

Regenerative, sustainable and resilient: the future of farming in Wales

Overview

Since 2016 the Welsh food and agriculture industry has had to respond to an ever more challenging operational context. The UK's first Food Security Report concludes that "The biggest medium to long term risk to the UK's domestic production comes from climate change and other environmental pressures like soil degradation, water quality and biodiversity (loss)."

Wales' food sovereignty and food system resilience is jeopardised by local and global climate impacts and increasing global social disruptions. Change is required to restore nature and our natural resources, secure net zero food production, and to better connect production with all domestic needs.

Mounting evidence shows that both nature and the wider environment are being negatively impacted across Wales by a range of pressures, from climate change and urbanisation to unsustainable farming and fishing practices. None of our ecosystems have been found to be resilient and one in six of our species are at risk of extinction. We must take urgent action now and this Senedd term may be the last opportunity to address the nature and climate crisis for future generations. The Agriculture (Wales) Bill(s) and the Sustainable Farming Scheme represent important opportunities to tackle these crises.

Wales Environment Link and the Nature Friendly Farming Network want the Agriculture Bill(s) to:

- set a clear deadline and transitional plan for ending direct payments that are not linked to sustainable outcomes;
- set a clear and unambiguous transition for the introduction of a Sustainable Farming Scheme that works on the principle of public money for positive environmental outcomes (public goods); and
- set an effective regulatory baseline, backed by fair and clear civil and legal sanctions, that all farmers, land managers and landowners must comply with to access the Scheme.







We want the Sustainable Farming Scheme to support farmers to become more sustainably profitable and deliver more diverse, more resilient and more wildlife-friendly farming alongside producing sustainable food by:

- supporting farms to adopt practices that restore nature (including collaborative actions for biodiversity at a landscape/catchment scale) reduce air and water pollution, soil degradation and support agriculture's contribution to achieving net zero;
- enabling nature-based solutions to flooding and carbon storage;
- applying the principle of food sovereignty – enabling more mixed and locally owned agriculture, horticulture and forestry; and
- supporting improved and responsible access to the countryside, enabling current and future generations to benefit from nature, our special landscapes and beautiful countryside and boosting farm tourism.

Our event

We are bringing together some of the farmers in Wales who are leading the way in nature friendly farming whilst producing sustainable and nutritious food. We want to highlight their excellent work and provide a platform to discuss how Welsh Government can better support these farmers and those who want to start introducing nature and climate friendly farming practices.

Our thanks to NFFN farmers Rhys Evans, Sorcha Lewis, Sam Keynon, Hywel Morgan and Tony Davies for joining us and sharing their story with us today.

Thanks to Sue Pritchard, Chief Executive Officer of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission for chairing our panel, and thanks to the Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd and Rachel Sharp, CEO of Wildlife Trusts Wales, for joining our nature friendly farmers on the panel.

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