

TIME FOR TIAH

Latest news about The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture



Defra Commits to Supporting TIAH

Agricultural Transition Plan Prioritises Skills

Everyone involved in shaping the concept of The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture has been delighted with Defra's commitment to supporting TIAH.

Defra made the commitment at the end of last month, in its newly published Agricultural Transition Plan. UK Government regards an upskilled, professional workforce as an essential element of farmers and growers' future success.

In a message recorded for the TIAH Consultation Group, which comprises multiple supportive industry stakeholders, Farming Minister Victoria Prentis said:

"We in Defra really understand that removing the fragmentation which exists within the current learning and skills landscape in agriculture and horticulture is critical to supporting our desire to promote the sector as a progressive, professional and attractive career choice in the future.

IN THIS ISSUE

MESSAGE FROM TIAH'S PROJECT DIRECTOR

A NEW APPROACH TO INDUSTRY SKILLS

INSIGHT FROM OUR CAREERS GROUP CHAIR

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Minister, pictured right, continued: "We are really thrilled to recognise that TIAH can be the vehicle to deliver cohesion without duplication and simplify the landscape for ag training provision.

The progress so far is testament to the effectiveness of co-production and co-operation and it is essential that this continues. I know that I, and my officials, are really looking forward to continuing to support this Institute as it moves into the next phase.

Lord Donald Curry CBE said: "I am delighted that Government have recognised just how crucial having a highly skilled and professional agricultural and horticultural sector is going to be as we face unprecedented change over the next decade.

"The support of Defra Ministers and Officials is very much appreciated. The model of having an industry-led, and widely supported initiative, working in a consultation with Government has worked very well indeed."

TIAH Development Board Chairman David Fursdon said: "In the context of the huge challenges facing producers today, it is exciting to be involved with an initiative designed to help all those involved in this industry to meet those challenges. Having such widespread support too is a great encouragement."

Lord Curry chaired the recent meeting of the TIAH Consultation Group welcoming representatives from 21 agricultural and horticultural organisations and businesses, as well as Defra.

Janet Hughes sets out Defra direction

In addition to the Farming Minister's address, the group heard from Janet Hughes, Director of Defra's Future Farming & Countryside Programme, pictured below.



Janet joined the meeting to talk through Defra's approach to supporting the industry's transition to a 'prosperous, vibrant and competitive sector'.

Janet's key message was around the clear desire for 'co-design' with the industry.

She emphasised Defra's desire to have much more open, collaborative and responsive engagement with the sector and stressed that proper engagement is critical to getting this 'huge, once in a generation opportunity' right.

Janet urged people to engage with her on the [Defra Future Farming Blog](#). In her latest post, Janet talks about exactly what 'co-design' means.

She writes: "Co-design is a design approach that actively involves users and stakeholders from the beginning of a project, right through to roll-out. It means we collaborate with everyone who has an interest to solve real problems with them. We actively seek their input and feedback, based on their lived experience, as we iterate and improve services."

TIAH Takes Shape

by Janet Swadling, TIAH Project Director

The past year has been one none of us could have imagined, presenting challenges for all. Despite the difficulties, I am very pleased that 2020 has been a year of constant progress for TIAH.

We began the year with a fantastic session at the Oxford Farming Conference, skillfully led by NFU Next Generation. Of those present, 97% agreed that the concept behind TIAH was the right approach to improving skills and lifelong learning across agriculture and horticulture.

The first meeting of the TIAH Consultation Group was kindly hosted at the House of Lords in March, by Lord Donald Curry CBE, who has been pivotal in driving the new Institute's progress. It generated lots of collaboration and meetings. These are continuing and playing a huge role in informing how TIAH continues to take shape.

We have engaged in a very open and collaborative process with Defra and other Government departments and I am delighted that this has now come to fruition in the form of Defra's official commitment to support TIAH, as outlined in its new Agricultural Transition Plan.

This tremendous progress has been achieved as a result of the strong support and involvement of industry leaders, who recognise the need for

change if we are to have the right skills capability for a thriving industry in the future.

Success to date has been achieved due to genuine collaboration and excellent team working by all involved with TIAH's development.

A priority has been to ensure that there is a clear understanding that TIAH will co-ordinate, rather than duplicate, the great work that is already happening on skills.

At the heart of TIAH's success will be raising the profile of farming and horticulture so that it is rightly viewed as being on a par with other industries.

Key to achieving this will be a convincing careers platform to attract people into the industry and clear career paths to motivate the existing workforce to engage in structured CPD in a user friendly, individually tailored way.

We are excited about what lies ahead and look forward to continuing to work with you as TIAH takes shape during 2021.



Transforming the Approach to Skills

by Tess Howe, AHDB Senior Skills Manager

It's widely acknowledged that, as agriculture and horticulture prepare for the future, the roles farmers and growers perform, and the core skills required will change. But how do they prepare for this new world and know where to find the most appropriate support to help them adapt?

TIAH aims to provide the answers through its two most fundamental elements - a virtual space and a competency framework. Both are currently being developed to help industry members, individuals and managers alike find their way when it comes to skills for the future.

The virtual space will be the home of TIAH. More than just a website, this interactive and personalised online 'hub' will enable users to find all the key information on skills, education and lifelong learning in relation to their specific needs. They will be able to check the competencies of a specific role profile, look at career pathways, find training, understand labour market information or simply log in to check their own skills record and identify future opportunities.

The virtual space will provide a wealth of information, but key to its success will be the ability for it to learn each user's needs over time, and build a much more personal experience, just as we are used to with sites such as Netflix and Amazon.

The structure of the website is currently under development. We are identifying user needs and the types of journeys we expect people to take.

Once these 'wireframes' are developed we will then be able to start building the site.



Supporting the virtual space will be a comprehensive competency framework, detailing the different competences across three separate levels of operation: Operator, Supervisor, Manager Owner.

The first draft of this framework has received very positive comments and will undergo further refinement, not least to ensure it reflects the most common roles across the country.

We are aware that while on some farms the three levels are clear and distinct, there will be many farms where all three are performed by one person!

If you feel you, or somebody in your team, can make a positive contribution to the working groups developing both of these concepts, please get in touch. The more contributions we have, the better chance we have of producing the world class system we are aiming for.

PLEASE GET INVOLVED

The TIAH Development Board is collaborating with many organisations and businesses in driving forward the new Institute's development. Involvement is welcomed from all areas of the agriculture and horticulture industry.

If you are not already connected, please get in touch by contacting info@tiah.org. A holding web page for TIAH can be found at www.tiah.org. This newsletter is produced on behalf of the TIAH Development Board.

Opinion

In each TIAH newsletter, we will be hearing from people playing a key role in the new Institute's development. First up is Richard Longthorp, Chair of the Careers Working Group.

I have been involved in industry skills for more than 20 years - from setting up a training organisation, Agskills Ltd, with other pig farmers in the late '90s, aimed at taking a more structured approach to training, to today, with the imminent development of TIAH.

In the interim I have chaired an industry group charged with developing a skills strategy for the Pig Sector. This saw BPEX recruit a Pig Industry Skills Manager to develop a comprehensive training package for the Pig Sector. In 2014, whilst chairing the AgriSkills Forum, I persuaded AHDB that having a dedicated Industry Skills Development resource was essential.

And so, to the current day where I now chair the TIAH Careers Working Group. The group's overall role is to undertake work supporting TIAH's goal of making more people, from more sectors of society more aware of the exciting and fulfilling career opportunities that exist in UK agriculture and horticulture.

TIAH's immediate priorities are the development of a Competency Framework, and the virtual space which will be central to its activities. To support this, the Careers groups is progressing two important initiatives - getting the industry recognised as STEM and developing two new Trailblazer Apprenticeship Standards.

With the development of TIAH now proceeding apace, it is an exciting but still challenging time. TIAH Development Board Chair, David Fursdon, recently challenged us to describe what success for TIAH will look like. The original Vision of the AgriSkills Forum Strategy, "Towards a New Professionalism", (*listed right*) probably still nails it for me. I believe this forms the roots from which TIAH will flourish. It's brilliant to see how the goals expressed in the pig sector back in the '90s have grown into a new institute with potential to deliver on these long-held ambitions right across industry.



RICHARD'S VISION OF TIAH SUCCESS

A profitable and sustainable industry fully capable of meeting the demands and challenges of agriculture and land management in the 21st century...

Delivered by a world class, competent, innovative and professional workforce whose professionalism is recognised and rewarded...

Where skills development is fundamental and integral to all businesses...

An industry that is seen as a career of choice where the significance of farming and land management are recognised and valued by society.