

Agri Skills Strategy - Propsed Action Plan

1	Objective 1: Develop and implement comprehensive system(s) for recognising and encouraging skills development at all levels, thereby increasing professionalism of the industry
1.1	Identify the key partners to work with to develop existing Continual Professional Development (CPD) schemes in order to create a comprehensive and coherent framework of provision that enables an individual's professionalism to be authenticated:
1.1.1	Research existing Continual Professional Development (CPD) schemes in different parts of the sector and review their effectiveness and applicability with the objective of recognising existing skills of an individual
1.1.2	Encourage and promote development of synergies across existing schemes to avoid duplication
1.1.3	Develop the principles and framework for a quality CPD scheme which might apply across the different parts of the agricultural and production horticultural sectors. (Make this so that it ticks all the boxes for all the partners)
1.1.4	Investigate ways of acknowledging and capturing current knowledge transfer activity to evidence high level skills.
1.2	Increase the focus on skills recognition, and skills development at all levels, leading to the new professionalism and gain commitment from the main farming, trade and professional organisations, including education and training providers
1.2.1	Work with the main farming and trade organisations to ensure full commitment to the concept and requirements of professionalism
1.2.2	Ensure the different sectors within the industry are aware of the importance of, and actively engages with, emerging qualifications systems including the Qualification and Credit Framework
1.3	Stimulate research and ensure more effective knowledge and technology transfer (KTT) so as to promote productivity and innovation
1.3.1	Develop a continuum to ensure effective dissemination of KTT between:
1.3.1.1	research institutes, universities and colleges with significant research and development activity; and colleges and other providers with significant teaching and delivery activity,
1.3.1.2	those providers and practitioners who make use of the knowledge to enhance productivity and innovation
1.3.2	Fully involve Government research and scientific officers, research and funding bodies and the the Chief Scientific Officer for the Agricultural and Horticultural Development Board in this work
1.4	To gain acceptance in principle, and cooperation from regulators, to help enable those recognised under the new professional framework to be eligible for reduced regulatory burden
1.4.1	Seek representation from the Agri-skills Forum on the Farm Assurance Boards and within DEFRA Better Regulation Task Force and other key bodies to ensure increased focus on skills recognition and development

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2	Objective 2: Promote skills development as being central to business improvement and the concept of professionalism
2.1	Communicate a better understanding of the business benefits to both employers and employees of higher level technical, management and business skills
2.1.1	Clearly articulate the business benefits of training and agree communication strategies to disseminate this message
2.1.2	Develop better methods for attributing the value of training
2.1.3	Identify and develop industry champions to encourage uptake of systems of recognition, furthering the development and selling the concept of "professionalism"
2.1.4	Promote the understanding that business improvements can be achieved through skills development for both employers and employees
2.1.5	Encourage farmers to promote a more positive image of the industry to consumers, potential entrants and other partners
2.2	Communicate the benefits of increased Professionalism to Partners and Consumers
2.2.1	Promote the understanding that "Better Regulation" and more business friendly inspection regimes are seen as adding value to a business and not simply more cost and compliance
2.2.2	Promote a positive image of the industry to consumers, government and compliance agencies
2.3	Actively support the expansion of facilities such as reliable high speed broadband and associated technologies in order to optimise the delivery of learning
2.3.1	Encourage use of new e-learning technologies in delivering learning, recording achievement, assessment and validation
2.4	Develop a real or virtual "gateway" through which individuals and businesses can quickly and easily access training, qualifications, assessment and funding.

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3	Objective 3: Use skills development opportunities and professionalism to promote the industry as being an attractive place to work
3.1	3.1 Develop a better understanding in the industry of the value and importance of new entry routes and career opportunities
3.1.1	Promote increased industry involvement in the delivery, promotion and as consequence the uptake of the Environmental and Land based Diploma
3.1.2	Communicate the benefits to employers of all learning they undertake or support being recognised by mechanisms such as the Qualification and Credit Framework
3.1.3	Develop enhanced work based learning opportunities for students in both further and higher education
3.2	Encourage further participation from industry in supporting learning and promoting careers
3.2.1	Identify, develop and provide champions to promote the industry and its professionalism to potential recruits, through better interaction with all relevant forms of careers information, advice and guidance channels for all ages
3.2.2	Encourage employees and their employees to support work-based learning including by becoming facilitators, mentors or assessors and providing more learning opportunities
3.3	Promote the industry as professional and innovative offering a range of career opportunities
3.3.1	Actively promote the industry to young people both at school and college and particularly those who may influence their career choice namely careers advisers, teachers and parents
3.3.2	Promote the benefits of apprenticeships and the entry and key progression rates
3.3.3	Promote the benefits of learning opportunities for both new entrants and existing staff, including apprenticeships but also the wide range of other education, training, and learning opportunities available on full or part time basis

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4	Objective 4: Provide government with a strong and influential partner to meet the challenges of the future
4.1	Work with the AHDB and other major organisations representing the different parts of the industry to present a common voice on major skills-related issues to governments and public
4.1.1	Develop a rigorous evidence base of the present and future skills needs of the industry to inform policy development
4.1.2	Ensure that future policies fully recognise the skills implications and ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet any new development needs
4.2	To encourage industry organisations to provide and maintain an adequate level of resource to enable a co-ordinated approach, reflecting the importance of the development of the new professionalism
4.2.1	Promote across the industry the importance of an authoritative forum on skills which can influence government and other partners

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5	Objective 5: Support DEFRA in embedding skills within its policies and its engagement with other government departments
5.1	DEFRA actively and effectively influences relevant government initiatives that impact on the industry
5.1.1	Industry supports and informs DEFRA on developing appropriate responses to education, training, and skills & business development initiatives which impact on the industry
5.1.2	Industry provides effective support to DEFRA in the promotion of professionalism across all relevant government departments and policies so as to ensure its long term viability
5.1.3	Defra promotes the need to undertake skills impact assessments, so there is no negative impact on skills recognition and development in future government policies, future skills requirements are accurately identified and also opportunities are explored for the "demonstration of competence" to be used instead of some legislation either in whole or in part where appropriate
5.1.4	Defra and the industry jointly investigate more effective and efficient ways to enable funds to flow into the sector to achieve the strategy's objectives
5.1.5	Promote sectoral approaches to delivering skills solutions and secure the future of those organisations presently delivering them
5.1.6	DEFRA promotes skills and business development models (such as a integrated, specialist "gateways" for all advice on skills and business development) which meet the needs of the sector
5.1.7	DEFRA promotes a skills and development funding structure based on a modular system supported by the QCF
5.2	DEFRA ensures that its policies and programmes and those of the DEFRA 'family' actively support the development of enhanced professionalism across the sector
5.2.1	Creates a single focus within the department to promote skills policies and programmes across the DEFRA 'family'
5.2.2	Ensures a continuum between industry and DEFRA research and development forums (strategy groups) and industry
5.2.3	Supports the further integration and contiguity of the RDPE skills programmes
5.2.4	Enables those recognised under the new professional framework to be eligible for reduced regulatory burden
5.2.5	Invites representation from the Agri-skills Forum onto the Better Regulation Task Force and other key bodies to ensure increased focus on skills recognition and development
5.2.6	Promotes within the sector the concept of professionalism and the need for greater joint action by industry members to achieve this
5.2.7	Works with the sector to develop a rigorous evidence base of present and future skills needs by which to drive policy
5.2.8	Promote risk management as a key means of securing future food supplies
5.2.9	Identify sources of funding to further promote professionalism, and skills and business development