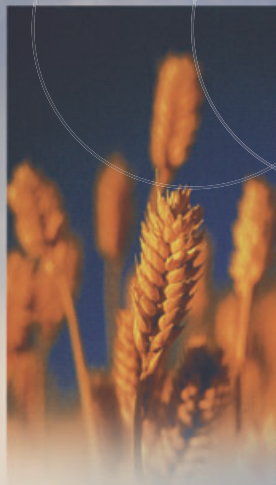


# Fens Adventurers

## Rural Development Programme

### A GUIDE FOR FARMERS

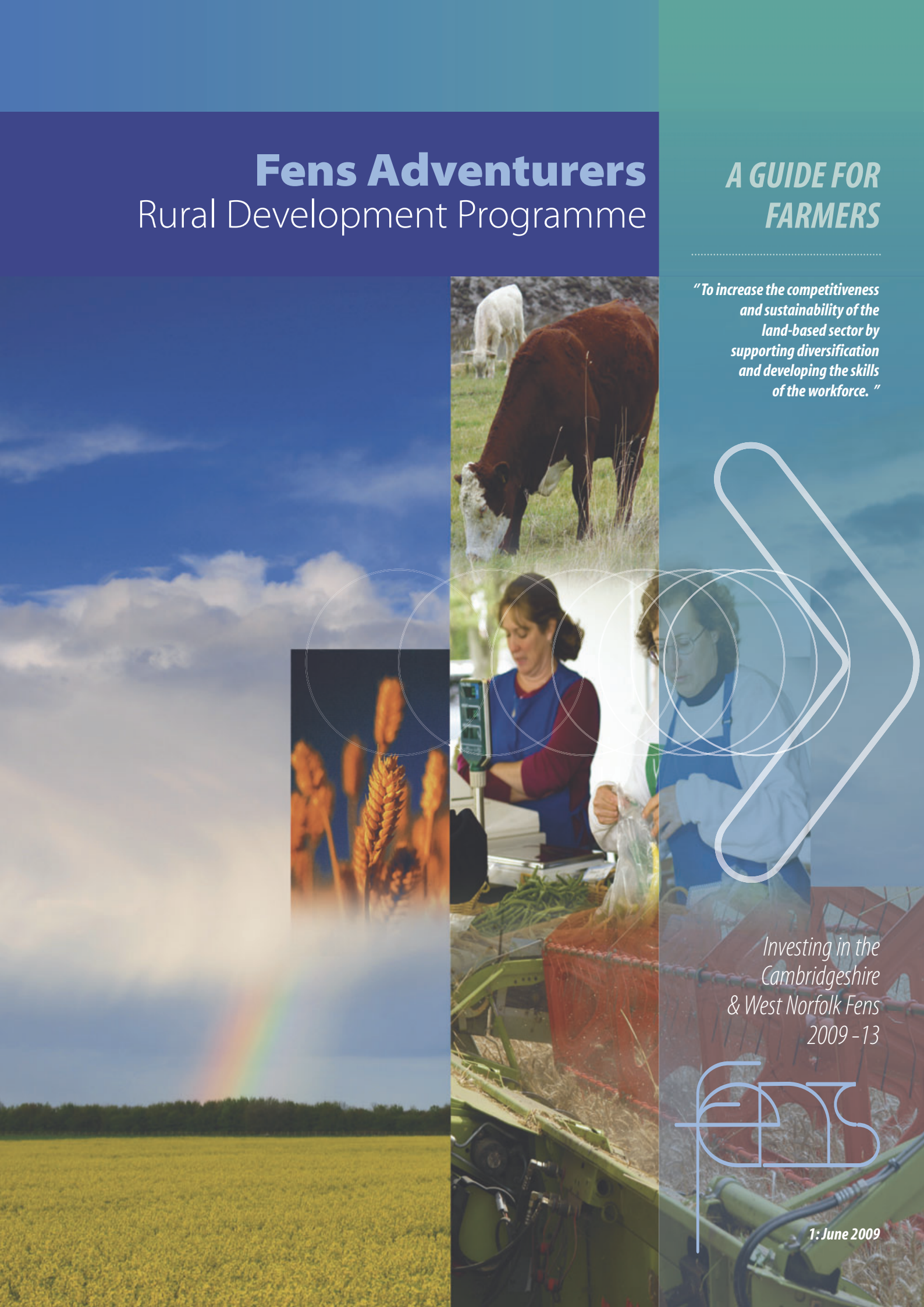
*"To increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the land-based sector by supporting diversification and developing the skills of the workforce."*



*Investing in the  
Cambridgeshire  
& West Norfolk Fens  
2009 - 13*



1: June 2009



## What's it all about?

**The Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme (FARDP)** is a £4 million grants programme. The key aim of FARDP's governing body, the Local Action Group (LAG) will be to use these grants to invest in the start-up or enhancement of local rural business ventures which operate over parts of the Cambridgeshire and West Norfolk Fens.

## Farming at the heart of the Fens!

Farming and the Fens are inseparable. It was the prize of farming the Fens nutrient rich soils which led the original adventurers to invest their capital into making the Fens what they are today – a powerhouse of agricultural production. Farming has always been at the heart of the Fens and the Fens Adventurers LAG has farming at the heart of this programme.

The LAG have prioritised the investment on four key areas; sustainable food and farming, rural business development, sustainable rural tourism and enterprising communities. Whilst 60% of the programme budget will be channelled directly to farmers through the agricultural measures, there are opportunities for farmers to engage with all four of the FARDP priorities and their associated measures. The following outlines some opportunities to enable farmers access grants.

### Sustainable Food & Farming

Farms in the Fens exemplify modern and sustainable farming. With exceptional production techniques these farms make a significant contribution to the local economy. FARDP wants to build on the success of existing farm operations by supporting more efficient marketing and processing techniques as well as improving sustainability through diversification.

**The added value to agricultural production** measure will support farmers to increase value to their products by enabling improvements with their processing and marketing techniques .

**The Vocational Training** measure will help raise the levels of skills in the agricultural sector. Farmers should address most of their training needs through the regional Landskills East training programme. However, there may be specific local training needs that can be covered through FARDP.

**The Farm diversification** measure will support farmers or members of a farm household that want to develop an alternative or additional income stream on their farmland. Examples of diversification projects could be on-farm butchery facilities, recycling or leisure activities.





## Rural Business Development

This priority aims to promote sustainable economic development by supporting new business start-ups and further development of existing micro enterprises (defined as having fewer than 10 employees and an annual turnover of under €2 million).

**Creation and development of micro enterprises** – this measure could support farmers that have already diversified and want to enhance the separate new or existing business.

## Sustainable Rural Tourism

**The Fens are a popular tourist destination** attracting large numbers of visitors per year. Most of these tourists are short stay visitors who are attracted to the unique landscape, big skies and breathtaking countryside.

**The encouragement of tourism activities** measure could be used by farmers, working collaboratively, who want to start or enhance the tourism offer on their farm (e.g. farm parks or accommodation sites) with capital investment and revenue support for marketing. Investment could also be used to support developing recreational infrastructure on farmland such as walking, cycling and riding routes.



## Enterprising Communities

This priority aims to enable local communities to deliver better services and activities which enhance the quality of life.

**The basic services** measure could be used by farmers to develop services for their local community through, for example, the conversion of a farm building for community use, or the establishment of a new income stream which has a wider community benefit, such as childcare/elderly care facilities.

## Cross cutting investment opportunities

**The training for those in work** measure will support business owners in providing training programmes to address non-agricultural skills shortages.

**The co-operation** measure will provide grants for projects already supported under FARDP to link with other schemes across the EU to share knowledge and best practice.

An example could be to support the travel and arrangement costs of a farmer, who has already received funding to develop more efficient processing techniques, to visit and learn from a similar successful operation based in another region of the UK or the EU.

## What's different this time?

FARDP is a "bottom up" investment programme where decisions will be made by the Fens Adventures Local Action Group (LAG). The LAG is a partnership of local entrepreneurs and professionals representing interests in farming, rural business, and tourism as well as other specialities relevant to the area.



## For your project to be eligible it must:

- *Align with one of the four priorities*
- *Be located within the FARDP area or the majority of its intended beneficiaries must reside within this area (see map). For a more detailed map visit [www.cambsacre.org.uk/fensadventurers](http://www.cambsacre.org.uk/fensadventurers)*
- *Have a sound funding package in place, be it your own funds or borrowings*
- *Demonstrate that the proposal will have wider business and community benefits (e.g. by improving local supply chains, creating new jobs or securing existing jobs, improving skills or competitiveness or filling a gap in the market)*



## I'm interested but what about the process?

In general the LAG will look to invest from £10,000 to £100,000 per venture and depending on the activity and size of business will look to contribute between 20% - 60% towards the overall project cost. If you feel you have a relevant project idea please contact the FARDP team first who will help you develop your project idea and guide you through the application process.

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For more information on the programme, including details of where to get a copy of the programme prospectus, please contact the programme team or visit the Cambridgeshire ACRE website  
[www.cambsacre.org.uk/fensadventurers](http://www.cambsacre.org.uk/fensadventurers)

## Have you spoken with Business Link East?

All businesses looking for support should also contact **Business Link**, a business advice and support service. You can contact them by phone (0845 600 9006), online [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) or face-to-face by visiting your local branch.

