

House of Commons: Written Statement (HCWS276)

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Written Statement made by: **The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Elizabeth Truss)** on 11 Feb 2015.

Investment in the Food and Environment Research Agency

I am announcing today £14.5 million of new investment in the Food and Environment Research Agency through a joint venture with Capita and Newcastle University. This is part of Defra's ambitious science programme and recognition of the importance of cutting-edge research. The joint venture will expand the agency's world-leading scientific capability and strengthen its role in food safety research. It will enable Fera to play an even greater role in helping to drive growth in our £100 billion agri-food industry.

The investment builds upon the £2.7 million already committed by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to Defra's National Agri-Food Innovation Campus York, where Fera is based. It represents a strong commitment to the regional economy and to the LEP's priority area of agri-food business.

Fera has a significant presence in the agri-food market where it is already recognised as an internationally respected scientific organisation. As the joint venture partner, Capita, will bring valuable commercial expertise and experience enabling Fera to maximise its capabilities. The venture also includes the creation of a joint academic institute with Newcastle University aimed at advancing the understanding and application of science to practical agri-food problems.

In bringing together the public sector, private sector and academia, the joint venture allows Fera to build on its reputation as an international centre of excellence and provide the invaluable scientific services that Defra and wider Government will continue to require in the future.

It is intended that the new joint venture will commence operating on 1 April 2015.