



**Title of Meeting:** Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Sub-Group on Agricultural Pollution

**Date of Meeting:** 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018

**Venue:** Gelli Aur College  
Farm, Carmarthen

**Present:** Zoe Henderson (NRW Board Member and Chairperson)  
Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU Cymru)  
Bernard Griffiths (FUW)  
Dennis Matheson (Tenant Farmers Association)  
Sara Jenkins (Menter a Busnes)  
Stephen Bradley (DCWW)  
Creighton Harvey (Carmarthenshire Fishermens' Federation)  
Andrew Chambers (Welsh Government)  
Bob Vaughan (NRW)  
Marc Williams (NRW)  
Brian Pawson (NRW)  
Matt Lowe (NRW)  
Jeremy Frost (Welsh Government)  
Luke Davies (Welsh Government)  
Kevin Taylor (Welsh Government)  
Jo Horder (HCC Meat Promotion Wales)  
Jamie McCoy (AHDB)  
Tim Bennett (CIEL) – items 13-15 only  
Emma Taylor (PLANED) – items 13-15 only

**Apologies:** Betsan John (Welsh Government)  
James Dowling (Welsh Government)  
Ryan Davies (Welsh Government)  
Laura Griffiths (Welsh Government)  
Eirwen Williams (Menter a Busnes)  
Kirsten Hughes (HCC Meat Promotion Wales)  
James Ruggeri (HCC Meat Promotion Wales)  
Sarah Hetherington (NRW)  
Geraint Weber (NRW)  
Nichola Taylor (NRW)  
Helen Haider (NRW)  
Meinir Wigley (NRW)

## 1. Welcome & Apologies

Zoe Henderson congratulated NFU Cymru and CFF on a successful Water Quality event recently held in Carmarthenshire. Around 200 farmers attended. With all the different meetings and events now being organised, the level of activity is rising, and the Sub Group is starting to drive change.

***Action Point 1: Creighton Harvey to circulate flyer from NFU Cymru/CFF event on Water Quality to all Sub Group members.***

## 2. Update on NRW Dairy Advice Project

Matt Lowe explained that eight new NRW agricultural officers have been appointed up until March 2019 with the intention for six of these officers to continue working during the following financial year. NRW staff will be providing internal induction training to the new officers during the second week of September. External training will be provided by Harper Adams in October. The new officers will visit farms alongside experienced officers until they are deemed competent to work on their own. A desktop study will be undertaken to prioritise forthcoming farm visits with the relevant criteria including stock numbers, land available and WFD status.

***Action Point 2: Matt Lowe to liaise with Sara Jenkins and Steven Bradley regarding the offers from Farming Connect and DCWW to assist induction training of new NRW agricultural officers.***

***Action Point 3: Matt Lowe to liaise with FUW and NFU Cymru regarding identification of suitable farms for induction training of new NRW agricultural officers.***

Discussion then took place regarding the reduction in the number of dairy farms, although the national herd size has increased slightly. It is important to note that larger farms with higher stock numbers do not necessarily posed the greatest risk of pollution. Additional information is within Chapter 3 of the WLMF Sub Group Interim Report.

***Action Point 4: Marc Williams to send a copy of WLMF Sub Group Interim Report to Jeremy Frost and Luke Davies.***

Some additional discussion took place on the suggestion that some farms might not see agricultural pollution incidents as a particular problem because they were already covered by insurance. Opinions expressed that although the insurance might cover costs, it would not cover any legal costs or fines if a farmer caused a pollution or breaks any regulations.

***Action Point 5: Geraint Weber to consider adding implications of farm insurance policies to the specification for the forthcoming Root Cause Analysis Project.***

### **3. AHDB Delivery / Information for Farmers**

Jamie McCoy delivered a short presentation highlighting there are a number of AHDB resources available which many people may be unaware of. For example, AHDB have a number of different booklets on topics such as the economic benefits of managing nutrients which farmers can order in paper format or are available online. Jamie also outlined the slurry wizard programme which is available online for farmers to use. Following the input of some basic farm data, the programme can produce a simple report describing the action points relevant to that farm, including slurry storage capacity and costings for the infrastructure improvements required.

***Action Point 6: Jamie McCoy to send weblinks for all AHDB documents, slurry wizard programme etc. to Sub Group members.***

***Action Point 7: Sub Group members to contact Jamie McCoy if any additional paper copies of AHDB advisory booklet are required.***

It was noted that anyone can subscribe to the AHDB “Forage for Knowledge” monthly newsletter which provides topical information to land owners, farmers, contractors etc. This is a UK-wide newsletter and is not specific to Wales.

***Action Point 8: Sub Group members to contact Jamie McCoy if they want to add any key messages to the “Forage for Knowledge” Monthly Newsletter.***

AHDB are organising an out-wintering cattle event and are targeting South West Wales where there is a high density of dairy farms.

***Action Point 9: Sub Group members to contact Jamie McCoy regarding any farms who out-winter cattle and which would be suitable for hosting an AHDB discussion event.***

### **4. WG EU Transition Fund Update**

Brian Pawson explained that NRW has now submitted two applications to the Welsh Government’s EU Transition Fund. The project most relevant to the WLMF sub-group is called “Improving the Sustainability of Agricultural Supply Chains Through Enhancing Water Quality”. There was no time to consult with WLMF members as the submission deadline was 10<sup>th</sup> August. The aim of the project will be to provide pre-regulatory

audits to selected dairy, beef, and poultry farms including those importing organic materials being spread to land. It will build on the existing NRW dairy advice project through covering a wider range of farm types and linking with AHDB and HCC work on farm profitability to try and establish whether those farms with the greatest capacity to respond to the challenges posed by Brexit are also meeting the sustainability standards likely to be required under Brand Cymru.

Some group members raised reservations about the interpretation of the farm profitability data and the way in which this could be misinterpreted as part of the proposed NRW project. Brian Pawson explained that WG were likely to have made a decision on the project bids by mid-September. In the event that the Agricultural Supply Chains and Water Quality bid is accepted by WG there will still be plenty of time to ensure that the final project specification meets with the WLMF Sub Group objectives.

## 5. WLMF Sub Group Workplan & Projects

Brian Pawson explained that the draft Action Plan builds on the document previously circulated in June and that the comments already received from members had now been incorporated. Further comments are now required in order to ensure a clear set of actions have been recorded in relation to each of the recommendations within the WLMF Interim Report. The Action Plan will then need to be kept under regular review.

***Action Point 10: Sub Group members to send any further comments on the draft action plan (now incorporating the proposed projects for 2018/19) to Marc Williams, Helen Haider and Brian Pawson. Comments on timeline and priority for each project would be especially useful.***

***Action Point 11: Marc Williams to add additional columns covering “Action By” and “Action So Far” to the draft WLMF Sub Group Action Plan. Revised version to be circulated to Sub Group members prior to next meeting September.***

In relation to the WLMF Sub Group budget for 2018/19, three discrete projects have now been identified:

- Root Cause Analysis (Supports Recommendation 3.1)
- Nutrient Loading to Land (Supports Recommendation 3.1)
- Updating the agricultural advice available on the NRW website. (Supports Recommendation 6.4)

Sub Group members confirmed that they wished NRW to go ahead with the above three projects. A decision on whether or not to support the monitoring aspect of the BRIC's project (Supports Recommendation 5.1) would be made after the forthcoming presentation by Emma Taylor of PLANED.

Zoe Henderson confirmed that the Cabinet Secretary had not provided any further comments on the WLMF Sub Group interim report. It was agreed that this should not prevent the Sub Group from continuing with those projects already identified.

***Action Point 12: Marc Williams to organise an additional Sub Group meeting to try and finalise the WLMF Sub Group Action Plan.***

## **6. Farming Connect Agri-Pollution Delivery Programme**

Sara Jenkins confirmed that the relaunched Sustainable Production Grant (SPG) has now been announced by the Cabinet Secretary with the EoI window opening on 3<sup>rd</sup> September. The first Sustainable Farming (SF) event is on 4<sup>th</sup> September with a further 8 events taking place across Wales during September. A short scene film will be played at all the SF events and this will feature an explanation of the work of the WLMF Sub Group.

The Farming Connect (FC) film on agri-pollution has now been edited. The final slide shows the logos of all the organisations belonging to the WLMF Sub Group.

***Action Point 13: Sara Jenkins to check that TFA logo appears on last slide of the agri-pollution film.***

Six on-farm agricultural pollution events have now been confirmed as part for the FC Targeted Catchment Programme. In larger catchments both a morning and an afternoon session has been planned to manage the number of attendees expected. Contractors will be invited to all events in order to ensure that key messages are promulgated as widely as possible.

NRW staff have reviewed and provided comments on three FC factsheets. Two of the factsheets have been updated ready for printing and will be available at the SF events. The third factsheet will have to be re-written and will not be ready in time for the SF events.

Kevin Taylor then provided an update on the roll-out of the SPG and further discussion took place on the reasons why groups of famers and groups of organic farms are ranked above individual farmers and individual conventional farms in the event that two applications receive the same score. Further discussion is likely to take place at the Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC) on 13/14 September.

The SPG will be available to those farmers with pre-1991 SSAFO infrastructure, although the key point is that applicants have got to exceed 4 months storage after all work is completed and the finished slurry store must be covered. Old slurry stores cannot be upgraded unless they are already compliant with SSAFO regulations, so new

slurry stores will have to be built in many cases in order to meet the criteria. It was argued that this approach would disadvantage tenants who often find it easier to persuade landlords to let them upgrade a store. Kevin Taylor explained that he would shortly be meeting with Keith Owen (ADAS) to further discuss the issue of covered slurry storage.

Kevin Taylor also discussed the timescales during which farmers must apply and to complete all the work.

## 7. “Brexit and our Land” (WG Green Paper)

Due to time constraints “Brexit and our Land” was not discussed during the meeting.

***Action Point 14: Marc Williams to ensure “Brexit and our Land” (WG Green Paper) is on the agenda for the next Sub Group meeting.***

## 8. Arrangements for future sub group meetings

- 25 September – Pwllpeiran Upland Research Centre, Cwmystwyth, incorporating a visit to the research plots
- 11 October – WG Offices, Aberystwyth
- 7 November – WG Offices, Aberystwyth
- 12 December – FUW Offices, Aberystwyth

***Action Point 15: Marc Williams to circulate a copy of WEL’s recent letter to Zoe Henderson.***

## 9. Update on relevant diary activities

There were no updates on diary activities

## 10. Minutes from WLMF sub group meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018

***Action Point 16: Any comments regarding the draft minutes from 18<sup>th</sup> July to be sent to Marc Williams by close of play on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> August. The final version of minutes will be placed on NRW website week commencing 27<sup>th</sup> August.***

## 11. Declarations of Interest

Zoe Henderson reminded the Sub Group members to send their DoI forms to NRW if they have not already done so.

***Action Point 17: Sub Group members to send any outstanding DoI Forms to Brian Pawson, Marc Williams or Helen Haider.***

## 12. AoB

No issues were raised under this heading.

## 13. Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock

Tim Bennett (Chairman of the Board of CIEL) provided a talk on the work involved in identifying key challenges to livestock farms and providing innovative solutions in partnership with 12 UK universities. Many poultry farms are very involved with the research agenda and have implemented the latest technological developments, but beef and sheep farms are much further behind. CIEL have helped to develop substantial new research facilities across the UK with the aim of enhancing livestock production and quality across the supply chain. The key task now is to ensure that these are used to drive good research projects and programmes

***Action Point 18: Tim Bennett to provide a copy of a powerpoint summarising his CIEL presentation. Marc Williams to circulate to Sub Group members.***

## 14. BRICs Project

Emma Taylor (PLANED) provided a brief talk on the BRICs project and discussed the request for funding from the WLMF budget in order to strengthen the monitoring programme. The proposed monitoring will aim to determine whether there have been improvements to water quality as a result of specific interventions being applied within the catchment. There was a discussion whether anglers in Pembrokeshire could undertake invertebrate sampling to assist with the project in the same way as happens in Carmarthenshire.

***Action Point 19: Marc Williams to re-circulate a copy of the BRICs bid for funding from the WLMF budget along with a breakdown of costs according to the Financial Year.***

***Action Point 20: Sub Group members to provide further comments on BRICs project to Marc Williams.***

## 15. Slurry Separator System Talk & Tour

John Owen of Gelli Aur then led a tour of the Slurry Separation System with both Sub Group members and guests. The separator was not operating during the Sub Groups visit but John explained how the process worked. The separator comprises of a de-watering and purification system based on electrolysis. This is used to filter slurry and transform the water component to a suitable quality for recycling or discharging to a watercourse. The water will be monitored before being

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discharged to a watercourse and any poor-quality water which is detected will be pumped through the system for a second time. The project will evaluate the operation of the slurry separation process and determine whether it will be economically viable for the system to be made available commercially and used on farms.

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