannah Jones is a Farm carbon and soils adviser with the Farm Carbon Toolkit. Hannah has previously coordinated and carried out research projects spanning herbal leys, arable systems, cover crops and field vegetables. Her role has been to coordinate farm-based trials by working closely with farmers and agricultural businesses to optimise the impact and applicability of the research. She has taken this experience and is contributing to the developing project portfolio of FCT. Her work includes bespoke trials which feed into the Farm Carbon Calculator, the advisory work and knowledge transfer

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Agronomy; Crop nutrition; Natural capital; Plant breeding

Qualifications: BSc, MSc, PhD, FACTS

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Harriet Scott | RAFT Solutions Ltd

Organisation Website: www.raftsolutions.co.uk

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Experienced project manager in UK Agri-Tech and innovation in sustainable food production. Specialised in writing, delivering and publishing research and development projects of all scales and sizes including project management of 18 Innovate UK funded projects.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Diagnostics & sensors

Qualifications: Recognised PRINCE2 Practitioner

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Holly Shearman | Innovation for Agriculture / Royal Agricultural Society of England

Organisation Website: Innovation for Agriculture / RASE

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Bioeconomy; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced, qualified project manager, in the agricultural sector; adaptable in approach to different problems and able to organise and prioritise a heavy workload, whilst operating to strict deadlines. Having written bids for and then successfully managed large cross sector national livestock disease eradication and innovation projects for commercial and charitable clients as well as DEFRA, Horizon Europe & UKRI. I am a qualified R-SQP (RAMA) with a BSc (Hons) degree in Animal Science and hold a Prince2 practitioner project management qualification. I am also a beef and sheep farmer from Sussex, passionate about animals, the environment and in particular sustainable production animal health and welfare, and the challenges that the agricultural industry faces today. Through my years as a project manager in the livestock and veterinary industries, I have developed an excellent working relationship with several key stakeholders as well as individuals across all levels of the industry and beyond. I am also very experienced in utilising successful PR & communications to engage farmers and wider industry into attending events, to ensure maximum attendance; as well as facilitating meetings and workshops, to get the most out of the attendees, as well as to ensure maximum impact is achieved and measured for funders as well as attendee's benefit. I am a hardworking pro-active self-starter who enjoys a challenge, with the ability to relate to and form positive working relationships with a wide range of people from all sectors and agencies both on an individual and group basis. I enjoy researching new subjects and can assimilate large amounts of information quickly and accurately and disseminate it according to the audience.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Circular economy; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc, RAMA (rSQP), PRINCE2 PM Practitioner

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

James Hague | Dairy Club

Organisation Website: <https://dairyclub.tech/>

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Ruminants; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I was Technical Director at Kingshay for eight years in charge of all trial work and technical output. I am a trained project manager and have been involved in a wide range of trial designs from soils through to full farm economics.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Automation; Crop nutrition; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc Agric (Animal Science), FACTS, AI, PA1 & 2, Craftsman Certificates

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

James Stretton | Black Sheep Technology Ltd (t/a FlockFinder)

Organisation Website: www.flockfinder.co.uk

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: Black Sheep Technology has been awarded 3 x Innovate UK grants to support the delivery of its industry leading technology platforms - specifically designed to support farmers and improve livestock productivity. Managing these grants from application, through MO-review all the way to project closure, so am very familiar with the requirements and expectations of IUK. Before starting Black Sheep Technology, I built up a decade of experience as a Project Manager in banking and financial services sectors.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy

Qualifications: BSc

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Jayne Brookman | ElentecBio Ltd.

Organisation Website: elentecBioAg.com

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Bioeconomy; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have managed grants and multi-participant projects for over 30 years with particular experience of collaborative projects between knowledge providers (often universities) and industry helping to manage the communication between partners and with funders as well as the overall progress of the project. I coordinated the BBSRC (UK research council) Crop Club (wheat, barley and OSR) and Diet and Health Club and supervised coordination of the Animal Club (Breeding and animal health), these were groups of projects with a clear focus on delivering for the end user. I have managed EU- projects, and as the dissemination partner for SME-focussed consortia. I was the lead for the Global Challenges Research Fund AgriFood Africa programme 2019-2020 before taking up a regional role at the European Funder, EIT Food, where I was responsible for AgriFood projects for the UK, Ireland and Iceland. I was promoted to a pan-European role (Chief Partnership Officer) in 2023 and left in March 2025 to lead a IP-generating SME in slurry treatment. I have a broad understanding of agriculture, but my main expertise is in coordination of partners , translation of end user needs into research or policy targets and communication between funders, participants and target audiences.

Skills: Agri-business management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc (Hons), PhD

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

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John Stones | Self employed consultant

Organisation Website: Project monitoring officer - contracted to Innovate UK

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Bioeconomy; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Ownership and full management of pig farming business, latterly combined with full management of Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, including provision of group & individual training and mentoring. Since 2012 contracted to monitor collaborative R&D projects funded by Innovate UK

Skills: Algal biotech/fermentation; Data / AI / machine learning; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Robotics

Qualifications: HND Agriculture plus ongoing management & leadership training

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Lindsay Whistance | Organic Research Centre

Organisation Website: <https://www.organicresearchcentre.com>

Region: Cymru Wales

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been working on agriculture-related research projects since 2002, beginning with small-scale funding from Nuffield and the Universities Federation of Animal Welfare whilst still an undergraduate. As a post-graduate researcher, I have experience in managing components of projects at different levels of activity and funding from both domestic and international sources. Activities include management of a project theme at Work Package level as well as individual tasks under Work Package themes. At task level, I have experience managing work as an individual, as part of a small team, and as the lead on data collection and interaction with wider, international teams. Managed sources of funding include Horizon 2020 and UKRI. The projects I engage with are primarily focussed on farm animal health and welfare, human-animal-relationships and the sustainable use of resources in farm animal systems. I am currently active in eight research and knowledge-exchange projects and am managing three of these.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: PhD in Livestock Science; BSC (Hons) Animal Science (Behaviour)

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Lisa Morgans | Royal Agricultural University

Organisation Website: <https://www.rau.ac.uk/about-rau/our-staff/dr-lisa-morgans>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I began my career in agriculture as a practicing veterinarian where I worked for 4 years in mixed practice in Cornwall and established a successful herd health club with clients based on peer-to-peer learning. I then moved to Bristol University to complete a PhD in a participatory, farmer-led approach to reducing antimicrobial use, which went on to win the Antibiotic Guardian Awards for research. I then briefly worked in New Zealand helping dairy farmers and vets practice responsible medicine use and then became Head of Livestock at Innovation for Agriculture, where I ran a number of knowledge exchange projects at European and local level. This ranged from coordinating farm demonstration events, wool-welfare discussion groups, bovine TB task & finish groups to securing funding and setting up and collaborative projects to tackle slurry and farmer mental health challenges. I then moved to the RAU in 2023 where I now split my time between teaching and doing applied farmer-led research on regenerative farming and breeding of livestock, as well as social science projects on understanding impacts of cultured meat and improving the sustainability of the broiler sector. I have been an innovation manager for an IUK funded researcher starter on composting too.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Diagnostics & sensors; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: BVSc, PhD, FHEA

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

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Lizzie Downes | Promar

Organisation Website: www.promar-international.com

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Soft fruit; Viticulture; Ruminants; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have been an MSP for over 2 years, and have monitored over 40 projects, so have good awareness of the systems in place. A number of these projects were farmer led, here I have ensured I spend time with the farmer to work through the requirements of IUK, so that they are fully aware of all the T&C's and work through the submission of claims. I enjoy supporting farmers, and pride myself on being accessible and responsive to enquiries, and well as being well humoured. I have a strong farming background, which helps me to understand the challenges within the Ag sector. I was raised on a dairy & sheep farm, and went on with my husband to establish our own sheep and livery business. Alongside being an MSP, I was the Project Manager for the Defra Resilience Fund within Promar, where we delivered over £3.3m of support to farmers across England. Along with this, in 2024 I managed the delivery of the UK Farm Assurance Review which was sponsored by the NFU & AHDB.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Animal health & welfare; Diversification & transition management; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: BSc (Hons) in Agri-Food with Marketing & Business Studies

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Marta Ruano | ABVista

Organisation Website: <https://www.abvista.com/>

Region: Scotland

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Viticulture; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: As a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Strathclyde, I have actively contributed to the development of lipid-based delivery systems for applications in animal nutrition and health. Working in collaboration with AB Vista, I have played a key role in formulating bioactive lipid nanoparticles for feedstock incorporation, ensuring scalable and effective solutions for agricultural use. My experience includes optimizing peptide formulations using advanced analytical and physicochemical techniques and evaluating their efficacy against key pathogens relevant to livestock health. During my tenure as a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Associate, I worked closely with industry stakeholders, including farmers and agricultural specialists, to facilitate the implementation of novel feed formulations. I translated complex scientific findings into practical applications, providing training and technical support to industry partners. Additionally, I liaised with AB Vista's management and R&D teams to ensure alignment between research outcomes and commercial needs. At Leitat Technological Centre, I led projects on functionalized textiles for agricultural use, such as insect-repellent coatings and antimicrobial treatments. I also collaborated with industry partners to develop microencapsulated ingredients for animal feed and functional foods. My ability to bridge the gap between research and real-world agricultural applications has been a key aspect of my work, ensuring impactful and sustainable innovations.

Skills: Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Biomaterials, bioenergy; Biopesticides, pesticide alternatives & biocontrol; Crop nutrition; Enhanced management / decision support; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: Chemical Engineering and PhD in Physical-Chemistry

[**→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator**](#)

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Matthew Sharman | Devenish Nutrtition (Retired from)

Organisation Website: <https://www.devenish.com/>

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over 35 years' experience in writing grant proposals and managing/coordinating multi-partner agri-food projects with Research Organizations, SMES, Universities and Policy makers. This has included projects are National and European level. My most recent project, funded by UKRI, was on "Advancing Bioprocess Sustainability for Poultry Feed from Algal Biotechnology" This was highlighted as an exemplar project (see https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/ISCF-Transforming-Food-Production-Challenge_Digital_Pages.pdf)

Skills: Algal biotech/fermentation; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Diagnostics & sensors; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: MSc CChem FRSC FIFST

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Matthew Sheehan | Promar International Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://promar-international.com/>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Viticulture; Ruminants; Other livestock; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: A Principal Consultant at Promar since 2016, working with a wide range of farming and food supply chain businesses. Over 30 years' experience in the agriculture sector, from practical on-farm roles, through to senior manager and business directorship in large supply chain organisations, as well as in agri-food consultancy. In addition, a highly experienced Innovate UK MSP, having worked with 80+ projects, in agriculture, food, sustainability and biosciences since 2019 – offering extensive understanding of what makes projects successful, whether in set-up, during delivery, and in post-project exploitation. As a consequence of this range of roles, am highly familiar with farmers and farming businesses (understanding how they tick and what makes them successful), with particular strengths in dairy and forage farming systems, but familiar with agriculture more broadly and the wider food supply chain, working comfortably with stakeholders of all types throughout the sector. Have led teams and managed numerous projects throughout this career, whether they be for technical improvement or business change. Very familiar with project set-up, grant application and how effective grant management and project management need to operate hand-in-hand.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal health & welfare; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc Hons (Biology); Post Graduate Diploma in Farm Management; MSc (Master of Agricultural Science (Tropical Agricultural Development, Economics and Planning option)).

→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator

Peter Hoyle | Promar International Ltd

Organisation Website: <https://promar-international.com/>

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Originally from a mixed livestock farming background (dairy, beef, sheep and pigs), I have acquired over 25 years of first-hand experience in the practical and financial aspects of managing an agricultural business - which includes over 15 years managing livestock enterprises at decision maker level. I contributed towards driving innovation in a sustainable business and I was responsible for the development and progression of an enterprise. As a key account manager, project management experience included enhancing the relationship with the main customer and negotiating a consistently higher base price for cattle supplied. As a Research and Data Analyst at Promar International, a role I have held for the last eight years, I have provided a reliable Monitoring Service to a number of agricultural type projects funded/part funded by grants from the Farming Innovation Programme. I have been involved in many different projects delivering innovative outputs that provide an advance on current best practice, pushing boundaries to allow for more cost effective solutions that also contribute to improved resource utilisation and environmental sustainability. In my role at Promar, I helped extent the Farm Business Accounts and Cost Tracker Service into the Organic Dairy Sector and I lead cost of production calculations.

Skills: Agri-business management; Data / AI / machine learning; Diversification & transition management

Qualifications: MSc Rural Land and Business Management

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

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Peter Williams | AG Bio Ltd

Organisation Website: AG Bio Ltd

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Bioeconomy; Ruminants; Monogastrics;
Other livestock; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Approx 8 years experience as Innovate UK Monitoring Officer. Prior to that was project lead

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Circular economy; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc MSc PhD Emeritus Professor

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Rachel Hayton | Synergy Farm Health Limited

Organisation Website: Synergy Farm Health Limited

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have worked as a clinical farm animal vet for the last 30 years and now manage an extensive research programme on our client farms. We usually have about a dozen active projects running at any one time. In the last 2 years I have successfully managed project managed 3 Innovate funded studies including: Can Bulk Milk Revolutionise TB Testing?, ImmunIGY: A Novel Pen-side Test for Checking Calf Immune Status, to increase the efficiency of beef production through supply chain feedback and improved management and Cow Recovery: The Sustainable Solution for Improving Downer Cow Outcomes.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Diagnostics & sensors; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc, BVM&S, MRCVS, Advanced Practitioner in Cattle Health and Production

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Richard Hooson | Agri- Eco Solutions

Organisation Website: I currently don't have a website.

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I started my career as a farm consultant with Promar International (a Genus Company), focusing on budgets and cashflows, animal nutrition, crop nutrition, succession planning. This developed into being project manager for Genus as Emergency Vaccination Resource (EVR) Project Manager (Foot and Mouth vaccination). Then I ran Genus Milking Systems engineering business. Followed by Afimilk UK manager (advanced milking systems and herd management software). Dyneval Veterinary Lead (start up). For last 2 years I have set up and run Agri-Eco Solutions - a consultancy business specialising in SFI applications for farmers.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Diagnostics & sensors

Qualifications: BSc, FACTS.

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Richard Pearson | Oxcel

Organisation Website: www.oxcel.com

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Consulting on Agri Tech Start up Oxcel - Enhancing Livestock Drinking Water. Head of Agriculture Morrisons - developed producer groups. Regional Director NFU - supported countless farm projects and legal actions.. Ran own Start up business for 10 years.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Animal health & welfare; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc Hons Agricultural Marketing

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Robert Misselbrook | Mylor Ventures Ltd

Organisation Website: Mylor Ventures Ltd

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Viticulture; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have undertaken 2 specific Innovate UK projects with the Agri-Centre through Innovate UK with Oxi-Tech Solutions Ltd. This was in reference to Dairy herds and removing chemicals and energy from the milking cycle and reducing Mastitis. This was for both Manual and Robotic milking. I was Project Manager for both and undertook all communications and grant management with Innovate UK. I have also led grant applications for Poultry, Water feed, Flower management and an innovative Geo-thermal driven project for production of Sugarcane in the UK. I have been advising and helping companies apply for and manage grants, including all financials, for over 10 years. The focus of my grant work has been on Innovate UK and European Grants such as Cornwall's BIG1/2 grants. I have recently applied for and won a grant for a customer for the Strategic Prosperity Fund, centred around Engineering and the renewable sector.

Skills: Agri-business management; Animal health & welfare; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Renewable energy; Robotics

Qualifications: B Eng, Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Ruth Clements | Restore Nature Ltd

Organisation Website: www.restorenature.co.uk

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an experienced Veterinary surgeon with 15 years' experience in animal agriculture primarily involved in the design and implementation of farm level trials aimed at developing and promoting economically and environmentally sustainable systems. This has included innovations in disease control, nutrition, trace element management and nature friendly farming methods. I was involved in the successful submission of a large 3-year Horizon 2020 grant aimed at vaccine development, and was on the management board leading the work package responsible for innovation and demonstration. I have also led a work package for a DEFRA Core organic II project looking at innovative feeding strategies in monogastric animals. In addition to these larger grant proposals, I have overseen the operation of home office and GMP registered animal facilities carrying out smaller scale studies carried out to GCP standards. I have also led on knowledge transfer and communications projects aimed at engaging individuals and groups in progressive land and animal management practices which can contribute towards both climate and biodiversity targets.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Natural capital; Regulation / policy

Qualifications: BSc Hons, BVM&S, MRCVS

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Sam Hoste | Quantech Solutions (UK) Ltd

Organisation Website: Quantech Solutions (UK) Ltd

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Forages; Bioeconomy; Ruminants; Monogastrics

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have led grant funded projects from conception through to completion since 2004. These have been projects with farmers, companies (Map of Ag, AB Agri, PIC, Carrs Billington, Farmway, etc.), whole supply chains, and organisations such as AHDB, the Defra funded Red Meat Industry Forum “International Best Practice” project, the Agri-tech centres, and currently the Yorkshire Agricultural Society and the Agri-Sense project. My project leadership and management has covered developing a fundable concept, identifying potential partners and supporters, writing and managing the writing of applications, leading the dialogue with company finance managers, orchestrating the overall project team, and consulting with the funders such as Innovate UK. Frequently, I have initiated a significant amount of co-creation with farmers and others involved – for example in regional animal health improvement we involved farmers, vets, government vets, hauliers, processors, and AHBD. The novel aspect was that we identified focal farmers to work with their neighbours on localised animal health improvement plans. I am academically involved with agriculture and animal science universities and colleges in the UK and overseas, all potential project partners. I mentor agri-tech companies for two universities.

Skills: Agri-business management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: BSc(Hons) Agriculture, MSc Animal Breeding, PhD Animal Genetics, MBA

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Samantha Green | Hudson and Sanders

Organisation Website: Hudson and Sanders

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have a degree in Animal Health and Welfare. Since graduating I have project managed poultry farming and technology project both privately and and through IUK. I have written multiple successful bids and been project lead on 4 innovate UK projects. I have also led multiple private projects and trials on our company poultry farms

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Animal nutrition/feed formulation

Qualifications: Prince 2 training ongoing. Bsc Hons in Animal Health and Welfare, level 3 extended diploma in Agriculture

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Siwan Howatson | Mentera

Organisation Website: <https://mentera.cymru/>

Region: Cymru Wales

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forages; Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: Siwan is currently responsible for the delivery of the Our Farms Demonstration Network and other knowledge transfer activities for farmers in Wales under the Farming Connect Knowledge Transfer programme. As part of the network, 202 farming businesses are part of 94 projects across sectors and topics. The network facilitates the developments and delivery of different innovative on-farm trials and projects focusing on innovation and new technologies to help them and other Welsh farms reach net zero by 2050, and to build both resilience and sustainability amid a changing climate. Siwan has over ten years' experience of delivering effective leadership to develop and deliver high-profile, cross-sectoral technical and knowledge exchange programmes involving R&D and on-farm trials, budget management and responsibility, and methods of knowledge exchange. Her key passion is to close the gap between academic research and on-farm practices and through the Farming Connect Programme has developed the Try Out Fund Concept to encourage and ensure more farmers are able to access to support to bring their ideas to life.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal nutrition/feed formulation; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: MSc Ruminant Nutrition & 1st Class BSc Hons Bio-veterinary science

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Tabitha Acton | Soil Association

Organisation Website: <https://www.soilassociation.org/>

Region: North East & Cumbria

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Ruminants

Skills and Experience

Experience: Over 9 years of experience working as an agricultural advisor with a focus on animal health and welfare, particularly ruminants. Working alongside farming at home, on an upland beef and sheep farm. I have held the qualification with AMTRA for Registered Animal Medicines Advisor since 2017 and been a Registered Sheep Advisor with RoSA since 2024. I currently sit on the Board for the Moredun Foundation, as part of my role as the chair of the North of England Advisors board for the Moredun Research Institute. As well as being a member of the local funding panel for Northumberland National Park Authorities FiPL program. Experience in my role as a Farming Advisor within the farming and land use team at the Soil Association includes; delivery of meetings, webinars and one-to-one advice for Defra's Future Farm Resilience fund, application for funding and ongoing coordination of two Innovative Farmers Field Labs, and development and facilitation of a program of work within our Agroecology at Scale project focused on beef and sheep.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Animal health & welfare; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: BSc Hons Biomedicine & Nutrition, MRes Immunobiology, Registered Animal Medicines Advisor/SQP, RoSA

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Will Dallimore | Ngage Solutions

Organisation Website: <https://www.ngagesolutions.co.uk/>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: Livestock

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Ruminants; Other livestock

Skills and Experience

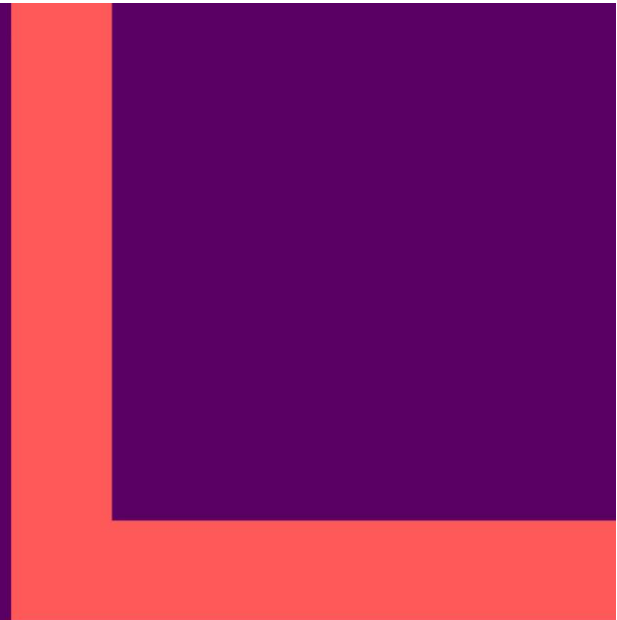
Experience: I manage DEFRA-funded Rural Capital Grant programmes across a wide area, providing over £12m in grants to businesses. Besides direct management of funding, I offer consultancy services for other DEFRA/RPA funding opportunities, gaining experience in agricultural productivity, adding value, and various diversification activities. I effectively manage a diverse team across multiple geographies and develop new and existing partnerships. My business analysis skills allow me to offer tailored advice to individual business needs. I am responsible for contract and relationship management with funders from public, private, and voluntary sectors. Additionally, I support farm clusters and local partnerships such as the Bucks and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership. I serve as Vice Chair of the Chilterns Farming in Protected Landscapes grant panel and Chair the South Midlands Growth Hub Rural Advisory Group.

Skills: Agri-business management; Automation; Circular economy; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital; Plant breeding

Qualifications: BA Hons

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

New Systems



Campbell Scott | Atomictractors Limited

Organisation Website: www.atomictractors.com

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Biomass; Forages; Ruminants; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: With over 20 years of experience in the agricultural sector, including as former Director of Marketing for Massey Ferguson (AGCO), I bring extensive expertise in project and grant management across both commercial and innovation-led environments. I have led and delivered a wide range of short- and long-term projects, from modest initiatives to multi-million-pound programmes, consistently meeting deadlines and budgets. Many of these projects involved collaboration with CEJA (the European Council of Young Farmers) and its national affiliates, giving me strong experience in stakeholder engagement and international coordination. Since founding my own company, Atomictractor Limited, in 2021, I have successfully secured a Fast Start Grant and led or partnered in over ten Innovate UK grant applications. I have acted as Project Lead Applicant and Consortium Partner, with direct involvement in application writing, budget planning, milestone tracking, and reporting. My hands-on understanding of both the agricultural sector and the innovation funding landscape equips me to effectively support farmer-led R&D initiatives. I'm passionate about helping projects stay focused, well-coordinated, and outcomes-driven—ensuring innovative solutions reach the farm gate.

Skills: Agricultural engineering; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Renewable energy; Robotics; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BA MSc Chartered Marketer

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Christine Adams | Mayflower Innovation

Organisation Website: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/christinehadams/>

Region: South East

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Soft fruit; Salad crops; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have successfully project managed 8 Farming Innovation Pathway funded projects, over £5m total grant funding, with leading-edge SMEs including Muddy Machines and Optimal Labs. These included collaborations with some of the UK's leading vegetable growers, for example EVG who produce 25% of Sainsbury's tomatoes and Cobrey Farms who grow 60% of the UK's asparagus, packaging 80%. I have project managed 20+ Innovate UK grants in a variety of technical areas. I have monitored 100+ grants over 12+ years including those with agricultural applications, but from different competitions, such as the A4I project Innovative Chemical Blends for Improved Western Flower Thrips Monitoring (project10130844). Thrips are a prevalent and increasing pest issue for many UK farmers. In terms of project management, I have 25+ years' PRINCE2. Over and above this, I see stakeholder management as vital and have worked with key stakeholders from SMEs to Ministers and captains of Industry. In the flagship agricultural project, HERD (10027555) working as the Collaboration and Project Manager, I worked directly with the following farmers: General Manager, Keston Williams at Barfoots: General Manager, Mark Twinn at DGM growers, Owner, John Chinn at Cobrey Farms, General Manager, Simon Barnett at MWW, and Ian Critchley of G's Fresh.

Skills: Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Robotics; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: PhD Materials Physics; BSc Physics

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Claire Rose | Graveltrack Consulting

Organisation Website: Graveltrack Consulting

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Viticulture; Bioeconomy; Other livestock; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I worked at Lincoln Agri Robotics as development lead, building outreach with business and supporting agritech startups through Eagle Lab Farm Innovation. I also worked on an agri robotics Hrozon project scoping global market for viticulture robotics.

Skills: Agri-business management; Agricultural engineering; Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Automation; Circular economy; Crop nutrition; Crop protection; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Irrigation; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy; Renewable energy; Robotics; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: MBA

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)



Innovate
UK

Davina Fillingham | Partner Dee Atkinson & Harrison

Organisation Website: www.dee-atkinson-harrison.co.uk

Region: Yorkshire & the Humber

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Forages; Salad crops; Tree crops; Viticulture; Forestry; Agroforestry; Ruminants; Monogastrics; Other livestock; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: In 2013 I was awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship to study the Application for Precision Agriculture for Rural Land Management following on from that through my professional career as a Rural Surveyor and Agri – Business Consultant I have advised farmers on the adoption of technology test and trials on farm and worked on the implementation of technology on farm, projects have included 3 way optical sorting for potato grading, adoption of robotics on farm, review of systems for managing and interpreting data. I have developed a significant network of people in the Agri-Tech sector from research institutions to farmers keen try new technologies. I have prepared and managed applications under the Farming Investment Fund and Farming Transformation fund and Farming Equipment Technology Fund including implementation and the claims process, as well as recently operating a project to support farmers in the adoption of technology on farm known as Agri-Sense this is a precision agriculture special interest group funded by the York and North Yorkshire combined Authority and run and administered with regular claims in a format that replicates the Innovate funding. As well as Agri-Tech funding I have worked in grant management in the agriculture and agri environment sector throughout my entire professional career implementing projects and managing claims.

Skills: Agri-business management; Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Diversification & transition management; Enhanced management / decision support; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Imaging / satellites; Natural capital; Plant breeding; Regulation / policy; Renewable energy; Robotics; Soil / water / air quality management and improvement

Qualifications: Bsc(Hons) NScH, MRICS FAAV PMIagrM

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Jack Farmer | LettUs Grow

Organisation Website: www.lettusgrow.com

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Soft fruit; Salad crops; Tree crops; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: 10 years building and operating LettUs Grow, horticultural technology company. Plant scientist by training with nearly a decade of experience in supplying/operating controlled environment agriculture projects (polytunnel, glasshouse, vertical farms) in the vegetable and soft fruit sectors.

Skills: Agronomy; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Irrigation; Natural capital; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

James Barsby | Intercil

Organisation Website: <https://www.intercil.com/>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Forestry; Bioeconomy; Other livestock; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: 23 years professional experience, of those 15 years in funding acquisition and project coordination and grant management/facilitation as PI and workpackage lead on UK IUK SBRI, EC FP6,P7, Horizon2020 and Horizon agri-tech projects; including Dorset's LEPs OneHealth Agri-tech work programme. >£50m won in that time across various funding programmes.

Skills: Agri-business management; Data / AI / machine learning; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital

Qualifications: Working towards Chartered Director qualification with IoD

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

James Willcox | Winson Agriculture

Organisation Website: <https://www.mottmac.com>

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Salad crops; Forestry; Ruminants; Other livestock; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have worked as a project manager for 8 years spanning Defence, IT and Agritech. These projects include Innovate UK funded R&D projects both small scale (£50k) and large scale (£5M) projects, all have been delivered successfully.

Skills: Animal health & welfare; Automation; Data / AI / machine learning; Diagnostics & sensors; Robotics

Qualifications: MSc Agricultural Technology. BSc Oceanography. APM PMQ. Prince 2.

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Julian Knight | www.fairmanknightandsons.com

Organisation Website: www.fairmanknightandsons.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Bioeconomy; Other livestock; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have 35 years' experience in Environmental and Sustainable Farming Management. I have wide experience in Carbon Credit Trading and Project Accreditation and the UK Emissions Trading Scheme. I am Co-Founder of the UK's largest Sustainable Insect Farming Business based in Lincolnshire. I have many years' experiences working with the APHA (Animal Plant and Health Agency) and Trading Standards and Food Standards Agency. I have previously advised the UK Government on Renewables and Sustainable Businesses and currently am a member of the UK Fresh Produce Network which is an All-Party Parliamentary Group advising UK Parliament on all aspects of Fresh Produce production. I am an adviser to the new Greater Lincolnshire Mayors Office. I am a member of the Royal Entomological Society and the UK Soil Association.

Skills: Agri-business management; Circular economy; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Renewable energy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc MA FRSA

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Lyndsey Starr | PNO Consultants Ltd

Organisation Website: PNO Consultants Ltd

Region: North West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: 13+ years' experience as an innovation management consultant and grant writer working with farmers, growers and forestry businesses to secure innovation funding from national and EU managed funding programmes including Innovate UK, Defra, DESNZ, European Space Agency and the European Commission. My core expertise is in helping potential applicants to navigate the funding landscape, find suitable partners, consortium management, project concept development, defining work plans and budgets, leading the development and writing of the application, and providing expertise in commercial strategy, project management, market analysis, policy and regulations, and business planning. I have an established network across the sector, including links to networks such as the UK Agri-Tech Centre, and regularly deliver grant writing workshops to help with the facilitation of projects and proposal writing. PNO Consultants Ltd has facilitated 25+ dedicated agri-tech focused grant projects including through Farming Futures and the Farming Innovation Programme, securing funding in excess of £10M. PNO are also highly active in related sectors/innovations including space, low carbon and circular economy. We also have an extensive track record of project management in the sector, helping businesses with the grant reporting process including the preparation of quarterly grant reports, deliverable development and partner management.

Skills: Circular economy; Crop nutrition; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital;

Qualifications: BSc

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Muhammad Imran | Aston University

Organisation Website: <https://research.aston.ac.uk/en/persons/muhammad-imran>

Region: West Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Biomass; Soft fruit; Viticulture; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I have over 15 years of experience in leading and managing innovation-focused R&D projects in agriculture and sustainable technologies, both in academic and commercial contexts. My expertise includes successful development and delivery of grant-funded initiatives under Innovate UK, Newton Fund, and Horizon Europe, with particular emphasis on smart farming, agri-tech, and post-harvest systems. I have collaborated closely with farmers, grower groups, and agri-businesses to co-design solutions that improve on-farm productivity and sustainability. I have facilitated stakeholder engagement across multidisciplinary teams, ensuring effective communication, timely delivery, and alignment with project objectives. My experience includes writing successful bids, preparing reporting documentation, budget management, risk mitigation, and monitoring outputs in compliance with funder requirements. I am currently supervising projects involving solar-powered irrigation, hybrid cold storage for rural farms, and AI-driven resource optimisation for agriculture in the UK and internationally. My agricultural experience is reinforced by hands-on collaboration with growers and farm-based businesses, particularly in technology trials and adoption assessments. I hold a leadership position at a UK university and am committed to advancing innovation that delivers real-world impact in the agricultural sector.

Skills: Data / AI / machine learning; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Irrigation; Renewable energy; Robotics

Qualifications: PhD

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Paul Huggett | IUK-Business Connect (retired part time)

Organisation Website: <https://iuk-business-connect.org.uk> (retired)

Region: East Midlands

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise:

Skills and Experience

Experience: Project managed delivery of various IUK/TSB funded industrial projects in commercial and academic context. Managed major technology transfer programmes between UK and Canada

Skills: Diagnostics & sensors; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Renewable energy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BSc, PhD

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)



Innovate
UK

Paul Smith | Board Adviser to Aquagrain and IRTL

Organisation Website: www.aquagrain.co.uk

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Combinable Crops; Tubers & roots; Fieldscale vegetables; Salad crops; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems

Skills and Experience

Experience: I am an award winning cross-sector business and product development director who delivers innovative and sustainable transformative outcomes through engaging leadership, collaborative project management and outstanding research and analysis. I have 12 years Agtech experience of food industry organic waste recycling, food and water security, acquired through directing the commercial development of hydrogels and organic soil improvers. I have scoped, costed and secured funding for a number of UK and International collaborative projects. In recent years, I have secured over £3m in Agri-Tech development grant funding for ten projects I have managed with total budgets of £4m on time and on budget. I have also secured four winner and runner international food and water security corporate, or government sponsored competition successes. I have a proven track record of identifying industry challenges and developing pioneering products and services. Known for delivering and driving practical, profitable, ethical, and sustainable impacts in evolving business landscapes. Expert in maximizing resources in challenging environments, and translating complex technical and scientific information into compelling and actionable content. Skilled in creating and managing business and product development strategies and programs from concept through to commercialisation, raising development investment finance and securing innovation grant funding.

Skills: Agroecological, regenerative, biodynamic, organic farming systems; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Natural capital; Regulation / policy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: None

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Richard Rampton | RuralAdvice Ltd

Organisation Website: www.ruraladvice.com

Region: East of England

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: Lifetime experience in farm management as manager, lecturer and consultant with experience in UK, Papua New Guinea and Australia. Consultancy experience in UK, Russia, Balkans, including project management (Russia). Innovation experience making successful applications to Innovate UK and currently managing Feasibility project.

Skills: Agri-business management; Diversification & transition management; Facilitation, co-design, business coaching; Natural capital

Qualifications: MSc in Farm Management (Distinction); Reading University

[→ Request to connect to a Project Facilitator](#)

Tim Chater | Phoenix Ventures Ltd

Organisation Website: www.phoenixventures.org

Region: South West

Sector Expertise

Primary Area of Sector Expertise: New systems

Additional Areas of Sector Expertise: Biomass; Salad crops; Bioeconomy; Novel food systems; Novel protein

Skills and Experience

Experience: With over two decades of experience at the intersection of innovation, commercialisation, and agrifood systems, I bring a unique blend of strategic project delivery and grant management expertise. As Managing Director of Phoenix Ventures Ltd, I lead complex multi-stakeholder projects across bioscience, agritech and foodtech, often underpinned by public and private grant funding. I have designed and managed innovation frameworks for clients including government agencies, FTSE-listed firms, and early-stage ventures. I've secured and delivered over £50M in co-development and licensing agreements, co-led a £25M regenerative agriculture project in Wales, and advised on sector-wide innovation barriers in white papers with BIA and BBIA. My role with the Welsh Government Food & Drink Division included authoring business cases, engaging with farmers and rural enterprises, and developing systems that enhance resilience and sustainability in primary production. As a NED and mentor to high-growth start-ups, including those backed by Novo Nordisk and the BioInnovation Institute, I guide product-to-market fit, strategic partnerships and IP roadmaps. My work combines deep sector insight with hands-on delivery of high-impact agricultural and sustainability initiatives.

Skills: Agri-business management; Circular economy; Enhanced management / decision support; Innovation / commercialisation management and strategy; Sustainability, circular economy, renewables

Qualifications: BA, MBA

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