



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

Date of Meeting: 18th July 2018

Venue: FUW Offices,
Aberystwyth

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)
Branwen Miles (CLA)
Creighton Harvey (Carmarthenshire Fishermens' Federation)
Andrew Chambers (Welsh Government)
Betsan John (Welsh Government)
Bob Vaughan (NRW)
Sarah Hetherington (NRW)
Helen Haider (NRW)
Marc Williams (NRW)
Rob McCall (NRW)
Brian Pawson (NRW)

Apologies: Jamie McCoy (AHDB)
Eirwen Williams (Menter a Busnes)
James Dowling (Welsh Government)
Ryan Davies (Welsh Government)
Laura Griffiths (Welsh Government)
Kirsten Hughes (HCC Meat Promotion Wales)
James Ruggeri (HCC Meat Promotion Wales)
Geraint Weber (NRW)
Nichola Taylor (NRW)
Matt Lowe (NRW)
Meinir Wigley (NRW)

No:	Item	Action
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1 Welcome & Apologies

Zoe Henderson welcomed Brian Pawson back to the WLMF sub group following his absence on compassionate leave. Congratulations were

extended to Branwen Miles on her new role with the European Landowners Organisation (ELO).

2 Farming Connect Agri-Pollution Delivery Programme & Film Update

The amended short film produced by Farming Connect (FC) has been circulated to the group. The film will be shown at the Royal Welsh Show (RWS) on the FC stand. Members commented that the penultimate slide shows the individual organisational logos with the final slide stating 'also supported by the WLMF sub group'. This doesn't make clear that all of the organisational logos actually represent the members of the WLMF sub group. It was not clear whether there would be an opportunity to amend this before the RWS.

Sara Jenkins showed photos of the rainwater simulator that will be on the FC stand at the RWS. The model will be annotated with figures highlighting the amount of clean water that can enter a slurry storage system if not diverted. The model will be an 8ft visual exhibition illustrating the point that properly roofed yards can reduce the need for slurry storage capacity/reduce the costs involved in spreading. It was suggested that a video should be made of the simulator in action and show this on social media.

Action Point 1: Sara Jenkins to arrange filming of the rainwater simulator and send YouTube link to the sub-group.

Discussion took place on the value of creating an FC factsheet on improved water efficiency, especially in relation to dairy farms.

Action Point 2: Bob Vaughan to circulate.

Details of the nine Sustainable Farming (SF) events are still to be confirmed. The SF events are to be at locations which can accommodate large numbers of farmers. If the events are over-subscribed, then additional events will be held. All farmers within failing waterbodies will be invited to the SF events. A further fifteen follow up on-farm events will be delivered by Keith Owen (ADAS) and Chris Duller (Grassland Advisor) from October onwards. Targeted events have already taken place in Anglesey & Gele so the emphasis will be on the other failing waterbodies.

It was agreed that NRW Officers should contact FC local development officers allocated to the relevant catchments to discuss suitable farms on which the targeted events to take place. FC do not have to use existing demonstration farms for the targeted events. There is no pre-requisite for farmers to have attended one of the SF events should they then wish to attend a targeted event.

Sara Jenkins and colleagues were thanked for re-visiting the approach to the targeted events so as to deliver a win-win outcome.

Action Point 3: Rob McCall to begin drafting guidance on the approach to regulatory issues for those NRW staff involved in advice and guidance events.

The Agrisgôp group recently created within the Gele catchment are planning to submit an application for the Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS). The group has undertaken some Root Cause Analysis (RCA) to identify the cause of elevated phosphate and bacteria within the catchment. The RCA identified land spreading of waste as the contributing factor whilst NRW previously identified the cause as stock access to watercourses. This issue needs feeding back to the local NRW staff working within the Gele catchment for further investigation.

Action Point 4: Bob Vaughan to further investigate the issues of waste to land application through asking one of NRW's waste specialists to attend the next sub-group meeting.

Action Point 5: Helen Haider to add land spreading of waste to the agenda for Aug/Sept WLMF sub-group meeting.

An RCA was also undertaken by the Trothi Agrisgôp group. This identified maize growing as the key issue within the catchment. FC have now arranged a catchment event on the under sowing of maize.

Feedback from the existing Agrisgôp groups is there is insufficient data available from NRW to pinpoint the reasons for poor water quality, the exact location of problems and whether these all relate to agriculture. The suitability of monitoring undertaken by NRW was discussed and the group were asked to feedback thoughts and ideas for improvement to NRW. It was highlighted that some farmers are keen to undertake their own monitoring within catchments and that this could be linked to a potential payment for ecosystems services (PES) scheme. It was suggested that a review could be undertaken of where NRW are currently in relation to water quality monitoring with the potential to start a collaborative monitoring programme.

Sara Jenkins stated that further RCA work will be undertaken with farmers to identify the nature of pollution problems within particular catchments.

Action Point 6: Bob Vaughan to share weblinks on the availability of cheap handheld monitoring devices that could be used by farmers to assess if water quality trends are moving in the right

direction.

Action Point 7 – Bob Vaughan to share links to NRW’s existing Diffuse Pollution Action Plan with the rest of the sub-group.

It was noted that FC will be running two more “Farming for the Future” events on 21st and 23rd August. Farmers must attend one of these meetings if they are intending to apply for a Farm Business Grant (FBG).

NRW have now reviewed FC’s clean and dirty water factsheet but many of the remaining factsheets are still to be checked. Sara Jenkins stated that FC will not be covering the issue of hot weather at the RWAS, but had issued a factsheet last week on the subject. NRW are pulling together a response regarding hot weather and water resources. FUW are also pursuing Welsh Government (WG) in relation to this issue.

The group discussed the issue of fish in distress. Members of the public are advised to contact the NRW hotline if they see signs of fish in distress.

Action Point 8: Bob Vaughan to talk to Dave Mee (NRW Fisheries Team) about sharing information on fish in distress with Farming Connect.

FC e-learning modules on nutrient management, manure management and good husbandry will be available by the end of July. It was suggested that the level of the modules might have been set too low and there would be advantages in developing packages suited to a range of abilities.

Action Point 9: Sara Jenkins to circulate temporary login details for existing FC e-learning module to all the group members so that they can try it out.

Action Point 10: Sarah Jenkins to ask Kevin Thomas of LANTRA to provide an update on the proposed training course for contractors involved in slurry spreading.

FC are holding a dairy event at Coleg Sir Gaer (Gelli Aur campus) on 31st August.

3. Response from the Cabinet Secretary to WLMF Interim Report

All members of the group have now received a copy of the Cabinet Secretary’s acknowledgment of the interim report. Further discussion took place on the merits of meeting with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss the recommendations in the report.

4. Update on the NRW Dairy Advice Project

The interview process to employ an additional 8 agricultural officers within NRW has been completed and the successful candidates should be in post by the end of August. Officers will be working closely with local FC staff to promote available FC services and ensure farmers receive the best advice. An announcement is to be made at the RWS on the launch of the Dairy Advice Project. NRW will be meeting with Laura Griffiths (Welsh Government) to discuss how the 8 new NRW advisors can work with FC.

Action Point 11: Matt Lowe to deliver a more detailed update on the NRW Dairy Advice Project at the next WLMF sub group meeting.

Action Point 12: Sarah Hetherington to liaise with Matt Lowe and ensure that details of the FC advice programme are available to the 8 new NRW advisors.

It was noted that NRW do not hold sufficient data to determine whether individual farms are at less risk of causing agricultural pollution after receiving an FC advisory visit. In relation to the development of “Earned Recognition”, it would be helpful if Menter-a-Busnes could ask farmers if they would be happy for details on agri-pollution investments to be shared with NRW.

5. WLMF sub group letter on Sustainable Production Grant (SPG)

Andrew Chambers confirmed that WLMF letter on the SPG has now been received by Gareth Wilson in WG. Ultimately it is for the Cabinet Secretary to make the final decision on the SPG eligibility criteria.

Andrew Chambers confirmed that farmers with pre-1991 slurry stores (exempt structures) are eligible to apply for the SPG, although such stores would still need to have at least 4 months storage capacity (i.e. the exemption applies to the date of construction not the level of capacity). Sub-group members felt that the position of farmers with pre-1991 structures remained ambiguous and more clarification was needed regarding the SPG qualification requirements.

Action Point 13: Gareth Wilson (WG) to be invited to next WLMF sub-group meeting.

6. Discussion on recent reports on water quality - Wales Environment Link (WEL) Restoring our Freshwaters & World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Saving the Earth

Discussion focussed on the possibility of inviting representatives from WEL to WLMF sub-group meetings in future, especially in view of the letter previously received from James Byrne. Another possibility would

be to take evidence from WEL as part of a forthcoming meeting. Possibly a visit to the Gwent Living Levels Project could be combined with a future sub-group meeting. It was noted that the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act requires all decisions on stakeholder group membership to be adequately documented.

Action Point 14: Brian Pawson & Zoe Henderson respond to WEL in relation to their recent report on water quality and request for WLMF sub-group membership.

Zoe Henderson reported that Julie Finch of 2 Sisters Food Group had also asked to join the WLMF sub-group and an informal discussion is being arranged during the RWAS. It was suggested that it would be more appropriate for a meat industry trade body attend the sub-group rather than individual companies. In this context, HCC are already members of the WLMF sub group.

It was mentioned that Dr Stephen Marsh-Smith of Afonydd Cymru is also interested in joining the WLMF sub group. Dr Marsh-Smith has been advised to submit any request by writing directly to the chair of the sub-group.

Members of the CFF recently attended a Carmarthenshire County Council meeting on agriculture and land use planning along with Afonydd Cymru (AC). A follow up meeting is being planned by Stephen Marsh-Smith who is also in discussion with Gareth O'Shea of NRW.

Creighton Harvey has provided a short appraisal of the reports prepared by WEL and WWF.

Action Point 15: Other sub-group members to feedback any comments on the WEL and WWF reports to Helen Haider/Marc Williams.

Action Point 16: NRW to cross reference the recommendations in the WLMF interim report with any recommendations in the WEL & WWF reports to ensure nothing has been overlooked.

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

Discussion took place whether the WLMF sub group should provide a combined response to the Green Paper in addition to the individual responses from member organisations. It was agreed that the WLMF should provide a succinct response focussed on those elements of the consultation that relate directly to the sub-group's previous report.

Action Point 17: Helen Haider to ensure the Green Paper is on the agenda for the next sub-group meeting.

8. Regulatory Recommendations within the WLMF Interim Report

Rob McCall highlighted that the work of the WLMF sub group has been referenced in the recent WG consultation on the Green Paper. NRW are working collaboratively with WG on regulatory issues and Chapter 7 of the consultation aligns with the recommendations in the WLMF sub-group's Interim report. The consultation doesn't mention when any regulatory changes can be expected, but a further statement on this issue has been promised for the autumn. The Cabinet Secretary has not made any statement in relation to the NVZ, but the consultation flags the role for Basic Measures. The WLMF sub-group still has a significant role to play through working on the development of the regulatory recommendations within the Interim Report.

Development control (land use planning) issues were flagged in the Interim Report and both NRW and the WLMF sub-group need to work with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to input into the next round of Local Development Plans (LDP's). Development control should be seen as an enabling process that assists farmers with making proper provision to reduce the risk of pollution, rather than one that reduces engagement and promotes the use of retrospective planning applications. The planning surgeries provided by Farming Connect have a part to play, but local authorities also need to consider the nutrient loadings arising from all farms in catchment as part of considering their decisions on individual applications

Action Point 18: Creighton Harvey and Rob McCall to discuss representation at forthcoming Carms CC, Afonydd Cymru, CFF, NRW meeting. Outcome from this meeting could be used as a basis for opening discussion with the WLGA.

Dennis Matheson stated that the Welsh Government is working on model clauses for tenancy agreements, clarifying who is responsible for slurry storage requirements. Draft text should be available by the autumn.

It was agreed that the sub-group needs to progress its gap analysis work in relation to the existing regulatory landscape. This work will be critical to any WLMF response to the WG Green Paper.

Action Point 19: Rob McCall to follow up existing WLMF gap analysis on regulation.

9. EU Transition Fund Opportunity

The Welsh Government EU Transition Fund is designed to assist all sectors across Wales in preparing for Brexit. Investments made from the European Transition Fund should be:

- Additional to ongoing activity already underway, leveraging additional resources where possible;
- Additional to investments/compensation from the UK

Government;

- Strategic, well-founded and with clear potential to add value, supporting collaboration across sectors;
- Wherever possible, distributed using existing Welsh Government funding channels with existing organisations active in the identified areas

NRW have been discussing with WG how to formulate a successful bid on behalf of the WLMF as well as wider issues around sustainable land management (SMNR) post Brexit. A further WG/NRW meeting will be held shortly. There may be an opportunity to build a WLMF bid around the recommendations in the interim report – highlighting how tackling agricultural issues will improve Welsh environmental performance and hence make supply chains more resilient. In this context, Sarah Hetherington mentioned that some of the WLMF recommendations were now being taken forward as part of the developmental work being undertaken on Brand Cymru.

Action Point 20: Bob Vaughan to circulate further information regarding the EU Transition Fund project proposal.

Action Point 21: All sub-group members to send comments on EU Transition Fund proposal to Bob Vaughan.

Action Point 22: Helen Haider/Marc Williams to ensure there is an agenda item at the next sub group meeting to discuss the bid to the EU Transition Fund.

Action Point 23: Bob Vaughan to formulate bid to EU Transition Fund from the WLMF project proposal.

It was highlighted that the EU Transition Fund can't be used for something that WG should be already be delivering as part of its existing responsibilities.

A number of the recommendations in the WLMF Interim Report have already been identified as suitable for funding under the NRW's previous "unfunded burdens" bid to Welsh Government. Any recommendations that already have enough funding available will need to be excluded from the WLMF's bid to the EU Transition Fund.

Action Point 24: Helen Haider to finalise list of proposed WLMF projects under the NRW unfunded burdens bid and circulate to the rest of the sub-group.

10. Disclosure of WLMF sub group minutes

Following the publication of the WLMF interim report and the creation of a dedicated page on the NRW website, it was agreed that all records of future meetings (starting with the one on 18/07/18) should be placed in

the public domain.

Action Point 25: All sub-group members to review draft minutes from 18th July to ensure accuracy and use of a suitable style prior to publication.

11. Arrangements for future sub group meetings

- 22 August 2018- Coleg Sir Gar, Gelli Aur campus, incorporating a visit to the slurry separation system
- 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

It was agreed that a meeting or joint site visit with WEL members should form part of a future meeting. A representative from the Building Resilience in Catchment (BRICS) project should also be invited to speak at a forthcoming meeting.

12. Update on relevant diary activities

Zoe Henderson and Bernard Griffiths are speaking at the DCWW Independent Environmental Advisory Panel (IEAP) meeting in Cardiff on 19th July.

Creighton Harvey will be talking to the CFF members about the WLMF interim report on 2nd August.

NFU Cymru have been using the County Shows to survey farmers about their attitudes to water quality. Farmers attending the Monmouth Show were also given a free USB stick with information about water quality issues.

13. Minutes from WLMF sub group meeting on 21st June 2018

All previous action points have either been completed or are in hand.

14. AOB

It was noted that page 6 of the WLMF interim report states that a more detailed set of recommendations will be published by the end of the year. NRW's draft proposals on how to take forward each of the recommendations has already been circulated and a number of sub-group members have provided detailed comments.

Action Point 26: Meinir Wigley to arrange an interview/article on the work that the WLMF sub-group is proposing to carry out in future.

Andrew Chambers explained that Jeremy Frost (WG Fisheries team) would be interested in attending future sub-group meetings.

Action Point 27: Helen Haider/Marc Williams to invite Jeremy Frost to a future meeting.

It was suggested that it would be worth trying to meet with the Cabinet Secretary as a way of following up her recent letter to the chair of the sub-group.

Action Point 28: Zoe Henderson/Brian Pawson to invitation for Cabinet Secretary to meet with members of the WLMF sub group.

A WLMF sub-group email address has now been created and will be added to the NRW website. Any feedback/comments arising from the interim report can be sent to this mailbox which will be managed by Helen Haider and Marc Williams.

Action Point 29: Marc Williams to circulate details of WLMF sub-group email address.

Action Point 30: All to publicise the WLMF interim report on social media.
