

# Agricultural Leadership Development Programme 2027



## Week 1

Sunday 17th January 2027  
Friday 22nd January 2027



## Week 2

Monday 1st February 2027  
Friday 5th February 2027



## Week 3

Monday 1st March 2027  
Friday 5th March 2027

## Programme Overview.

**Applications Close On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.**

 [www.soc-ag.org](http://www.soc-ag.org)

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The Agricultural Leadership Development Programme develops high-impact leaders, equipping them to grow, transform their organisations, shape strategic thinking, and strengthen the credibility and long-term resilience of agriculture.

## Programme Aim.

To develop a cohort of professionally credible, strategically capable leaders equipped to operate effectively across business, policy, research and public discourse, while delivering tangible value to their organisations and the wider agricultural sector.

## Programme Outcomes.

The Agricultural Leadership Development Programme is designed to deliver outcomes across three interconnected levels:

- individual capability
- organisational value
- and sector impact

Completion of this course may be recognised for Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) towards the RAU's MSc in Business Management.



## 1. Professional Leadership Capability

Participants will develop the capability to:

- demonstrate enhanced professional judgement, self-awareness and leadership clarity
- apply strategic thinking to complex agricultural challenges
- communicate with confidence across media, policy and stakeholder environments
- operate effectively within UK and international agricultural systems
- lead with credibility beyond their immediate role

## 2. Organisational Value

Participating organisations benefit from individuals who are better equipped to:

- bring back strategic insight into policy, trade, research and sector direction
- strengthen organisational engagement with government, industry bodies and stakeholders
- enhance credibility through confident external representation
- contribute to innovation, resilience and forward planning
- apply learning through the 2027 Challenge, generating ideas aligned to business and sector priorities

## 3. Sector Leadership & Professional Standards

The programme supports:

- the development of a more professional, credible and confident leadership cohort
- stronger collaboration across industry, policy, research and the supply chain
- more effective engagement between the sector and government institutions
- wider recognition of agriculture as a skilled, professionally led sector

## 4. Strategic Insight & Sector Contribution

Through the 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience, participants develop:

- nationally significant, evidence-informed research priorities
- proposals tested against economic, political and delivery realities
- practical insight into how leadership, policy and research intersect
- outputs with the potential to inform future sector strategy and investment decisions

## 5. Long-Term Impact

The Agricultural Leadership Development Programme is intended to contribute to:

- a pipeline of leaders capable of influencing sector resilience to 2035
- stronger alignment between organisational strategy, research priorities and policy direction
- improved sector confidence in public narrative and external engagement
- enhanced leadership capability embedded within participating organisations

## Overall Outcome

The Agricultural Leadership Development Programme aims to produce a cohort of professionally credible, strategically capable and well-connected leaders who:

- deliver measurable value within their organisations
- support sector-wide progress
- help position UK agriculture as a modern, professional and resilient industry

# Programme Overview.

## Week 1 Royal Agricultural University 17<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2027 Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS, UK

The opening week is hosted at the Royal Agricultural University (RAU), one of the UK's leading specialist institutions for agriculture and land-based education, providing an academically grounded and sector-connected environment for the programme.

This week focuses on leadership foundations, self-awareness and sector context. Participants will undertake psychometrics and structured leadership development, alongside sessions exploring personal leadership journeys from senior figures across agriculture and beyond.

The programme combines workshops, small group exercises and debate-led dinners, creating space to challenge assumptions, test perspectives and build cohort cohesion.

Engagement with industry through events such as LAMMA provides practical grounding, while dedicated media and communication sessions begin to develop participants' confidence in external representation.

## Week 2 Brussels & Netherlands 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> February 2027

Week 2 provides an international and systems-level perspective, exploring how policy, trade, research and innovation interact to shape agriculture.

Participants will engage directly with European institutions, gaining insight into policy development and decision-making, before travelling to the Netherlands to explore world-leading examples of agricultural research, innovation and supply chain integration.

Visits to organisations such as Wageningen University and commercial R&D facilities will highlight how science, industry and investment align in practice. Sessions on trade, infrastructure and markets further broaden understanding of global agricultural systems.

## Week 3 Westminster, London, UK 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> March 2027

The final week focuses on leadership in action, with an emphasis on policy engagement, public narrative and strategic influence.

Participants will gain insight into government, investment and policy processes, including engagement with speakers from Defra and exposure to the UK's political environment. Media training is deepened through a press-focused session, ensuring participants can communicate complex ideas with clarity and authority.

The week culminates in the 2027 Challenge panel, where groups present their proposals for The 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience in a commissioning-style environment.

Alongside this, the programme closes with reflection, leadership commitment and alumni engagement, reinforcing long-term impact and network strength.

## The 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience

Across the programme, participants will work in groups of five to develop a commissioning-ready research proposal addressing a critical barrier to long-term resilience in agriculture.

Each group must:

- Define a single, clearly scoped research question or programme
- Demonstrate why this issue matters now (national or international relevance)
- Set out what research is needed, by whom, and over what timeframe
- Explain how the outputs would be applied in practice (policy, industry, or farm-level impact)

The proposal should be framed as if submitted to a major research funder, government body, or industry organisation operating within a defined agricultural system (e.g. national, regional, or international).

The Challenge culminates in a commissioning-style panel, where each group delivers a 10–15 minute presentation followed by Q&A, pitching their proposal as if competing for real-world funding.



# Programme Details Week ONE

## Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2027

**17:00–18:30**

Arrival & Check-in

**18:30–19:00**

Drinks Reception, Bathurst Lounge, Royal Agricultural University

**19:00**

Welcome Dinner – Introductions and overview of the Agricultural Leadership Development Programme 2027 with invited guests

Accommodation at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS, UK

## Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing

**09:30–12:30**

Psychometrics & Self-Awareness with Inspired Mindset

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–14:30**

My Leadership Journey with Dame Fiona Reynolds, High Sheriff of Gloucestershire

**14:30–16:30**

Leadership Workshop & Small Group Exercises with Inspired Mindset

**16:30–17:30**

Introduction to the 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience with guest speaker Guy Woolley, Chief Operating Officer, UK RI

**19:00**

Dinner sponsored by MorePeople – Debate with Guy Moreton, Founder & Chairman, MorePeople: UK Agriculture Must Rethink What Leadership Looks Like

Accommodation at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS, UK

## Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing

**09:30–11:30**

Leadership Workshop with Ian Evans, Royal Agricultural University

**11:30–12:30**

My Leadership Journey with David Webster, Chief Executive, LEAF

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–14:30**

My Leadership Journey

**14:30–16:30**

Leadership Workshop & Small Group Exercises Ian Evans, Royal Agricultural University

**17:00–17:30**

Introduction to LAMMA Day

**19:00**

Dinner sponsored by The Andersons Centre – Debate with Graham Redman, Partner, The Andersons Centre

Accommodation at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS, UK

## Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2027

**08:30–09:00**

Morning Briefing

**09:00–10:30**

Depart for LAMMA, NEC, Birmingham, Pendigo Way, Marston Green, Birmingham B40 1NT

**10:30–16:30**

Visit to LAMMA the UK's premier farm machinery show, connecting farmers across a range of sectors with pioneering companies offering cutting-edge agricultural machinery, technology and equipment.

**19:00**

Dinner sponsored by HCR Legal LLP – Debate with Rory Hutchings, Partner, Head of Agriculture and Estates Team, HCR Legal LLP: Will AI replace my job?

Accommodation at the Royal Agricultural University, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS, UK

## Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing & Professional Photography Session – Individual and Group Portraits – The Alliston Centre, Royal Agricultural University

**09:30–12:30**

Interactive workshop on building and protecting brand value – yours, your companies, your sector and that of UK agriculture.

**12:30–13:30**

Sandwich lunch

**13:30–14:30**

My Leadership Journey with guest speaker

**14:30–16:30**

Interactive Leadership Workshop – Building the story, inside the newsroom, and what of AI

**16:30–17:00**

Roundtable Discussion: The 2027 Challenge – Research for Resilience

**19:00**

Dinner

Accommodation at the Royal Agricultural University, Gloucestershire, GL7 6JS, UK

## Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing

**09:30–11:30**

Leadership Workshop

**11:30–12:30**

Thoughts on Reflexive Leadership: Learning, Adjourning, Growing with guest speaker Louise Manning, PhD, FIFST, FRSB, ARAGS, NSCh

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–14:30**

Reflection and Work on the 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience

**14:30–15:00**

Briefing for Brussels

**15:00**

Close



# Programme Details Week TWO

## Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing - West Room & Centre Room, Courtyard by Marriott Brussels EU

**10:00–12:30**

Visit and presentation: British Agriculture Bureau with guest speaker Robin Manning, Director, representing UK farming interests in Brussels and specialising in EU-UK agricultural policy and trade

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**14:00–16:00**

Visit to the European Parliament

**16:00–17:00**

My Leadership Journey with guest speaker from Copa-Cogeca .

**19:00**

Dinner

Accommodation at Courtyard by Marriott Brussels EU, Brussels



## Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2027

**08:30**

Depart for the Netherlands

**10:30**

Visit to Wageningen University – Innovation in Practice

Participants will visit Wageningen University, a global leader in agricultural research, to explore how science, data and innovation are applied to transform food production systems. The visit includes a guided campus tour, offering insight into the University's integrated approach to research, education and collaboration across disciplines.

Participants will also visit UniFarm, the University's dedicated agricultural research facilities, providing a direct view of field-scale experimentation and applied research in practice.

The session will focus on advanced plant systems, including high-tech glasshouses, precision growing and controlled environments, demonstrating how research is translated into practical, scalable solutions that improve productivity, sustainability and resilience. Together, these elements highlight how Wageningen aligns science, industry and investment to deliver real-world impact across agricultural systems.

**15:30**

Depart

**19:00**

Dinner

Accommodation at Hotel Asteria, Venray, Netherlands

## Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2027

**09:00**

Depart for Trouw Nutrition, Boxmeer, Netherlands

**09:30**

Introduction to Trouw Nutrition and its role within Nutreco and the wider SHV group, followed by a practical exploration of its swine, poultry and ruminant research and development facilities.

The session will be hosted and guided by Mark Cox, Ruminant Lead for Atlantics (GB and Ireland), who will provide expert insight throughout.

It will cover the company's work in animal nutrition, premixes, farm minerals, milk replacers, analytical services and technical support, alongside its contribution to sustainable livestock production and responsible feeding.

Participants will gain insight into how research, formulation, manufacturing, laboratory analysis and advisory services combine to support animal health, performance and resilience across species, and how scientific evidence is translated into practical nutrition solutions for farmers and the wider supply chain.

**16:30**

Depart

**19:00**

Private Dinner at Hotel Asteria, Venray, Netherlands with invited guests

Accommodation at Hotel Asteria, Venray, Netherlands



## Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2027

**08:30**

Depart

**10:00–12:30**

Visit to the Port of Rotterdam – A guided coach tour of Europe's largest port, with a focus on its role as a major hub for agricultural commodities. The port handles significant volumes of grains, oilseeds and related products, supported by extensive storage, processing and distribution infrastructure linking global supply chains with European markets. The tour will provide an overview of these operations alongside the wider port landscape.

**13:00–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–15:30**

Trade & Markets

**15:30–16:30**

Reflection Session – What Does This Mean for Leadership?

**16:30–17:30**

Work on the 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience

Accommodation at The James Rotterdam, 25 Aert van Nesstraat, Centrum, 3012 CA Rotterdam, Netherlands

Evening Free - Rotterdam

## Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2027

**09:00–11:00**

Strategic Integration & Discussion

**11:00–12:30**

Leadership Application Workshop

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30**

Close

# Programme Details Week THREE

## Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing – Hudson Room, Farmers Club, Whitehall

**09:30–11:00**

Leadership in Natural Capital – Agricultural Investing for Impact with guest speaker Carl Atkin-House, Managing Director, Head of Natural Capital Strategy, Climate Asset Management.

**11:00–12:30**

How to Inform Policy: Insights from Inside and Outside the Civil Service with guest speaker Harley Stoddart, Head of Climate Mitigation Science, Defra.

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–14:30**

My Leadership Journey with guest speaker Emily Norton, Chair Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

**14:30**

Depart for U.S. Embassy, London

**15:30–16:30**

My Leadership Journey

**15:00-17:30**

Visit to U.S. Embassy, London and presentation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture

**19:00**

Sponsored Dinner – Debate

Accommodation The Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, Whitehall, London SW1A 2EL

## Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing

**09:30–12:30**

Interactive Workshop – Enhancing reputation and managing reputational risk

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–14:30**

My Leadership Journey with guest speaker

**14:30–16:30**

Interactive Leadership Workshop – Communicating with confidence

**16:30–17:30**

Work on the 2027 Challenge: Research for Resilience – Press Pitch Test

**19:00**

Sponsored Dinner – Debate

Accommodation The Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL



## Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2027

**09:00–09:30**

Morning Briefing – Farmers Club, Whitehall

**10:00–12:15**

Houses of Parliament & House of Lords Tour

**12:15–14:30**

Drinks Reception & Lunch – Atlee and Reid Room, House of Lords

**14:30–16:30**

My Leadership Journey

**16:30–17:30**

Reflection & Discussion Session

Evening Free

Accommodation The Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL

## Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2027

**09:00–12:30**

Final Preparation Session: The 2027 Challenge – Research for Resilience

**12:30–13:30**

Lunch

**13:30–14:30**

Panel Presentations

**14:30–15:00**

Panel Feedback

**15:00–16:00**

My Leadership Journey

**16:00–17:00**

Cohort Reflection

**19:00**

Agricultural Leadership Alumni Dinner & John Alliston Memorial Lecture – One Great George Street, London

Accommodation The Farmers Club, 3 Whitehall Court, Whitehall, London SW1A 2EL

## Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2027

**08:30–09:30**

Leadership Breakfast

**10:00–11:00**

My Leadership Journey with guest speaker Johnny Wake DL FRASE ARAGS

**11:00–11:30**

Leadership Declarations

**12:00–13:00**

Programme Reflection

**13:00**

Close



## Programme Directors.



### Professor Nicola Cannon

Professor Nicola Cannon is Professor of Agriculture at the Royal Agricultural University, where she is involved in teaching, research, and policy engagement in sustainable farming systems. She holds a BSc in Agriculture from the University of London, a PhD in Plant Sciences from the University of Reading, and a PGCAP in Higher Education from The Open University.

Her career spans research, consultancy and senior academic leadership. She has served as Interim Dean at Qingdao Agricultural University in China and Deputy Rector at the International Agriculture University in Uzbekistan.

Earlier roles included Research Officer in precision farming at Cranfield University, farm adviser and company director with East Anglia Food Link, and Technical Expert for the United Kingdom Accreditation Service.

Professor Cannon's research focuses on sustainable cropping systems, soil health, nutrient efficiency and regenerative agriculture. Recent projects include evaluating war damage to farmland in Ukraine, developing urine-based fertilizers, advancing UK-grown soya, and contributing to the Farm Soil Carbon Code.

A Practitioner of the Society of Agriculture, Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies and Nuffield Scholar, she is also a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and recipient of the Farmers Club Agricultural Educators Award. She has a wide range of external roles including the Expert Group for Organic Production (EGOP) for DEFRA, vice chair of Burford Farming Club and co-ordinator of Cotswold Arable Study Group. Previously she has co-ordinated and run HRH Prince of Wales Food and Farming Summer School and worked with celebrity chefs on a range of projects.



### Angus Chalmers, BSc(Hons) Agriculture, FSAg

Since 2005 Angus has owned and run RDP, an integrated communications business specialising in Agri-business and Animal Health.

An accomplished communicator and leader, delivering strategic thinking with a deep understanding of the wider agricultural industry alongside a strong network of contacts.

Following a degree from Seale-Hayne and an early career with Grant Thornton LLP and ADAS, Angus has grown RDP into a well-respected communications agency delivering outcome led solutions to many of the largest corporate businesses within the sector.

A graduate of the Institute of Agricultural Management Leadership Course 2012, Company Secretary to the Oxford Farming Conference and advisor to The Henry Plumb Foundation, he is a passionate but pragmatic advocate of UK agriculture.

He is married with 3 grown up children and lives on a smallholding in Gloucestershire, which acts as a practical foil for the day job!

## Programme Fee.

### The cost of the programme:

- **Members** of the Society of Agriculture £8,000 + VAT per person
- **Non-Members** of the Society of Agriculture £9,000 + VAT per person

Members of the Society of Agriculture benefit from a £1,000 + VAT subsidy.

Non-members are welcome to apply; however, the subsidised rate is only available to members.

All successful applicants on the 2027 programme will receive one year of complimentary membership of the Society of Agriculture.

For details on becoming a member of the Society of Agriculture, please visit: [www.soc-ag.org/membership](http://www.soc-ag.org/membership)

Please note the following:

- Delegates are responsible for their own travel to and from Cirencester, Brussels/ Netherlands and London; delegates are responsible for arranging and covering these costs.
- A Health & Safety assessment will be provided to all delegates in advance as part of the delegate information pack.



### Selection Approach

The selection process is designed to identify individuals who demonstrate:

- strong leadership potential and professional credibility
- the ability to think strategically about the future of agriculture
- a willingness to contribute actively to the cohort and wider sector
- commitment to applying their learning within their organisation and for the benefit of the wider agricultural sector

### Applications will close on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.

Following the application deadline, shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an online interview on dates between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2026 (inclusive).

Proposed interview dates and times will be arranged directly with shortlisted candidates.

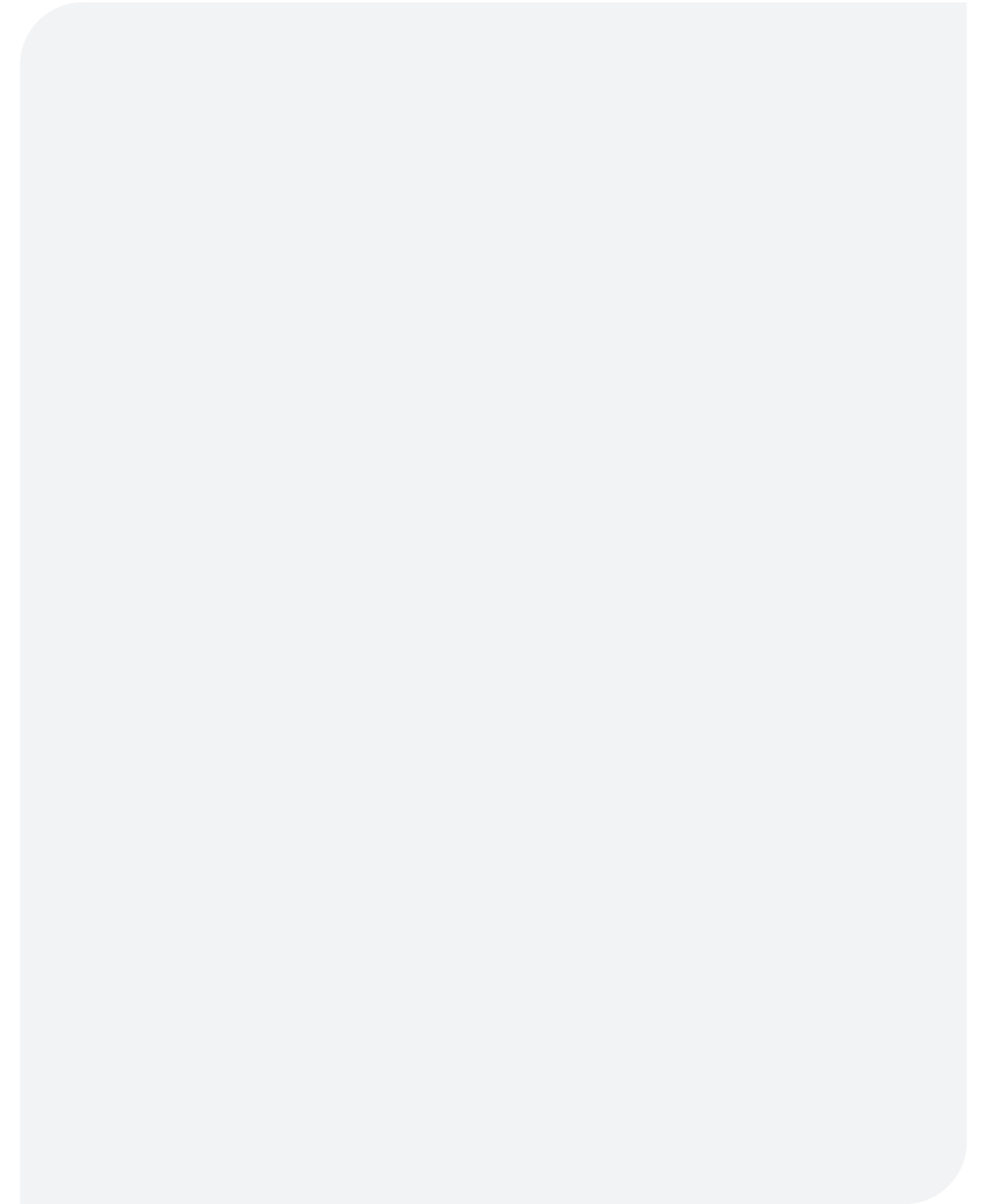
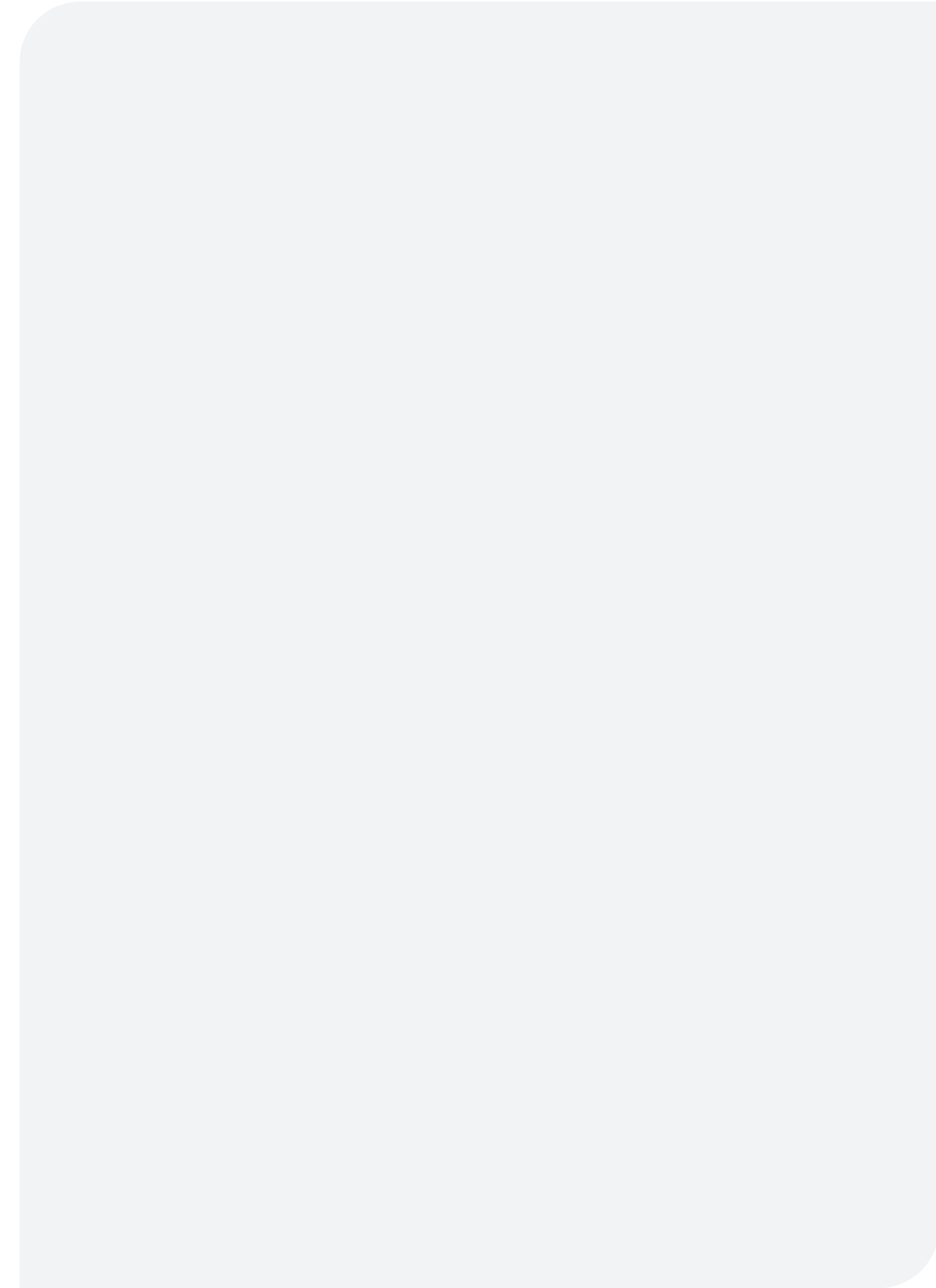
## Agricultural Leadership Programme Application Form.

Complete the application form or to request an application form by email, please email: [aldp@soc-ag.org](mailto:aldp@soc-ag.org)

### 1: Please provide a brief summary of your current role, responsibilities and organisation.

Please outline your career pathway to date, highlighting key roles and experiences

**2: Why are you applying for the Agricultural Leadership Development Programme?**



### 3: What do you hope to gain from the Agricultural Leadership Development Programme?

#### Participant Commitment

The Agricultural Leadership Development Programme requires full participation across all three residential weeks, active engagement throughout, and contribution to the 2027 Challenge.

By submitting this application, I confirm that:

- I am able to attend all programme dates in full
- I will actively engage with all elements of the programme
- I am committed to contributing to the cohort and applying my learning beyond the programme

#### Policies & Governance

I confirm that I have read and agree to abide by the relevant policies of the Society of Agriculture:

<https://soc-ag.org/about-us/governance/>

I understand that participation in the Agricultural Leadership Development Programme is subject to these policies and expectations of professional behaviour.

#### Payment Agreement

I understand that, if my application is successful, a formal offer of a place on the Agricultural Leadership Development Programme 2027 will be made.

- I (or my sponsoring organisation) agree to pay the full programme fee as invoiced
- I understand that full payment of the programme fee must be received by 30 November 2026
- I understand that my place is not confirmed until payment terms are agreed and payment is received
- I acknowledge that cancellation terms will apply once a place has been accepted

#### Declaration.

I confirm that the information provided in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge and that I agree to the commitments outlined above.

Name:

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Date:

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Please save and email your completed form to:  
[aldp@soc-ag.org](mailto:aldp@soc-ag.org)