

A mixed approach: Utilising public and private funding

With emphasis on the environment from both public and private funding, and rewards available for carbon and biodiversity improvements, growers should consider all their options according to Jim Stotzka, Frontier lead on sustainability and Hannah Clarke, SFI delivery lead and Kings technical advisor.



Hannah Clarke

“Both public and private funding have a place on farm. Information about public funding is readily available and usually well understood, but the number of private funding opportunities is increasing and can’t be overlooked,” explains Hannah.

Farmers should look to survey their whole farming practice and highlight where key changes can be made over the next three to five years, then apply for funding to suit their farm’s needs. This could be either public or private, or a combination of both.

Private schemes sometimes involve specific crops, have different application windows and contract lengths vary, so all details need to be considered.

“There can be so many opportunities and we’re supporting growers to navigate them. It’s important to compare how they align with the farm’s strategic goals,” she says.

The driver is not just meeting environmental objectives, but also ensuring the longevity of resilient, sustainable food production and a key message is that private and public funding sources need not exclude each other.

Jim adds: “One thing to check in any private contract is how it can work alongside agri-environment schemes including the SFI or Countryside Stewardship.

“Generally, what we see is that the Government pays for practices, while private funders pay for outcomes. This means the latter often has a greater data requirement in order to understand the impact the practices have on carbon, biodiversity, soil, water and air quality.”

“There are real benefits to combining both funding sources.”



Jim Stotzka

He observes that most of the private funding opportunities require a carbon calculator system like the Cool Farm Tool which is relatively straightforward, covering cropping details, farming practices and fertiliser. With the recent harmonisation announcement, this should only get easier.

“However, most private funding sources are exclusive of each other and once you have committed to one you may not be able to enter another depending on the actions or fields entered,” he says.

Hannah adds: “If done correctly though, there are definitely opportunities to overlap public and private funding.

“Growers should be wary of being paid twice for the same action, such as cover cropping for example, but there are real benefits to combining both funding sources.”

Find help with navigating future funding at
www.frontierag.co.uk/sustainable-crop-production

