CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS
Improving beef youngstock health

The AHDB Beef & Lamb R&D committee has identified youngstock health of beef cattle as a priority area. Calf health is fundamental to optimising beef cattle performance, welfare and efficiency, through both short and longer term impacts. AHDB Beef & Lamb is therefore seeking proposals for research and development work to address these challenges. Youngstock from the dairy herd is the focus of this call but work relating to suckled calves will also be considered. Typically, AHDB Beef & Lamb funds projects ranging in duration from 6 months to 3 years.

Proposals in response to this call should be received no later than 28th September 2015. Your proposal should be sent electronically to beeflamb.research@ahdb.org.uk

Any technical questions about this call should be raised with Mary Vickers at AHDB Beef & Lamb on 07990 506 012 or email mary.vickers@ahdb.org.uk.

Administrative queries should be directed to Michelle Quagliano 024 7647 8827 or on email to beeflamb.research@ahdb.org.uk.

Objectives

AHDB Beef & Lamb is seeking research or development proposals that aim to address various issues. Proposals should address at least one of the following in relation to beef youngstock:

- Development and demonstration of strategies to reduce health problems occurring
- Development of strategies that identify problems sooner
- Improved understanding of how the environment can be better managed to reduce health issues in housed youngstock
- The need for clear protocols for youngstock management
- Improved understanding of the main areas of antibiotic use and developments to reduce antibiotic use
- Development of guidance on managing youngstock during periods of stress such as the movement and transition of youngstock between farms
- Impact of calf health on lifetime performance and cost of production
- Interactions between health and other management factors such as nutrition
• New systems for youngstock management

All proposals must demonstrate clear application to commercial beef producers and should include a strong element of knowledge exchange activity involving relevant stakeholders in the beef industry.

Notes

• Any commercial farms involved in delivery of a proposal must be agreed in collaboration with AHDB Beef & Lamb staff.
• Any producers involved in R&D work must be willing to take part in the AHDB Beef & Lamb Stocktake costings programme and share financial performance data within the project team
• Any producers involved in R&D work must be willing to share information and participate in knowledge exchange activity
• Knowledge transfer to the wider industry is an important component of this project and deliverables should be mapped against milestones throughout the project
• AHDB Beef and Lamb is aiming to commit up to £500,000 on a number of projects in this area, depending on the duration and type of projects submitted. Projects of any monetary size within this range will be acceptable and smaller projects are just as welcome as larger projects.

Requirements of proposals

Full proposals should be submitted on the AHDB Full Project Proposal form available from http://beefandlamb.ahdb.org.uk/research/funding-opportunities/

A shorter "outline" proposal may be submitted where an indication of AHDB Beef & Lamb's general interest is desired before preparing a full proposal. It should be noted that this will add a minimum of 2 months delay to the final decision and there is no guarantee that funds will be held in reserve for proposals submitted in outline.

Assessment of applications

Proposals received by AHDB Beef and Lamb in response to this call will be assessed at the next meeting of the AHDB Beef and Lamb R&D sub-committee which normally meets five to six times per year.

Proposals will be judged according to the following criteria:

1. Relevance to industry
2. Likelihood of practical improvement opportunities
3. Cost benefit and value for money
4. Scale of impact
5. Quality of application & information provided
6. Scientific quality (experimental design and use of appropriate methods)
7. Strength of research team
8. Experience in the research field

Applications may be offered to equivalent organisations in Northern Ireland (AgriSearch), Scotland (QMS) and Wales (HCC) or discussed with government departments to explore joint funding possibilities. If proposers do not wish their proposal to be passed on in this way, this should be indicated on the submission.

AHDB Beef and Lamb reserves the right to ask proposers to combine project ideas and resubmit revised joint proposals. Applicants may choose to withdraw if they do not wish to pursue this and AHDB Beef and Lamb will not divulge to other parties (other than as described above) the content of any applications without the permission of the applicant.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of the assessment within one month of the meeting of the R&D Committee at which it is considered, but any such communication is subject to contractual terms being agreed.

Terms

AHDB Standard contractual terms for research will apply. A schedule for review meetings and reporting will be agreed during contract negotiations. This will include a written final report (submitted electronically).