



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

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**Date of Meeting:** 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

**Venue:** Welsh Government  
Offices  
Rhodfa Padarn  
Llanbadarn Fawr  
Aberystwyth  
SY23 3UR

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**Present:** Zoe Henderson (NRW Board member & Chairperson)  
Dennis Matheson (Tenant Farmers Association)  
Sara Jenkins (Menter a Busnes)  
Steven Bradley (DCWW)  
Creighton Harvey (Carmarthenshire Fishermen's Federation)  
Bernard Griffiths (FUW)  
Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU Cymru)  
Lorna Davis (NFU Cymru)  
Stephen Marsh-Smith (Wales Environment Link)  
James Dowling (WG)  
Helen Haider (NRW)  
Marc Williams (NRW)  
Matt Lowe (NRW)  
Sarah Hetherington (NRW)  
Geraint Weber (NRW)  
Meinir Wigley (NRW)  
Kate Snow (United Utilities)  
Liz Franks (Hafren Dyfrydwy)

**Apologies:** Andrew Chambers (WG)  
Spencer Conlon (WG)  
Bob Vaughan (NRW)  
Rhianne Jones (CLA)  
Luke Davies (WG)  
Jamie McCoy (AHDB)  
Kirsten Hughes (HCC)  
Rob McCall (NRW)

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**Also in attendance:** Kevin Thomas (LANTRA) items 1-4 only  
Betsan John (WG) items 7-13 only

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**No: Item**

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## 2. Welcome and Apologies

Zoe Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted how committed the members were to the work of reducing agricultural pollution and raising awareness. Liz Franks from Hafren Dyfrdwy was welcomed as a new member of the WLMF Sub-Group. Zoe also welcomed Kevin Thomas, LANTRA to the meeting who would be providing an update on the Technical Awards in Safe Use and Application of Slurry and Farm Yard Manure Training Course.

## 3. Presentation on “Technical Awards in Safe Use & Application of Slurry & Farm Yard Manure Training Course”

The training course is for all farmers and land managers, not just for agricultural contractors. Kevin Thomas of LANTRA thanked Sarah Hetherington, Steven Bradley and Lorna Davis for their input into the course content. A pilot approach was taken to the course in England and has now been translated into the Welsh context. The training package is now available on the Farming Connect training list and the application window is open until the end of June. Those applicants that apply for the course are entitled to 80% funding via Farming Connect. A pilot of the course is to be launched in Wales. The course content is still being adjusted. All participants receive a workbook and need to demonstrate they've attended the course and understood the content. Attendees receive a certificate and contractors can use this to show to farmers when operating on their site.

The course content will cover:

- Understanding the benefits of Nutrient Management Plans and Risk Maps
  - Consequences of not using and managing slurry and manures properly
  - Legislation and guidance relating to protecting the environment and water systems
  - The environmental impacts of slurry and manures and how they can be overcome
  - Safe storage, transport and security
  - Health and safety and dealing with accidents
  - Spreading machinery
  - Minimising ammonia emissions during application
  - Working within NVZ's or near water courses
  - The New Farming Rules for Water
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- Record keeping

In addition to the class-based work, students will undertake practical elements and look at spreading equipment etc. Examples of good and bad practice will be shown. The course will cover what to do in the event of an incident and will also include poultry manure, sewage sludge and digestate in addition to organic manures. The final course content will be available in a few weeks and will be circulated to members.

***AP1: Circulate workbook and course documents from Kevin Thomas to the WLMF Sub-Group members (Helen Haider/Marc Williams, NRW)***

#### **4. Questions for Kevin Thomas, LANTRA and discussion regarding contractors**

A discussion took place regarding the course content and whether NVZ derogations were covered. It was clarified that this aspect would be included within the nutrient management part of the course. A query was raised as to whether contractor management would be included in the content. It was highlighted that contractor management did not necessarily prevent pollution but that the responsibilities of the contractor and farmer would be included in the course content.

Kate Snow stated that United Utilities were happy to promote the course and fund it on the River Dee catchment in England and would discuss this further with Kevin Thomas.

Stephen Marsh-Smith highlighted that diffuse pollution is also a problem and not just from point sources. Kevin clarified that this aspect would be covered under the 'Safe Storage' part of the course and would be translated into financial terms to highlight the benefit of reducing nutrient losses.

Discussion took place regarding potential additions to the course such as adding guttering, soil compaction from vehicles etc. Kevin confirmed that soil health is to be added to the course content. Matt Lowe raised the importance of vehicle management which could perhaps be added to the risk mapping element of the course.

Rachel Lewis-Davies welcomed the course and highlighted that it's an important start to developing understanding and that perhaps additional modules could be added in the future. The importance of having adequate time for questions and answers was raised. Kevin stated that the pilot would gauge how much time to allow for questions and answers within the course and that a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document would be created. The course content would be modified as and when required.

Dennis Matheson highlighted that farmers do not want any more

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compulsory tests but stated that the course could perhaps be made compulsorily for contractors. It was raised as to whether undertaking the course was a public good and that those taking the course could be paid to do it.

Lorna Davis is linking in with Kevin Thomas in relation to how the course fits in with earned recognition. Lorna highlighted that the course is a good starting point and provided an opportunity to add modules that link to earned recognition. The intention with earned recognition is that farmers get an award and something similar to continuous professional development (CPD) points.

Bernard Griffiths confirmed that FUW are happy to assist with the development of the course pilot. It was raised that there is no data regarding exactly where slurry is being spread which could be used to target the courses and that contractors and their employees should be encouraged to attend the course.

Kate Snow highlighted her concerns regarding contractors being qualified to spread slurry after undertaking a 3-4-hour course and should have more detailed knowledge of the subject area. A query was raised as to whether water companies undertake a similar training programme with their spreading contractors. The spreading of sewage sludge is heavily regulated under the Sludge Use in Agriculture Regulations which prohibits the sludge from sewage treatment plants from being used in agriculture unless specified requirements are fulfilled, including the testing of the sludge and the soil.

It was raised that not all land managers understand the consequences of poor practise. Kevin stated that the wider consequences of poor practise would be covered in the course content including impacts on fish populations. It was suggested that case studies could be used to further illustrate the point regarding these wider consequences. An e-learning course is also planned with the intention to raise awareness levels and could be included as a pre-course requisite free of charge.

Kevin Thomas clarified that the course is designed as an entry point level and the desire is for it to be attractive for farmers to attend and not to discourage attendance with complicated and detailed course content but accepted that further courses needed development for contractors.

A discussion took place regarding how a contract between a farmer and a contractor is drawn up. Concerns were raised that having no formal contract in place brings uncertainty regarding where responsibility lies and could result in pollution.

It was highlighted that the industry is not there yet in terms of everyone being able to access the provision of nutrient management planning, risk mapping and the associated technology. Also, the course links in with the Brexit and Our Land and earned recognition work too. There is also

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potentially an opportunity to tie in the course with the next Sustainable Production Grant (SPG) window.

The pilot is estimated to start in six weeks. Applicants should apply by the end of June and once approved have nine months to complete the course. The estimated cost of the course is around £200 with 80% funding. Farmers will need to register with Farming Connect first if they wish to undertake the course. Farmers within the pilot will not have to pay for the course which is funded by WG.

Discussion took place around how we ensure farmers apply for the course and potentially using Farming Connect and industry representatives to promote the course. Farming Connect and LANTRA will undertake work to ensure contractors they know of are targeted to undertake the course. The need to deliver positive communications regarding the course was highlighted and the need for clear timescales.

Pilots for the course will be run with 15 famers/contractors within each area potentially taking place at Gelli Aur, Glynlifon and Pendine. Trainers for the course are currently being recruited and a tender for a training framework has also been undertaken.

It was raised that the course should link to the new regulatory requirements. WG have already fed into the course content regarding the new agri regulatory requirements. Discussion took place as to whether farmers who'd attended the course would be looked upon more favourably in the event of a pollution incident. NRW would still have to follow their regulatory procedure and whether the course had been attended may not be a factor in consideration of a potential outcomes, and the farmer/contractor would have to demonstrate that they had followed the Code of Good Agricultural Practise (CoGAP).

Kevin explained that across the board around 70% of the courses are attended even when farmers attendance has been approved and reminders have been given. Kate Snow suggested that a video be produced as part of the pilot to encourage uptake from farmers.

***AP2: Provide Kevin Thomas (LANTRA) with guidance on digestate and sewage sludge produced in a leaflet (Kate Snow, UU)***

***AP3: Develop and provide standard lines for members to promote the LANTRA course (Kevin Thomas, LANTRA, Meinir Wigley, NRW)***

***AP4: Encourage farmers/contractors to attend the LANTRA course (All)***

***AP5: Confirm dates for landowners to apply by and notification for eligibility for the training course (Sara Jenkins, Menter a Busnes)***

***AP6: Explore the potential of creating a video or similar from the***

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***pilot study to be used to encourage others to undertake the course (Kevin Thomas, LANTRA)***

***AP7: Circulate details of the course pilot to members (Kevin Thomas, LANTRA)***

## **5. Royal Welsh Show/Communications**

Meinir Wigley explained that NRW's theme for the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS) is forest and trees. Workshops with the forestry sector will take place. Farmers who've received a visit from a NRW Dairy Officer will be invited plus those that live around the LIFE bog project areas.

Discussion took place regarding how the WLMF Sub-Group would be taking part in the RWAS as a forum and what individual members would be doing. Meinir highlighted the importance of raising awareness of the new authorisations for abstraction of water and the need to re-register waste exemptions for agriculture. Discussion took place regarding the potential for farmers to re-register their waste exemptions at the RWAS.

The potential to engage with new entrants at the RWAS was discussed. WG stated that they would not be doing anything specifically in relation to the new agri regulations at the RWAS but would be promoting the second Brexit and Our Land consultation and new authorisations (for abstraction of water).

Meinir confirmed that the Minister Lesley Griffiths has been invited to the NRW stand. Rachel Lewis-Davies raised that the WLMF Sub-Group should also extend an invite to the Minister.

Farming Connect are promoting their clinics and nutrient management planning advice at the RWAS. Farmers who have received advice via Farming Connect will be invited to their stand.

Zoe Henderson suggested a WLMF Sub-Group newsletter be drafted to promote the work of the forum.

Discussion took place regarding how to engage with hard to reach farmers. Geraint Weber raised that the water companies had undertaken some work in relation to this by carrying out focussed work within communities to identify barriers to engaging. Lorna Davis highlighted the pressures that some farmers are facing and are in a period of uncertainty due to the announcement regarding the new agri regulations. NFU Cymru stated that they had signed up to the regulatory recommendations within the Interim Report on Agricultural Pollution and remain committed to delivering these.

NFU Cymru will be displaying their new model created to engage with farmers in a practical way about the concept of nutrient management

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which will show examples of good and bad practise. There will be information regarding water quality alongside this. Publications and ear tags are being developed with key messages which could be linked to the WLMF Sub-Group. Meinir Wigley and Lorna Davis will progress the idea of an item that can be given away to farmers at the RWAS with key water quality messages.

***AP8: Draft 2-page newsletter on the work of the WLMF Sub-Group (Helen Haider/Marc Williams, NRW)***

***AP9: Progress idea of creating a free item that can be given to farmers at the RWAS (Meinir Wigley, NRW/Lorna Davis, NFU Cymru)***

***AP10: Provide ideas for raising awareness of the WLMF Sub-Groups work and getting across key messages to Meinir Wigley (All)***

## **6. Dairy Project Update**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, the Dairy Project officers visited 374 dairy farms (approximately 22% of all dairy farms in Wales). The data from the visits has been collated but not all farm data has been entered onto the recording system yet. The aim now is to visit all dairy farms within 3 years using the additional officers who are being recruited (increasing the number of dairy officers from 8 to 12). More visits have been undertaken in Carmarthenshire as they have two dairy officers.

Matt Lowe presented on the data collected from the 259 visits entered on the recording system. The statistics showed compliance levels of farms in terms of slurry storage capacity in relation to the 4-month storage requirement under the SSAFO Regulations with those above and below the minimum legal requirement. It was raised that there may be other factors influencing the statistics such as those farmers impacted by TB restrictions, changes in business models etc. The benefit of linking the data to tenancy arrangements and geography was raised to add clarity to the root causes of the compliance levels.

The data was based on the responses given by farmers, rainfall was obtained from NRW hydrologists and to calculate storage the M5 120 rainfall data was used (rainfall figures that predict the quantity that will occur once in every five years over a four-month period). The data showed no apparent correlation between storage capacity and herd size. The benefit of exploring the correlation further was highlighted.

The presentation showed storage capacity in relation to the age of the slurry storage facility indicating that exempt stores were more likely to be non-compliant with the SSAFO regulations requirement for capacity. Post-1991 slurry storage facilities showed some improved compliance. Also shown was the nutrient loading from livestock in relation to the

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250kg/ha/N limit within CoGAP and the 170kg/ha/N limit within the NVZ regulations.

Those farmers visited as part of the project will receive a report although not all reports have yet been sent out. Matt Lowe will confirm exactly how many of the 374 dairy farms visited have had their reports.

Zoe Henderson highlighted that the statistics for the dairy project visits were very important in terms of understanding compliance levels but that there's always a desire to have more statistics to better understand factors influencing the results.

It was agreed that further work on the dairy project data with the NRW statistician is needed however something should be drawn up quickly to present to the Minister for her to consider as available evidence in relation to the new agri regulations.

Bernard Griffiths raised the he'd received some feedback from farmers in relation to the dairy project visits with some concerns regarding the capacity of the officers to advise on what improvements are needed on farm. It was highlighted that those farmers requiring significant works are directed to Farming Connect for further advise.

***AP11: NRW Statistician to look at the data collected from the dairy project to determine any correlation between herd size and storage capacity (Marc Williams, NRW)***

***AP12: Break down the non-compliant SSAFO structures data to geographical areas (Matt Lowe, NRW)***

***AP13: Circulate the dairy project update presentation to the Sub-Group once completed (Helen Haider, NRW)***

***AP14: Add explanation/caveat to the dairy project data/report (Sarah Hetherington, NRW)***

***AP15: Find out how many farm reports have been issued to farmers and feedback to members (Matt Lowe, NRW)***

***AP16: Add additional data from remaining farm visits to report (Matt Lowe, NRW)***

***AP17: Complete report and additional statistics before the next WLMF Sub-Group meeting in June (Matt Lowe, NRW)***

## **7. Agricultural Pollution Statistics**

There has been no clear correlation with the all Wales agri pollution incident data and average rainfall. The data presented focussed on the Carmarthenshire area with the number of pollution incidents originating

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from fields and average rainfall on a quarterly basis between January 2010 and December 2018. It was unclear as to whether there was a correlation and further work is to be undertaken with the statistician regarding this. The data does not indicate cause and effect and doesn't indicate when the slurry was spread.

The initial reason for undertaking the agri pollution statistics work was to demonstrate any impact of the advice work being undertaken. The J-curve model used by the Schumacher Institute in relation to the root cause analysis demonstrated that the situation with regards to pollution incidents may get worse before they get better. Discussion took place regarding the importance of highlighting risk, utilising tools such as SCIMAP to demonstrate flows, drainage etc.

Kate Snow raised that United Utilities never found any correlation between pollution events and rainfall regarding their work on the River Dee due to the presence of too many variables.

A table was shown with a breakdown of the causes of the pollution events and it was raised that this could be used potentially to decide where to focus advice. It was also raised that it should be reported back to NRW officers the importance of correct reporting in relation to incidents and what the data is used for to ensure incidents are correctly categorised.

***AP18: Produce Agricultural Pollution Statistics Report (including table of causes) and circulate to the Sub-Group before being published (Marc Williams, NRW)***

***AP19: Include other agri sector data statistics other than dairy (Marc Williams, NRW)***

***AP20: Contact Marc Williams with any additional statistical analyses requests regarding the agri pollution incident data (All)***

***AP21: Amalgamate incident cause table into common types e.g. infrastructure, field etc. (Marc Williams, NRW)***

## **8. Agricultural Regulation Update**

It was raised that the Sub-Group members are not receiving the feedback they would like from WG in relation to the new agri regulations and that the minutes and updates on actions from the last Task and Finish Group meeting on agri regulations held in March are still outstanding. ADAS are to submit the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) in June to WG. After this, ADAS will come to a future WLMF Sub-Group meeting to present on the RIA.

No clarification has been provided to the Sub-Group in relation to the available evidence that can be submitted to the Minister for her to

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consider nor the timeline to submit the information. It was highlighted by WG that the onus is on individual members to submit their evidence as soon as possible to WG. Betsan John raised that there is an opportunity for the Sub-Group members to submit evidence and discuss the RIA once ADAS present to the group which can hopefully take place at Julys meeting. It was raised that other members from the Task and Finish group on agri regulations may wish to attend the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> July.

A water update was provided by James Dowling including details of the next round of River Basin Management Planning (RBMP) which is currently being undertaken as part of the requirement of the Water Framework Directive (WFD). There was a reminder to the sub-group with regards to raising awareness of the need for those abstracting more than 20 cubic metres of water per day to apply for a new authorisation.

***AP22: Confirm with ADAS that they can attend the July WLMF Sub Group meeting (Betsan John, WG)***

## **9. WLMF Sub-Group Priorities**

The WLMF Sub-Group members were asked to list what their priorities were for 2019 and then vote for five of the listed priorities. The top five items with the most votes would become the priorities for the group for 2019 and were identified as:

- 1) Increasing knowledge of farmers regarding water pollution
- 2) Engaging with hard to reach farmers
- 3) Innovation
- 4) How public goods, new agri regulations and earned recognition integrate
- 5) Improving access to grants, having an enabling planning system, securing legislative compliance and operating procedures providers/advisors (all of these items received the same number of votes)

## **10. Arrangements for future sub-group meetings**

ADAS will potentially attend the July WLMF Sub-Group meeting to present on the RIA. An innovation session has been provisionally booked for Junes sub-group meeting.

***AP23: Provide an update on the Catskills trip (New York) at the next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019 (Bob Vaughan, NRW)***

## **11. Minutes from WLMF sub group meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May & outstanding Action Points**

The minutes from the last sub-group meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May were circulated to members. It was raised that members with any outstanding actions should provide an update and try to complete them asap.

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Outstanding action points from March and Aprils WLMF Sub-Group meeting provided to members on a separate document.

***AP24: Provide any amendments to the minutes from the last meeting to Helen Haider by 4<sup>th</sup> June(All)***

***AP25: Upload minutes from the last WLMF Sub-Group meeting onto the NRW webpage (Helen Haider, NRW)***

## **12. Update on relevant diary activities**

There is a Welsh Grassland event being held on 6<sup>th</sup> June. On 7<sup>th</sup> June NFU Cymru are holding a Sustainable Agriculture event at Pentre Farm, Merthyr Cynog, Brecon to which WLMF Sub-Group members are invited.

## **13. AoB**

A Skype meeting has been arranged for members to discuss the progress report on 6<sup>th</sup> June.

A discussion took place regarding how best to present the minutes of the meeting and whether they could be shortened to a summary of the discussions and the actions.

Dennis Matheson raised that the tenancy reform consultation is still ongoing.

Sara Jenkins is in discussions with NRW staff to look at potential host farms for the second tranche catchments for the targeted advice work.

There is a WFD consultation out on 17<sup>th</sup> June and a message regarding this will be circulated to members soon. There will be a 6-month consultation period.

Discussion took place regarding the importance of avoiding duplication between the different fora (the Wales Water Management Forum (WWMF) and the Fisheries Forum). Discussions are already taking place within NRW to avoid duplication.

***AP26: Meinir Wigley (NRW) to look at the number of hits on the WLMF website and how many view the minutes.***

***AP27: Feedback thoughts regarding the meeting minutes to Helen Haider (All)***

***AP28: Update the Wales map of catchment working with the second round of Farming Connect targeted catchments (Marc Williams/Geraint Weber, NRW)***

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***AP29: Discuss with Ceri Jones/Peter Gough, NRW from the WWMF and Fisheries Forum to provide briefings from their meetings to the WLMF Sub-Group members to avoid duplications (Sarah Hetherington, NRW)***

***AP30: Confirm whether the first round of Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS) bid applications which weren't successful will be included within the second round and feedback to members (Sara Jenkins, Menter a Busnes)***

***AP31: Attend the next WWMF meeting to highlight the work of the WLMF (Zoe Henderson)***

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