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Putting a brake on belching cows

Scientists at Aberdeen's Rowett Research Institute have been awarded £150k from The Proof of Concept Fund to develop technology which has the potential to significantly reduce the amount of methane currently produced by sheep and cattle. Methane is an important greenhouse gas and The Kyoto Protocol requires the UK to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Within Scotland, agriculture is responsible for 51% of all methane emissions, with the majority (over 90%, 163 Gg/year) coming from sheep and cattle.

"Cows can lose around 10% of the energy in their diet by belching out methane. This loss is bad for the cow and bad for the environment," said Dr Jamie Newbold, the Rowett scientist who has received the funding from Scottish Enterprise.

"Our previous research identified that organic sugars such as fumerate and a novel methane oxidising bacterium, are both potential feed additives which are capable of decreasing methane production in cattle and sheep," said Dr Newbold.

"This funding from Proof of Concept will allow us to undertake further work such as finding practical ways of growing and storing methane oxidising bacteria and developing appropriate formulations of the organic sugars and studying the dose-response. This work is necessary before the commercialisation of these additives can be considered."



Notes for editors

About The Proof of Concept Fund

The Proof of Concept Fund supports leading-edge technologies in Scotland's academic institutions, and aims to help export innovation from the lab into the global marketplace.

The £33m Fund launched in 1999 now supports 118 ground-breaking projects worth nearly £18million and has created 287 new jobs. It concentrates on early-stage ideas which have typically reached patent level and could lead to the creation of new businesses, or licensing innovative technologies. Successful bidders must demonstrate that their ideas have originality and true commercial potential.

The projects supported via the Fund are high risk and will generally take several years to become commercially viable investments.

The objectives of the Fund are:

- To improve the level and quality of commercialisation through the provision of funding for early stage development activity within Scotland's universities, research institutes and NHS trusts.
- To contribute to the development of Scotland's clusters by facilitating the exploitation of enabling technologies from within the fundamental and strategic research base.
- To contribute to the longer-term development of a strong, knowledge-based economy in Scotland.

Further details on the PoC Fund, the projects that are currently supported and the application process can be found at: <http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/proofofconceptfund>

About Scottish Enterprise

Scottish Enterprise is the main economic development agency for Scotland covering 93% of the population from Grampian to the Borders. The Scottish Enterprise Network consists of Scottish Enterprise and 12 Local Enterprise Companies. Working in partnership with the private and public sectors the Network aims to build more and better businesses, to develop the skills and knowledge of Scottish people, and to encourage innovation to make Scottish business internationally competitive.

A **cluster** is a group of related industries and organisations. They can be each other's customers, competitors, partners, suppliers or research and development sources. Partners in a cluster continue to compete, but they also begin to share the benefits of innovative ideas and practices that each contributes. This makes them more competitive. An example of a successful cluster is the Biotechnology industry in Dundee. The cluster approach in Scotland, pioneered by Scottish Enterprise, aims to ensure that Scotland's small, open economy thrives in an increasingly competitive global economy.

The Rowett Research Institute, ABERDEEN, AB21 9SB, is an internationally recognised centre of excellence for nutrition research. We undertake research to improve food quality and prevent disease. **This year we will celebrate our 90th**

Anniversary with public open days on Saturday and Sunday 27-28th September.

Further information available at www.rowett.ac.uk

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