**UK leads the way on agricultural innovation at Washington D.C. Climate Summit**

£3 million invested in the Global Fertiliser Challenge to fund new research to develop alternative fertilisers to boost sustainability and productivity

The UK has today (Tuesday, 9 May) reaffirmed its role as a global leader in food productivity, sustainable farming and tackling climate change at the Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM for Climate) Summit including making a £3 million investment to develop more sustainable fertilisers.

Attending the summit in Washington D.C., Minister for Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan and Farming Minister Mark Spencer helped bring more than 20 countries together to further global progress on the Agriculture Breakthrough, a collaborative effort launched under the UK’s COP26 Presidency, to accelerate the development and deployment of clean technologies and sustainable solutions in the agriculture sector.

As part of this, the UK announced it will join the US-led Global Fertiliser Challenge, investing £3 million to develop, test and scale up new and alternative fertilisers that can enhance soil health, agricultural productivity, and the sustainability of agriculture globally.

In partnership with the US, the UK’s investment will fund a new Efficient Fertiliser Consortium, led by the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, that will carry out research to advance efficient, environmentally beneficial and cost-effective fertilisers and management practices. This builds on a shared commitment to address food insecurity in low and middle income countries, and will go alongside the UK’s efforts to support domestic farmers with rising input costs through bringing forward direct payments and providing one-off grants to enable farmers to reduce their fertiliser use and increase productivity.

Launched during the UK’s Presidency of COP26, AIM for Climate seeks to increase investment in climate smart agricultural innovation, with this week’s summit marking a key moment to raise ambition, build collaborations and share knowledge on climate-smart agriculture and food systems innovation in the lead-up to COP28. The Agriculture Breakthrough is a UK-led collaboration between governments to accelerate development and deployment of clean technologies and sustainable solutions in the agriculture sector. Its goal is “to make climate-resilient, sustainable agriculture the most attractive and widely adopted option for farmers everywhere by 2030”. It is part of the Breakthrough Agenda – a UK COP Presidency initiative launched at the World Leaders Summit at COP26.

Farming Minister, Mark Spencer said:

Innovation is key to unlocking a more sustainable, profitable future for our farming and agriculture sectors. It is vital we join together at the international table to share expertise and best practice, and fund new research to catalyse pioneering solutions that will support farmers around the world to meet the challenges of food security while delivering for our environment.

Alongside today’s £3m investment into the development of alternative fertilisers, we are investing hundreds of millions of pounds in ongoing support and one-off grants every year for UK farmers get the support they need to capitalise on cutting-edge technology and research that can increase productivity and help tackle climate change.

We must continue to foster this innovation not only at home but around the world, and I encourage countries to get onboard as we work to generate a real breakthrough for the agri-food sector.

FCDO Minister for Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Our global food systems are under increasing pressure, from the devastating impacts of climate change as well as from the turmoil created by Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine. We need collaboration, innovation and ambition to tackle these challenges, and today’s AIM4C Summit and Agriculture Breakthrough Ministerial Meeting have demonstrated the possibilities – we now need investment in research and development, and a laser-like focus on deployment and delivery.

That’s why the UK is committing £3m to the Global Fertiliser Challenge, to develop new, more efficient fertilisers to transform productivity and safeguard nature. With the US and FFAR, we will accelerate the pace and scale of agriculture innovation and the adoption of climate-resilient agriculture solutions.

The UK continues to invest in overcoming the global challenge of feeding the world’s population whilst responding to climate change and biodiversity loss, including pest and disease threats. Its long-standing partnership with CGIAR, the world’s leading agricultural science and innovation organisation, has already helped millions of farmers to increase the resilience of their crops to drought and disease and contributed to the food security of millions of people.

Meanwhile, at home, the UK has made more than £168 million in grants available to farmers this year to drive innovation, support food production, improve animal health and welfare and protect the environment.

This includes grants of £51 million for the Farming Innovation Programme in 2023, bringing together farmers, growers, businesses and researchers in research and development projects that seek to transform productivity, boost environmental sustainability and help meet net zero targets. Projects already benefitting from the Programme include a hands-free solution to monitor a cow’s welfare and performance, data-sharing solutions for farmers to support each other in measuring and monitoring soil health patterns, and a working herd of harvesting agri-robots.

Running alongside this, the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) offers farmers specific equipment to boost environmental sustainability, improve animal health and welfare, and reduce input use to cut emissions and waste. This includes £34 million in slurry storage grants to help farmers reduce their dependence on artificial fertilisers through better storage of organic nutrients whilst also improving water and air quality.

The UAE announced its participation in the Agriculture Breakthrough during the event, confirming the COP28 Presidency’s commitment to the Breakthrough Agenda. Canada and Kenya also announced their participation, bringing the total number of countries participating in the international collaboration to sixteen.

Her Excellency Mariam bint Mohammed Almheiri, United Arab Emirates Minister of Climate Change and Environment said:

I am delighted to announce the UAE joining the UK’s Agriculture Breakthrough Initiative. This participation emphasises the UAE’s dedication to transforming food systems and developing innovative approaches that support agricultural R&D and innovation efforts.

Our mission is to set ambitious goals for the 2024 Agriculture Breakthrough Priority Actions that will be announced at COP28 in the UAE later this year. We recognise the critical role agricultural innovation plays in addressing climate change and are dedicated to promoting it at local, regional, and global levels.

The full list of participating countries is: Australia, Belgium, Cambodia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Germany, Kenya, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Morocco, Nigeria, Sweden, UAE and the UK.