

Rural Development Programme for England



Supporting the Rural Economy case study brochure, March 2020



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas

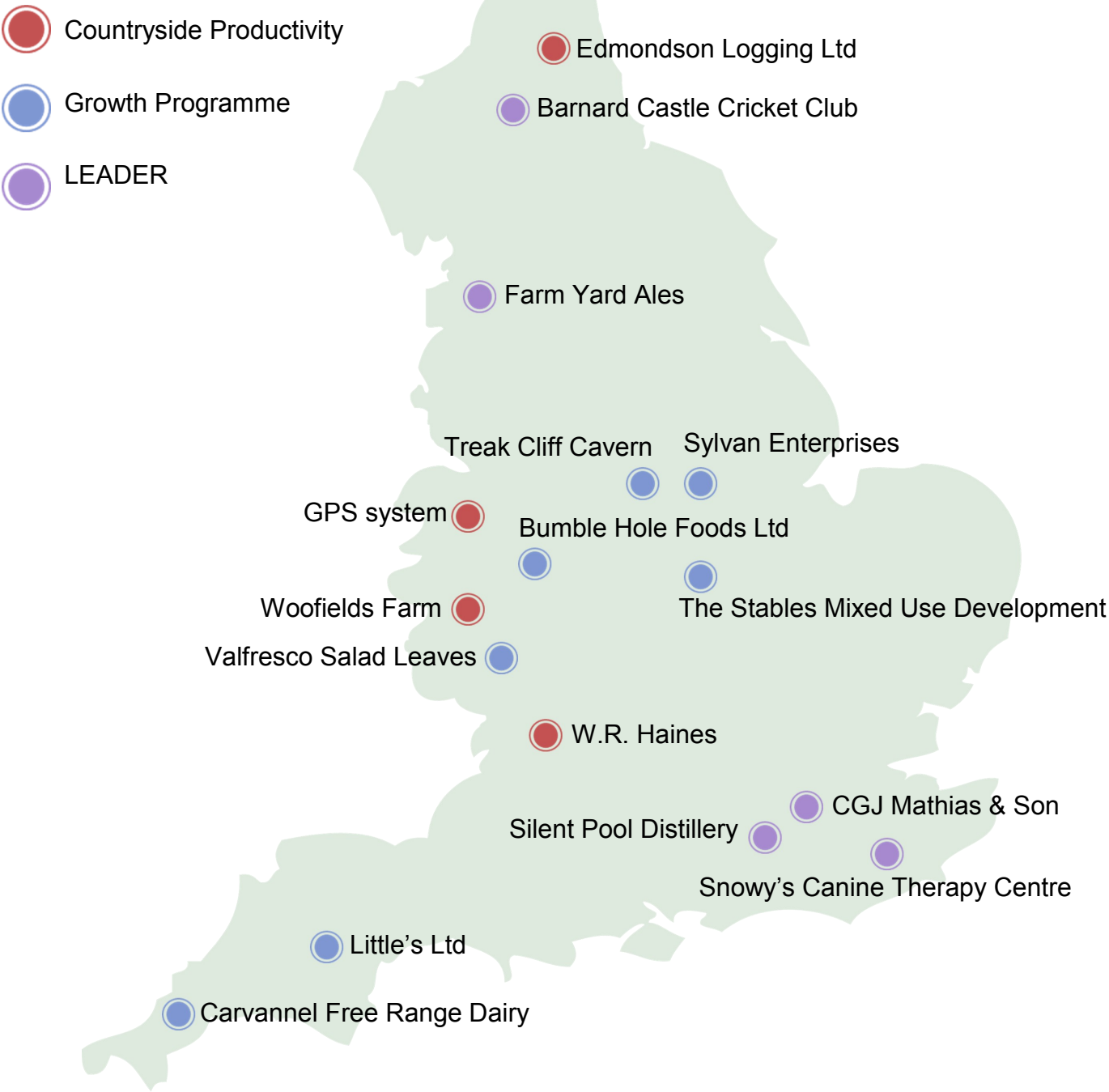
Front cover photos:

Treak Cliff Cavern (top left)

Farm Yard Ales (top right)

Members of the Rural Surrey Local Action Group (bottom centre), at the Silent Pool Distillery, Albury, Surrey, one of the businesses they have supported in the current programme.

Socio-economic Schemes



Map showing case studies in this brochure

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to 'Supporting the Rural Economy.' In this brochure we highlight a selection of projects from the socio-economic schemes within the 2014 to 2020 Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE).

The £3.5bn RDPE is managed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the programme is helping to support the UK Government's priorities to protect and enhance the natural environment for future generations, and encourage thriving rural communities. Since February 2015 the current RDPE has been supporting land managers, business owners and rural communities across the country. To deliver the programme, Defra has been working closely with Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Forestry Commission, the Rural Payments Agency, Local Enterprise Partnerships and LEADER Local Action Groups.

Socio-Economic update

The RDPE socio-economic schemes are investing over £550m to help grow farming, food and the rural economy. Support is available through grant funding aimed at helping to expand new and existing rural businesses; encouraging innovation, co-operation and access to the best new technologies. To January 2020, approximately £469m has been committed to 11,436 projects.

Withdrawal Agreement

Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, RDPE will continue to draw on EU funds until available funding has been exhausted. It remains the case that all RDPE agreements where funding has been agreed before 31 December 2020, will be fully funded, for the lifetime of agreements.

Calls for projects can be found on the [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website and via the [RPA Twitter page](#).



Vegetable Matters, a LEADER funded project in the Cotswolds AONB

Countryside Productivity

The Countryside Productivity scheme provides funding for projects which improve productivity in the farming and forestry sectors and help create jobs and growth in the rural economy. It represents **£145m** of funding through the following channels:

Small Grants

This £60m scheme uses an online application process and is targeted at supporting farmers to invest in specific pieces of agricultural equipment. Farmers can apply for a grant of between £3,000 and £12,000 to purchase innovative equipment from a standard list of eligible items.

Large Grants

This £70m scheme provided larger grants of £35,000 or more to meet 40% of the costs of capital equipment to purchase innovative farming equipment, improve forestry productivity, improve the processing of primary agricultural products and construct on-farm reservoirs.

European Innovation Partnership (EIP)

The EIP-Agri scheme has funding of approximately £3.5m. Funding is targeted to build innovation in agriculture by bringing together researchers and farmers/ foresters, working in partnership to apply new approaches, translate research into practice and exchange knowledge.

Animal Health Advisory Services

There are two services currently available to cattle farmers in England. These provide free, bespoke on-farm or group advice to farmers to help reduce the risk of incursion of Bovine TB or reduce levels of Bovine Viral Diarrhoea (BVD) in their cattle herds. Further information can be found through [Stamp out BVD](#) or through [TBAS](#), which has further places available.

Growth Programme

The Growth Programme aims to drive rural economic growth by enabling existing businesses to develop new products and facilities, investing in food processing and promoting rural tourism. It also supports the provision of superfast broadband in the hardest to reach parts of the country.

The total budget allocation to the Growth Programme is **£254.5m** and forms part of the £6billion EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) package along with the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund to support wider economic growth and social cohesion.

The scheme offers funding to rural businesses, social enterprises and charities as well as farmers seeking to diversify into non-agricultural activity.

LEADER

LEADER is a **£152m** scheme which uses a tried and tested, bottom-up approach to engaging rural communities in the development of their local area. The funding is delivered through 79 LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) established in rural areas to meet locally identified priorities.

The main advantages of the LEADER approach are that:

- local people have better knowledge of local issues that need to be addressed;
- the LAG is able to pool local resources for the development process in a way that does not happen with traditional top-down approaches; and
- it creates a greater sense of ownership and commitment to locally-relevant projects thereby maximising development opportunities.

LEADER groups are made up of representatives from rural communities, the public sector, local businesses and the voluntary sector.

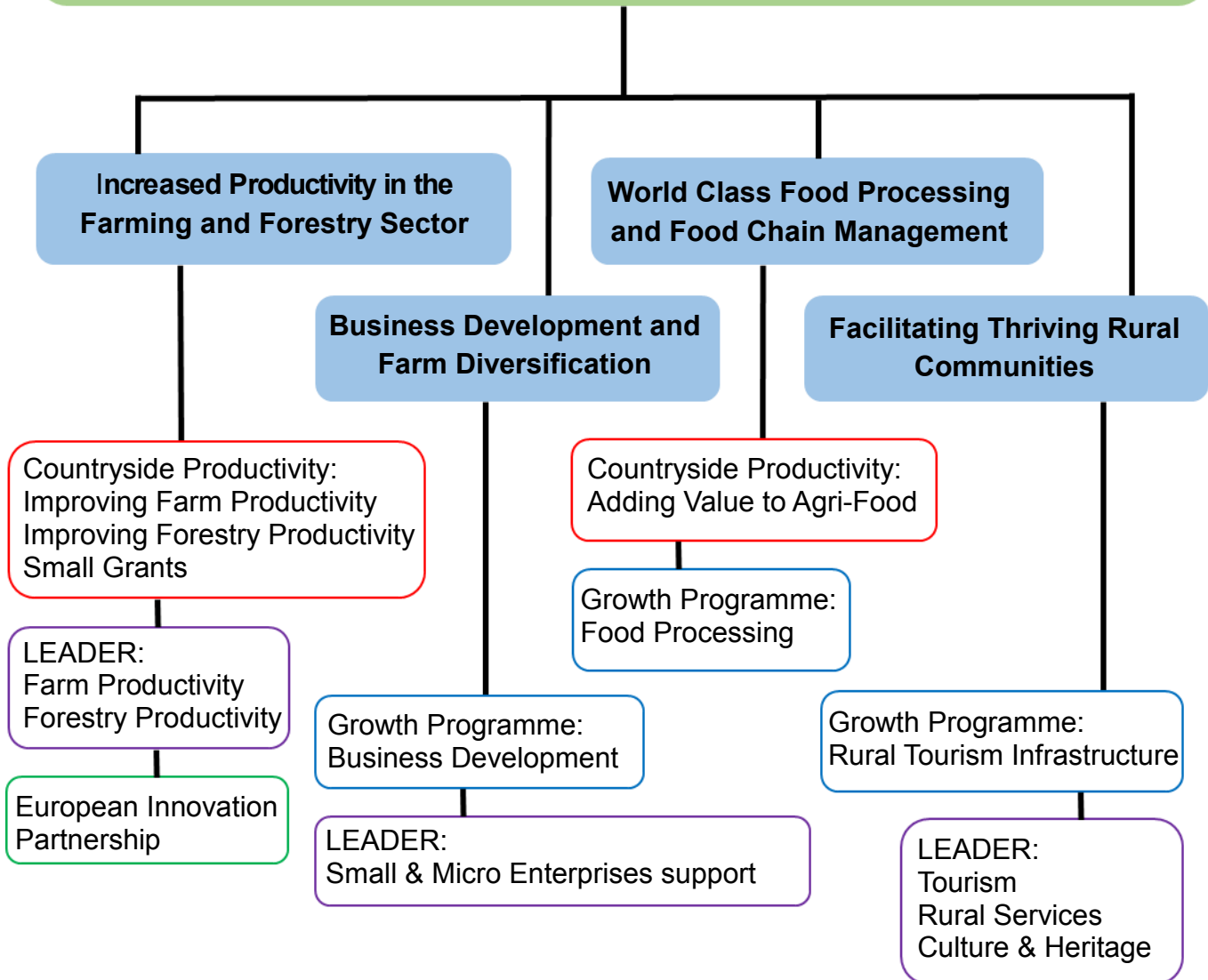
All LAGs have developed Local Development Strategies which identified action to be taken within their own particular areas to address the six strategic priorities identified at a national level:

- Support for increasing farm productivity
- Support for micro and small enterprises and farm diversification
- Support for rural tourism
- Provision for rural services
- Support for cultural and heritage activity
- Support for increasing forestry productivity

Another key feature of the LEADER approach, and where it adds particular value, is the dedicated support that can be provided to businesses and communities interested in developing projects. Up to 25% of the LAG's budget can be used to promote the funding and to guide potential applicants through the application process. This is particularly useful where applicants are not familiar with grant schemes and could be daunted by the complexity of funding application processes. Many successful projects have come about as a direct result of the active support and intervention of the LAG.

Supporting Defra's Objectives

The government is investing in rural business to stimulate growth and job creation in rural areas by funding projects through four key themes:



Increasing Productivity in the Farming and Forestry Sector



CGJ Mathias & Son (Nurseries) - Surrey

LEADER - Rural Surrey LAG

Grant amount: £13,854 Total cost: £34,636

CGJ Mathias & Son (Nurseries) are a third-generation family-run business producing and supplying mainly hedging plants to landscapers and developers. At the time of this application, the business was a partnership run by Bob Mathias, his wife Jane, and their eldest son Thomas, together with three full-time employees. A previous acquisition of a website had resulted in turnover increasing four-fold and, in order to meet the greater demand, the company needed to increase field production.

The LEADER grant allowed the business to purchase a root-balling/trimming machine with its own adapted transport trailer which reduces the need for manual trimming, improves the quality of the plants and makes under-cutting and root-balling quicker and easier.

This has helped the field-grown production to continue to expand and has enabled Thomas's brother, William, to join the business, as well as two more employees.

This summer they have built 900m² of modern glasshouse and are currently equipping it with state-of-the-art controls with the aid of a further LEADER grant. This will enable them to 'finish' larger field-grown plants in pots, replicating efficient Dutch production methods and will reduce reliance on imported plants and create further jobs.

Increasing Productivity in the Farming and Forestry Sector

Edmondson Logging Ltd - Northumberland

Countryside Productivity large grants forestry

Grant amount: £211,607 Total cost: £529,018

Project: To enable harvesting and processing of timber in situ from remote woodlands.

The business purchased a thinning harvester and mid-size forwarder allowing them to focus on smaller scale harvesting and extraction work.

Outcomes:

Almost doubling of production levels.

Indirect benefits to wood-fuel processors.



Woofields farm - Herefordshire

Countryside Productivity large grants farming

Grant amount: £532,212 Total cost: £1,330,530

Project:

To modernise the farm and improve efficiency by installing 10 milking robots, 3 feed pushes and 6 robotic barn cleaners.

Outcomes:

Financial savings on fuel, labour and water.

Improved animal welfare.

Improved working conditions for farm staff.

GPS System - Shropshire

Countryside Productivity small grants

Grant amount: £7,810 Total cost: £19,525

Project: To enable a more precise farming method by improving efficiency when distributing material on the field.

The main purchase was a GPS system which included a navigation controller and flow meter installed onto the tractor.

Outcomes:

Materials are more accurately and evenly spread across the field.



World Class Food Processing and Food Chain Management



Little's Ltd – Willand, Devon

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £56,762 Total cost: £141,907

Little's Ltd is a family business, trading in instant coffee for over 30 years. Over the years the company has evolved and has looked to move with the trends in flavoured coffees.

To do this, they purchase a very high quality freeze-dried instant coffee and then add natural flavours to create a range of 13 products. They also buy high quality premium freeze dried coffees which they fill into 50g jars. Little's supplies a number of large chain companies, such as Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Holland & Barrett.

The company wanted to expand their existing business and supply products to an ever-expanding market. There was demand in the market for own label instant coffee, requiring 100g jars.

The grant funding was used to purchase a new production line which was more efficient, quicker and can handle the new 100g jars.

This has enabled Little's to launch four premium products and four decaf products. They have recruited 1 full-time operative on a permanent contract, 1 administrator, 1 marketing person, 1 part-time operative plus a consultant as General Manager.

World Class Food Processing and Food Chain Management



Valfresco Salad Leaves - Worcestershire

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £97,661 Total cost: £348,789

Project: To increase production of salad leaves by improving efficiency and reducing processing time.

The funding helped purchase a multi-head weigher, scales, de-nesting machines and a bagger.

Outcomes: Five new jobs created.

Product range expanded to include tomatoes.

Now supplying multiple high street supermarkets.

Bumble Hole Foods Ltd - Warwickshire

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £440,731 Total cost: £1,269,936

Project: Built a new egg boiling plant.

The eggs are boiled and then peeled. The boiled egg is then either packed for use by food manufacturers or sliced for customers.

Outcomes: Will create 15 new jobs.

Developed a new range of innovative egg based products to meet increasing demand.

10 additional farmers supplying the eggs.



W.R. Haines (Leasow farms) - Gloucestershire

Countryside Productivity

Grant amount: £120,552 Total cost: £301,380

Project: To create a controlled Atmosphere Storage Facility.

This will allow harvest crops, such as Brassicas, to be stored for up to four times longer than previously.

Outcomes: Contracts with retailers are maintained as produce can be stored for longer.

The project will prevent up to 12% of crop waste.

Business Development and Farm Diversification



Farm Yard Ales – Cockerham, Lancaster

LEADER - Lancashire North and Bowland LAG

Grant amount: £46,750

Total cost: £250, 000

Steven Holmes has a keen passion for brewing beers. He wanted to use the water found on his family farm to create his own craft beers but lacked the facilities to brew on a large scale. The project included the construction of a purpose-built brewery, installation of a brew plant and the purchase of casks in which to store and distribute the product.

Project outcomes:

A wide range of beers is currently produced and, as a result of the project, the business is aiming to:

- Create 5 full-time jobs over the next 3 years;
- Use spent grain and hops as farmyard feed;
- Treat all waste on site through their own digester;
- To date they have brewed over half a million litres of beer, that's over 880,000 pints.

Business Development and Farm Diversification

Carvannel Free Range Dairy – Cornwall

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £83,812 Total amount: £167,625

Project: To establish a new milk processing business, focusing on producing and promoting a range of free range un-homogenised dairy products.

The funding facilitated the construction of a new building with an attached cold store, all necessary electrical works and the required dairy processing equipment.

Outcomes: Two full-time equivalent jobs.



Sylvan Enterprises – Nottinghamshire

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £40,318 Total cost: £100,795

Project: To invest in new machinery in order to meet increasing demand.

The project has allowed this furniture making business to increase in-house manufacturing and to gain new contracts.

Outcomes: Created 2-3 full-time equivalent jobs.

Now supply furniture to well-known hotels such as IHG, Accor and Hilton.



Silent Pool Distillery – Surrey

LEADER - Rural Surrey LAG

Grant amount: £119,978 Total cost: £299,945

Project: The funding paid for a semi-automatic bottling facility that stores, cleans, fills, stoppers, caps and batch labels bottles of Silent Pool Gin and other products.

Outcomes:

The bottling line now delivers 1500 bottles per hour, original capacity was 1500 bottles per day.

Created 10 full time equivalent jobs and 3 new products.



Facilitating Thriving Rural Communities



Treak Cliff Cavern – Derbyshire

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £57,293 Total cost: £143,223

Treak Cliff Cavern is famous throughout the world for its large and unique deposits of 'Blue John' stone. The site owner needed to enhance the current facilities, enable new visitor-based activities and extend its capacity to produce finished products from the mined stone.

The interior was refurbished, a new museum was added, and new displays and signage were set up, along with a newly-equipped workshop available for schools and the general public to use.

Project results:

Created 2-3 new full-time equivalent jobs (1 highly-skilled specialist artisan traineeship and long-term post, 1-2 full-time equivalent visitor services posts, and a part-time skilled archivist/education liaison officer to handle archives and schools/college/university visits).

Increased spend in the local economy.

Visitor numbers projected to increase by 30% compared to 2017 levels within 10 years.

Created new products including:

- One collector's market Blue John piece per year with a retail potential of £10,000;
- New range of Cabochons (gems) for the hobby market; and
- Four additional smaller Blue John sculptures per year with retail potential of £20,000.

Facilitating Thriving Rural Communities



Barnard Castle Cricket Club – Durham

LEADER - Durham Coast and Lowlands LAG

Grant amount: £11,537 Total cost: £14,421

Project: To modernise the existing facilities and invest in new facilities offering sporting and social events.

The grant helped to furnish and equip the new hall and purchase various equipment such as staging and a bar area for events.

Outcomes: An increase in event bookings.

Enabled employment of a manager, 4 part-time bar staff and 2 part-time catering staff.

Snowy's Canine Therapy Centre – Kent

LEADER - Kent Downs & Marshes LAG

Grant amount: £27,242 Total cost: £129,516

Project: To build an animal centre offering hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and myotherapy.

The grant helped pay for the centre and the best quality equipment, including a pool with a ramp and a hydro treadmill.

Outcomes: Creation of 3 full-time jobs.

Number of dogs treated per week increased from 20 to 57 in three months.



The Stables Mixed Use Development – Northamptonshire

Growth Programme

Grant amount: £136,180 Total cost: £340,450

Project: To redevelop an existing stable yard into a mixed-use accommodation and workshop facility.

The new development provides additional self-catering accommodation. The new studio allows local crafts people to deliver a diverse range of art and craft, cookery and gardening workshops.

Outcomes: 2.5 full-time jobs created.