

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Monday November 30, 2020

New skills institute will help farmers and growers adapt to change

Following Defra's commitment of support today (30.11.20) for the new Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture, the Chair of the Institute's Development Board has said it will support farmers and growers in making their businesses viable and sustainable for the future.

Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan – which it describes as a 'roadmap' to change – commits to contributing towards the establishment of TIAH as the home of professional development and training for the agriculture and horticulture industry in England.

TIAH Development Board Chair David Fursdon said: "Launching Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan today, Farming Minister George Eustice MP described the 'significant change' that will take place in agriculture and horticulture over the next 7 years and emphasised that Defra's plans are 'a way to do things differently'.

"Farmers and growers will have to make their businesses profitable and sustainable for the future while addressing the environmental concerns of Net Zero and the recovery of landscapes and nature. At all levels of the industry, success will require a workforce with the right skills, so business owners and their employees will need to enhance their existing skills and acquire new ones.

"TIAH will help support and transform the industry so that it is universally capable of creating profit and protecting the planet by training, retaining and attracting a workforce fit for the future. It will collaborate with all areas of industry to ensure a joined-up approach to promoting training and CPD."

The development and testing of the TIAH concept have been driven over the past two years by the Agri-Hort Skills Leadership Group (SLG), a voluntary, cross-industry initiative. The SLG comprised a group of volunteers from across industry, chaired by Helen Woolley, former Director General of CLA, and led by Lord Curry of Kirkharle CBE. Its activities have been supported by financial and in-kind contributions from AHDB and NFU. The new TIAH Development Board replaces the SLG.

Government funding for TIAH will allow the Development Board, working with all parts of the industry, to take the transformative Institute's development into its next phase, with an anticipated launch next year.

ENDS

For further information please contact Jane Smernicki, TIAH press officer, on 0791 900 3000 or jsmernicki@yahoo.co.uk.

Note to Editors

TIAH Development:

David Fursdon, Chair, TIAH Development Board

David is chairman of Beeswax Dyson Farming Ltd and a National Trust trustee. Alongside extensive

commercial experience, he has championed new entrants to the industry, chairing the Government-sponsored Future of Farming review.

Janet Swadling, TIAH Project Director

Janet Swadling, who was one of the founders of the SLG, and author of the Swadling Report on workforce development, has been appointed as Project Director for the new Institute. Janet is a former Deputy Principal and Chief Executive of Scotland's Rural College.

Full statement on skills from today's (30.11.20) Defra Agricultural Transition Plan:

Skills and training

We want to enable an innovative, productive and competitive agricultural sector, which invests in its people and skills. We know that the skills provision for agriculture is mixed, with different institutions offering training to varying levels of quality. Those working in the industry or looking to enter it, report that career routes and the role of training is unclear.

To address this, the government will contribute towards the establishment of a new professional body, the Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture. This will be the home of professional development and training for the agriculture and horticulture industry in England.

The proposal is being led by industry, was a principal recommendation of the Food and Drink Sector Council's Agricultural Productivity Working Group and has broad support from across the farming sector.

The Institute will establish a professional framework, providing farmers with a recognised pathway for training across agricultural and horticultural careers. We expect the Institute to amplify new Apprenticeship Standards and the T Level qualification in Agriculture, Land Management and Production which will be offered from 2023. It will enable the industry to drive forward greater uptake of skills and training and promote the sector as a progressive, professional and attractive career choice.