

FEATURE STORAGE

◀ Enterprise Grant (REG) for the build from the European Rural Development Programme for England. Defra was supportive of the project, in particular the innovative technology used in the store together with dual-purpose use and energy efficient techniques employed.

Trevor Sheard, farm business adviser at chartered surveyors Balfours, played a major role in the REG application process to help secure the grant.

He says: "The unique petal drying aspect of the project helped get the business through the application process."

And because the store is categorised as plant and machinery, the Bubbs were able to claim Annual Investment Allowance (AIA) capital allowance for tax purposes, he adds.

The Bubbs decided to use a



Left to right: Shropshire farmers James, Michael and Jonathan Bubb.

turnkey option provided by Crop Systems, who helped design, manage and build the store and oversaw the whole process through an on-site project manager.

The project started with some 'blue sky' discussions between Ray Andrews, managing director of Crop Systems and Michael Bubb in order to ensure the new facility could meet the storage, drying and processing requirements of the two crops.

The 2014 store is designed to store potatoes in bulk and petals in boxes. A tapered air tunnel down the centre splits the storage area in two, with an airtight steel door added at the back of the store to allow easy manoeuvrability of the forklift when petal boxes need to be moved.

System

The interior access system allows the store manager to move boxes around without

having to open the main doors, thereby keeping the heat in.

Adjoining the main store is a large packing shed and storage area, which also has an interior access door leading to the main store.

Crop Systems commercial manager Craig Wilkinson says: "This is the second tapered tunnel we have done, but it has a different configuration.

"Because of it being a dual-use store, the tunnel is narrower to allow even airflow to cater for flower drying."

In order to dry flowers, which, like potatoes, need high ventilation rates, the store's lateral vents have been adapted with splayed ends, closest to the air tunnel. Boxes of petals will be dried on the laterals, where they are wider, to increase ventilation.

The under-floor lateral vents are designed to create a funnel effect, distributing airflow