

Welsh Government

Progress on Agriculture & Land Management Policy, 21 September

This is a summary guidance note produced by CLA Cymru

Forward Plan

The Welsh Government intends to lay the Agriculture (Wales) Bill before the Senedd in the spring of 2022. The provisions it will include are:

- **Sustainable Land Management**
(SLM) and future support (including transition). SLM will be established as the overarching principle for future agricultural policy, including future support. The Agriculture Bill will also provide the powers to establish, administer and close schemes, which enable and support the delivery of SLM. This will include the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). It will also provide the framework to support the transition from the Basic Payment Scheme (and other rural development schemes) to future schemes.
- **Sunset powers**
WG intend to legislate through the Agriculture Bill on those provisions which were taken for the Welsh Ministers through the Agriculture Act 2020 (England) and will expire ('sunset') on 31 December 2024.
- **Tenancies**
WG intends to take regulation-making powers through the Agriculture Bill to enable tenants of Agricultural Holding Act 1986 tenancies to refer to dispute resolution requests for landlord's consent, to activities that are restricted under the terms of their tenancy agreement or requests for a variation of terms, where that request relates to the tenant accessing Welsh Government financial assistance schemes.
- **Forestry** WG will include powers within the Agriculture Bill to ensure the Welsh Ministers retain the power to review and amend Environmental Impact Assessment thresholds. They will include provisions in the Bill amending the Forestry Act 1967 to allow Welsh Ministers to add conditions to felling licenses, and to allow felling licenses to be amended, suspended or revoked after licenses have been granted. This is a matter which CLA Cymru continues to seek further developments.
- **Snares** WG will bring forward legislation to amend the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ban the use of snares and glue traps.
- **National Minimum Standards and Civil Sanctions** WG intends to reduce the regulatory burden on farmers. The Government wants to make it easier for farmers to understand what they must do to comply with the law through the introduction of National Minimum Standards. They want to ensure enforcement is proportionate to the severity of the offence and avoid the criminalisation of farmers for minor offences.

Welsh Government Forward Plan/Timeline

The table below shows the timeline WG aim to keep to before the full roll out of the new SFS beginning 1st January 2025. This is slightly longer than the expected 2024 but ensuring the policy is

practical is vital. There are is significant opportunity for us to influence by putting members forward for co-design, external affairs work as the Bill goes through the Senedd and work with officials and other stakeholders.

What	When	Comments
Publish a draft of the Sustainable Farming Scheme alongside the Agriculture (Wales) Bill. Launch of improved woodland creation scheme. Launch of other interventions to prepare farmers for transition.	2022	This will take into account an economic analysis of the SFS and pave the way for the next stage of co-design for the final scheme. Woodland scheme will build on positives of previous Glastir programmes. Interventions are likely to include further infrastructure support grants, advice, and guidance.
Final consultation of SFS and transitional plans to move away from BPS after Bill receives Royal Assent.	2023	WG make the point this depends on receiving sufficient funding from UK Government.
Outreach programme to prepare farmers and landowner for the move to the SFS. Farm Sustainability Reviews will begin as set out in previous consultations.	2024	Who carries out these reviews is not decided presently. Prior to full roll out testing of aspects of new scheme in addition to new pilots must take place.
Final scheme rolled out with transitional arrangements set out for those moving from BPS to SFS	January 1 st 2025	This date is later than anticipated but does provide time for thorough testing and buy in from farmers and landowners.

Summary of responses for the Agriculture (Wales) Bill.

Analysis from an external research agency.

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-09/agriculture-wales-bill-summary-of-responses.pdf>

Welsh Government response from Agricultural Tenancy Consultation 2019

<https://gov.wales/agricultural-tenancy-reform>

Environmental and Rural Affairs Modelling Programme Report

This report explores the use of a 'logic-chain' approach that shows how land management actions can affect the resilience of ecosystems, and the benefits ecosystem goods and services provide to people.

<https://erammp.wales/en/resources>