



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

Date of Meeting: 13th June 2019

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

& via Skype

Present: Zoe Henderson (NRW Board member & Chairperson)
Dennis Matheson (Tenant Farmers Association)
Sara Jenkins (Menter a Busnes)
Creighton Harvey (Carmarthenshire Fishermen's Federation)
Bernard Griffiths (FUW)
Lorna Davis (NFU Cymru)
Stephen Marsh-Smith (Wales Environment Link)
James Dowling (WG)
Helen Haider (NRW)
Marc Williams (NRW)
Sarah Hetherington (NRW)
Andrew Chambers (WG)
James Dowling (WG)
Ceri Davies (FUW)
Kirsten Hughes (HCC)

Via Skype Steven Bradley (Welsh Water)
Sophie Straiton (Welsh Water)
Matt Lowe (NRW)
Rachel Lewis-Davies (NFU Cymru)
Meinir Wigley (NRW)
Liz Franks (Hafren Dyfrydwy)

Apologies: Rhianne Jones (CLA)
Jamie McCoy (AHDB)
Geraint Weber (NRW)

No: Item

1. Welcome and Apologies

Zoe Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted that using the Skype facilities enabled those members that couldn't attend in person to still take part. Ceri Davies, Policy Officer from FUW was welcomed to the sub-group and would be attending the meetings in future.

2. Update on Catskills Mountains

Bob Vaughan gave the group a presentation regarding his recent visit to New York (NYC) to see the Catskills Mountains project which provides drinking water supply to the city.

In the early 1900s there was insufficient clean water locally to supply NYC. As happened in the UK the city looked to its rural hinterland for adequate supplies of clean water. The first reservoir was built at Ashokan in the Eastern part of the Catskill Mountains to deliver high-quality drinking water via pipeline to protect public health and quality of life in NYC. Further reservoirs followed in the Western Catskills.

The last 30 years has seen increased water quality standards in the United States. NYC has looked to influence catchment management as an alternative to enhancing its water treatment capacity. This is because it believes catchment control is a better and cheaper alternative to building and operating treatment facilities. As a consequence it has committed \$2.7 billion towards watershed protection programs. To date it has not failed to provide a water supply within the standards set by the Federal Government.

The watershed of the Catskill Mountains is variable and not unlike the Brecon Beacons. The East is heavily forested and has a higher risk of sediment erosion, the West is more agricultural. There is a fully-funded locally led programme in the watershed area with best management practises implemented at a cost of \$55 million. 151,000 acres are covered by a whole farm plan with planners visiting farms and assessing resource concerns and goals of the farmer.

On-farm improvements are undertaken by the advisory group who install infrastructure such as slurry stores, roofs, sheds and buildings. Six months slurry storage is installed on farms to accommodate the variable weather conditions in the area. Nutrient management plans are implemented on all farms where needed. Every field on each farm is mapped using LIDAR and a field assessment undertaken to identify no

spreading areas etc.

A conservation enhancement programme is part of the work to reduce run off to water, increase biodiversity and prevent erosion. Across the catchment there has been a reduction in nitrate and phosphate losses. In 2017 the agri programme reached 841 farmers and ran 37 advisory events.

The water from the catchment enters aqueducts which transport it to a reservoir before reaching NYC. There are strict measures to ensure the water quality is not impacted by e.g. animal access to the reservoir. NYC have invested in the Catskills communities ensuring that they also have adequate water supply and sewage disposal.

There are sensor stations across the catchment, including buoys on the reservoirs, to monitor water quality. As a result if there are problems, such as excessive sediment run off in a particular area, they can take immediate action to overcome the risk. For example they shut off input from one source and switch to another, or look to take better quality water from a part of a reservoir which is unaffected by pollution.

Although the agricultural programme is voluntary, farmers who don't sign-up can be subject to stringent local enforcement measures.

AP1: Circulate nutrient management planning guide shown to members (Marc Williams/Helen Haider, NRW)

AP2: Circulate copy of Catskills Mountains presentation to members (Marc Williams/Helen Haider, NRW)

3. Agricultural Regulation Update

The proposed agricultural regulations are due to come into force in January 2020 subject to the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) being undertaken by ADAS, and the Minister Lesley Griffiths considering all the available evidence. ADAS have confirmed that they'll providing a report to WG by the end June and then the Sub-Group members will be able to scrutinise it. ADAS are to be invited to a meeting with Sub-Group members to discuss the work that has taken place in relation to the RIA.

WG are currently drafting the guidance documents for the new agri regulations which will be circulated to members once complete. The TFA raised concerns regarding a lack of awareness of the new agri regulations with some believing that they are simply guidelines. Discussion took place regarding the communications work that needs to take place regarding the new regulatory requirements. Whilst the Ministers statement made on 14/11/18 regarding the new agri regulations was communicated widely, the details of the regulatory requirements have not been shared extensively. WG highlighted that

the content of the proposed agri regulations have not yet been agreed by the Minister so cannot be published until this has taken place.

NFU Cymru raised their concerns that farmers don't know about the new regulations. WG confirmed that they will liaise with the Farming Unions to ensure the details of the regulations are communicated. Consultation regarding the new agri regulations and the guidance will take place with the Sub-Group, but wider consultation will not. WG will confirm whether or not there are to be any key messages in relation to the new agri regulations to be relayed at the Royal Welsh Show (RWAS).

It was highlighted to WG the need for members to know the timeline for submitting evidence to the Minister for her to consider alongside the RIA. WG confirmed that the 'New Regulation details for Public Information' document circulated to members in January, could be shared with others outside of the forum.

AP3: Arrange meeting with ADAS to discuss the RIA (Andrew Chambers, WG/Marc Williams/Helen Haider, NRW)

AP4: Confirm minutes from the last Regulatory Task & Finish Group meeting on 21/3/19 and update on outstanding actions by 14 June (Andrew Chambers, WG)

AP5: Let Marc Williams/Helen Haider know if a copy of the 'New Regulation details for Public Information' document is required (All)

4. WLMF Sub-Group Priorities - how can we achieve:

- **Increased knowledge of farmers regarding water pollution**
- **Engaging very hard to reach farmers**

During the last WLMF Sub-Group meeting a session took place to identify the priorities of the group for the year. Zoe Henderson opened the discussion by highlighting that the group had made significant efforts to relay key messages in relation to agricultural pollution to farmers, however work is still needed to engage with hard to reach farmers.

Creighton Harvey raised that events had taken place, such as the joint NFU Cymru/CFF event at Manordeilo to engage with farmers in relation to the impacts of pollution, however anglers don't have the infrastructure to engage widely with the farming community. The Rivers Trust have 20 officers working with farmers and from the feedback there was still a lack of knowledge amongst farmers about life in streams and rivers running through their farms and that Farming Connect should include a formal input on this to farmers. Sara Jenkins indicated that members of CFF would be welcome to give an input which was welcomed by Creighton.

Farming Connect raised that the Agrisgôp groups are still taking place.

Farmers are actively engaging with the farmer-led voluntary approach to nutrient management, applications for Sustainable Management Scheme (SMS) bids etc. It has highlighted that there is no one solution to deliver a reduction in agricultural pollution and that resources are required to deliver a change.

It was highlighted that as a group we need to ensure the same key messages are going out and that we must engage with schools, colleges, young farmers and farmers wives to deliver the improvements we wish to see. Discussion took place around what we consider to be a hard to reach farmer, some of the struggles that they may be facing and an appropriate strategy to work with these farmers

Zoe Henderson attended the NFU Cymru Conference on 7 June and said she was proud of the NRW chair and the anglers and farmers there in highlighting the new approach of working together to tackle the issue of agricultural pollution.

Discussion took place regarding the need to identify all those who are going on-farm who are potential mechanisms to deliver the key messages of the group.

It was raised regarding the need to identify where organic manures were being spread and determine whether the area of spreading the material was suitable. A project specification in relation to this work area was sent out to tender before Christmas in relation to developing a GIS tool to map catchments to determine their nutrient status (i.e. whether they're at nutrient saturation or have capacity to receive nutrient inputs). No successful bids were made for the project tender however NRW are in discussions to put the project out to tender again and will feedback to the group regarding this.

It was highlighted that it is difficult to raise the subject of agri pollution as a standalone subject and that the groups messages should be weaved into other projects etc. There should be co-ordinated messages and the need to revisit the narrative of the group and refresh and documents was raised.

AP6: Share details to group of operators who have been identified as undertaking on-farm visits (Lorna Davis, NFU Cymru)

AP7: Review key messages and narrative of the group (Meinir Wigley, NRW/Stephen Marsh-Smith, WEL/Liz Franks, Hafren Dyfrydwy/Kate Snow, United Utilities)

5. WLMF Sub-Group Progress Report

A working draft of the Progress Report is to be ready by the next sub-group meeting and will link to the five key work areas highlighted within the Interim Report on Agricultural Pollution. The Progress Report will show what the group have achieved since the Interim Report with next

steps.

**AP8: Draft progress report by the next WLMF Sub-Group meeting
(Marc Williams/Helen Haider, NRW)**

AP9: Input into the draft Progress Report content (All)

6. Arrangements for future WLMF Sub-Group meetings

Lorna Davis has arranged an on-farm event in Cemaes, Anglesey on 10h July to showcase the work that the Cemaes Working Group has undertaken improve the bathing water quality. The WLMF Sub-Group will also be visiting Cemaes on 8th July with a meeting to take place afterwards in Bangor.

A visit to Merthyr Water Treatment Works is being arranged for a sub group meeting in the Autumn/Winter.

**AP10: Circulate details of WLMF Sub-Group site visit to members
(Helen Haider/Marc Williams, NRW)**

7. Minutes from the meeting on 23 May & outstanding action points

Members were provided with the minutes of the 23 May meeting and it was requested that they are checked to ensure they're correct. Zoe Henderson requested that all members try to complete any outstanding action points.

Menter a Busnes raised that they had contacted 35 agricultural contractors in relation to the Technical Awards in Safe Use & Application of Slurry & Farm Yard Manure Training Course. Meinir Wigley and Lorna Davis stated that they could explore the possibility of making a video to promote the course as a future piece of work.

Meinir Wigley raised that she was still looking into the possibility of a giveaway item that can be given out to farmers at the RWAS.

The Dairy Project report is currently being reviewed and amended to include the action items identified at the last sub group meeting.

AP11: Review minutes from 23 May meeting and send amendments to Helen Haider/Marc Williams by 5th July (All)

AP12: Ensure outstanding actions from previous sub-group meetings are completed (All)

AP13: Confirm further details and dates for the LANTRA pilot of the Technical Awards in Safe Use & Application of Slurry & Farm Yard Manure Training Course (Sara Jenkins, Menter a Busnes/Lorna

Davis, NFUC)

AP14: Explore the potential of creating a video or similar from the LANTRA pilot study to be used to encourage others to undertake the course (Meinir Wigley, NRW/Lorna Davis, NFUC)

8. Update on relevant diary activities

Zoe Henderson and Clare Pillman NRWs Chair will be attending the Dee & Clwyd ? meeting in September.

Zoe Henderson and Bob Vaughan will be undertaking a site visit on the Rhug Estate where a slurry purification system is being developed.

Sara Jenkins raised that all farmers from the targeted waterbodies would be invited to a reception at the RWAS. The results of the farmer surveys and case studies undertaken by Farming Connect are to be showcased at the RWAS.

AP15: Circulate details of waterbody event at RWAS to members (Sara Jenkins, Menter a Busnes)

9. AOB

Nothing raised under AOB.
