

FOSTER AND O'NEILL LAUNCH £12MILLION LOAN SCHEME FOR POULTRY LITTER PROCESSING PLANTS

Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster MLA and Agriculture Minister Michelle O'Neill MLA today launched a £12 million loan scheme to support the construction of demonstrator plants to trial new ways of processing poultry litter.

~ Tuesday, 17 June 2014

The loan scheme is the second stage in the Sustainable Use of Poultry Litter (SUPL) Project. It follows on from a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition which encouraged the technical development of solutions to utilise poultry litter.

Construction of demonstrator plants will allow the new techniques to be trialled on the scale needed to test their commercial and technical viability for the poultry industry. The loan scheme is designed to help with this process.

Announcing the scheme Arlene Foster said: "Agri-food is a cornerstone of our economy, creating higher sales, exports and jobs than any other manufacturing sector in Northern Ireland. Poultry is a key component of the agri-food sector and how poultry litter is processed is a challenge that must be addressed if the industry is to continue to thrive in the future. The £12 million loan scheme announced today takes us one step closer towards that goal by supporting the design, construction and commissioning of demonstrator plants to test the new technologies."

Commenting on the loan scheme Michelle O'Neill said: "We have shown through the Small Business Research Initiative and now the launch of this £12 million loan scheme that a sustainable agri-food sector is of the utmost importance. Encouraging the development of commercial scale plants to manage poultry litter is fundamental to our livestock sector and helping to meet the requirements of the EU Nitrates and Water Framework directives."

The loan scheme will assist technology suppliers to design, finance, construct and operate treatment plants as well as helping the poultry sector and technology suppliers agree appropriate contracts for the supply of poultry litter.

Notes to editors:

1. The SUPL Loan Scheme will provide loans at commercial terms to cover up to 40% of the capital cost of such plants.
2. The Sustainable Utilisation of Poultry Litter (SUPL) project is a joint initiative of the Department of Enterprise trade and Investment and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and will be administered by Invest NI.
3. The SUPL Loan Scheme builds on the Small Business Research Initiative competition which demonstrated noteworthy progress in the technical development of solutions to sustainably utilise poultry litter.