

Farm Advisor

Reports to:	Specialist Lead - Water Resilience
Responsible for:	Delivering farm engagement and advisory activity to support SERT's Water Resilience programme, including Holistic Water for Horticulture delivery and future pipeline development.
Location:	Hybrid working, split between home working and on-site/farm visits across the SERT area, with a focus in the East of our area initially. In addition, there is an expectation to spend a minimum of two days a month at our office based in Leatherhead and/or our hub in the East (currently in Headcorn).

The role

Are you passionate about working with farmers and growers to build more resilient businesses, healthier catchments and sustainable food systems?

We're looking for a positive, proactive and approachable individual with a strong understanding of the agriculture and horticulture sector in South East England and the challenges it faces. This is an exciting opportunity to work directly with farmers, growers and landowners to help shape practical solutions to pressing issues affecting the sector such as water scarcity, flood risk, abstraction reform, soil health and environmental resilience.

As the face of our on-the-ground farm engagement and advisory support, you will build trusted relationships with land managers and support them in identifying and implementing practical land and water management improvements. You will champion nature-based solutions and help unlock opportunities that strengthen business resilience while delivering wider benefits for water resources, biodiversity and the environment.

The role requires an understanding of the funding and investment mechanisms available to support change, from Environmental Land Management schemes and grants through to emerging opportunities such as Biodiversity Net Gain and other nature market initiatives. You will help farmers and growers navigate these opportunities and develop projects that deliver lasting environmental and business benefits.

You will play a key role in delivering the Holistic Water for Horticulture (HWH) project and advancing wider water resilience objectives across the SERT area. Working closely with farmers, supply chain partners and stakeholders, you will also contribute to broader catchment priorities, including biodiversity enhancement, water quality improvements and natural flood management.

Joining our Water Resilience team offers the opportunity to work alongside specialists in catchment management, river restoration and natural flood management, helping to shape innovative approaches to water resource management. Initially focused on engagement, partnership development and project scoping, the role will evolve to support the design and delivery of impactful projects that improve both farm and catchment scale resilience

While the role is primarily focused on the eastern part of our operational area, you will work collaboratively across the organisation, supporting project development, prioritisation and delivery across the wider South East region.

This is a rewarding opportunity for someone who enjoys working with people, building partnerships and delivering practical solutions that benefit both farming businesses and the environment.

Key duties and responsibilities

1. Farmer engagement and advisory work

- Build trusted relationships with farmers, growers and landowners to support the delivery of practical land and water management improvements.
- Support mapping and targeting work (e.g. land use, water-use / abstraction reductions hotspots, nature recovery work).
- Undertake targeted farm visits, walkovers and assessments to support farmers and land managers to identify opportunities that improve farm resilience.
- Provide advice and guidance on water resources, water efficiency, nature-based solutions and diffuse pollution reduction
- Prepare farm plans, reports and recommendations based on site walkovers and scoping work.
- Help develop and embed consistent approaches to farm engagement, surveying and reporting.
- Facilitate meetings, engagement events and knowledge-sharing activities with the agriculture and horticulture sector.

2. Project development and delivery

- Identify, scope and help develop practical on-farm interventions and potential projects, working closely with colleagues and partners. This may contribute to the development of project pipelines and priorities.
- Advise farmers, growers and land managers on funding opportunities. Occasionally support access to grants, private finance and emerging nature market mechanisms (e.g. Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality) to enable the delivery of water resilience or environmental improvements.
- Contribute to developing funding proposals, business cases and project pipelines aligned with catchment and organisational priorities.
- Support monitoring, reporting and the collection of evidence to demonstrate impact and inform future delivery.

- Support identification of emerging trends and opportunities in the sectors (e.g. expansion of viticulture, high water-use sectors, circularity).

3. Partnership working

- Work collaboratively with other specialist teams across SERT to support integrated catchment delivery.
- Engage with key external stakeholders in the agricultural/horticultural sector as well as regulators, water companies, farmer groups, environmental organisations and research organisations.
- Represent SERT at meetings, events and workshops, helping to strengthen relationships and raise awareness of catchment and water resilience issues.
- Support collaborative approaches that align farm business needs with wider catchment objectives.

4. General and admin responsibilities

- Ensure all work is delivered in line with organisational policies and funding requirements.
- Maintain accurate records and documentation of work undertaken.
- Support wider team objectives and organisational priorities where required.
- Undertake other responsibilities appropriate to the role as agreed with the line manager.
- Any further duties where appropriate and consistent with the role's levels of responsibility, competence and risk profile.

Person Specification

Training & Experience	Essential	Desirable
Degree, professional qualification or equivalent practical experience in agriculture, horticulture, environmental management, geography, rural land management or a related discipline.	✓	
Demonstrable experience of working directly with farmers, growers, landowners or rural businesses to support improvements in land, water, environmental or business management.	✓	
Experience developing and maintaining effective partnerships across farming, environmental, water company, public sector and community stakeholders.	✓	
Experience supporting the development and delivery of projects, including planning, reporting and engagement.	✓	
Experience producing farm plans, reports or technical assessments.	✓	
Experience working in the agriculture and/or horticulture sector.		✓
Experience supporting access to agri-environment schemes, grants, private finance or nature market opportunities.		✓
Knowledge & Understanding		
Good understanding of farming and horticultural businesses, including the operational, land and water management challenges affecting the sector.	✓	
Understanding of catchment-based approaches and how land management influences river health, water resources and environmental outcomes.	✓	
Understanding of nature-based solutions and their role in improving farm resilience, water management and biodiversity.	✓	
Knowledge of agricultural policy, environmental land management schemes and rural funding mechanisms.	✓	
Knowledge of water resource management, abstraction reform and on-farm water resilience measures.		✓
Understanding of nature finance mechanisms and private investment drivers, including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Nutrient Neutrality, voluntary carbon markets, ESG requirements and other emerging environmental markets.		✓
Skills & Personal Attributes		
Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build trusted relationships and influence a range of audiences.	✓	

Strong organisational skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deliver high-quality outputs.	✓	
Good analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to identify practical opportunities and solutions.	✓	
Proactive and self-motivated with the ability to work independently and collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team.	✓	
Experience facilitating workshops, meetings or farmer discussion groups.		✓
Experience using GIS, mapping systems and spatial datasets to support land management planning and project delivery.		✓
Miscellaneous		
Commitment to equality of opportunity.	✓	
Full UK driving licence and vehicle which can be used for work purposes.	✓	
Ability to work occasional evenings and weekend if required.	✓	
Suitable, safe home working environment.	✓	