



Welcome

Dear AIC Members,

Welcome to the second AIC Cymru Newsletter, bringing you key updates on those issues, policies and directions that are specific to Wales.



Michael Muncey
AIC Wales Policy Manager

AIC's Cymru Committee Forum is now up and running, with Chair Gareth Davies (MD Wynnstay), Vice Chair David Evans (CCF), and members from ForFarmers, Crystalx, Wynnstay and CCF representing all the interests of AIC Cymru Members in Wales. The latest meeting agreed to adopt the more appropriate name of AIC Cymru.

At our meeting on 20 September, we considered what we would like to further see from Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme. Our response – now submitted to the scheme – is in close alignment with farming unions in Wales.

Through much of 2022 AIC has focused on keeping Welsh Government informed as to the impacts of the war in Ukraine. Unfortunately, the conflict continues,

as do the effects on the price of energy, fertiliser, general inputs, fuel, commodities and feed, all squeezing farm margins.

Our message to the Government has been clear and consistent: ensuring farmer liquidity is essential to safeguard stability during this period. AIC Cymru continues to provide valuable input on the Welsh Agri-Food Supply Chain – Ukraine Conflict forum.

The next Committee Meeting for AIC Cymru is planned for 13 February 2023

Naturally as AIC Cymru forward I will continue to forge connections with more Members and stakeholders.

As AIC Cymru continues to establish, we welcome feedback about how we can better engage, support and represent our Membership.





Landmark Agriculture Bill for Wales: Here's What You Need to Know

Welsh Government laid the first-ever Welsh Agriculture Bill before the Senedd on Monday, 26 September 2022. Over the coming months, the Bill will go through the legislative processes of the Welsh Parliament.

This is an overview of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill (as introduced on 26th September 2022).

Agriculture Bill: Summary of provisions

In essence, the Bill gives the Government fairly broad powers to provide financial assistance, support and other policy interventions.

- The Bill establishes Sustainable Land Management (SLM) as the legislative framework for future agricultural policy in Wales. It creates a power to give support to the agricultural sector, parts of the wider industry and the supply chain that support the continued delivery of SLM.
- The Bill will also allow Welsh Ministers to continue making agricultural support payments to farmers as the current support schemes are phased out and the Sustainable Farming Scheme is introduced.
- It makes amendments to the Agricultural Holdings Act (AHA) 1986 to provide tenants with a route to dispute resolution in certain circumstances and replaces the time-limited powers for Welsh Ministers in the Agriculture Act 2020, which will expire in 2024.
- The Bill amends the Forestry Act 1967 to give Natural Resources Wales the power to add conditions to amend, suspend or revoke felling licences and also the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to prohibit the use of snares (and other cable restraints) and glue traps.

THE BILL IS DIVIDED INTO SIX PARTS



AIC Cymru is pleased to see that the Welsh Agriculture Bill's first objective is "the need to produce food and other goods in a sustainable manner", with the accompanying memorandum recognising the vital role of agriculture and its ancillary activities in the production of food and other goods. Supporting this function in environmentally, economically and socially sustainable ways is vital.

The first SLM objective also recognises the agricultural sector's crucial role in the preservation and progress of Welsh culture. In requiring the production of "food and other goods in a sustainable manner" the objective encapsulates the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. Truly sustainable farming is possible when the cohesion and resilience farms bring to their communities is supported.

The wording of the first SLM objective captures this:

3.44 This approach supports our ambition for Welsh farmers to be world leaders in sustainable farming, meeting our global obligations without offshoring food production to countries with lower standards. Whilst the biggest medium to long term risk to food security comes from climate change, soil degradation, water quality and biodiversity loss, the conflict in Ukraine has brought the issue of global food security into sharp focus.

This objective recognises the fundamental importance of supporting farmers to produce food sustainably in response to all of these challenges. The Bill also makes provision for the monitoring and reporting of progress towards achieving this objective, including the setting of indicators and targets, which will provide an important evidence base and facilitate scrutiny and accountability.

This objective didn't appear on the Welsh Government White Paper that preceded the Bill, so its inclusion would seem to reflect stakeholders' efforts to get the message across.

Under the section of the Bill that gives Welsh Ministers powers to provide support (Part 2, Chapter 1) the list of purposes includes "encouraging the production of food in an environmentally sustainable manner". This is a new addition to the list of purposes for support provision, which could be seen as a starting point for AIC Cymru's ambition to see food security as an SLM outcome.

History made, says NFU Cymru president

"For the first time in Welsh history this Bill will give Wales the opportunity to implement its own food and farming policy, made in Wales for the people of Wales," said Aled Jones, president of NFU Cymru. He added that the Bill is "the most important piece of legislation since the Westminster 1947 Agriculture Act."

Alluding to the conflict in Ukraine, Mr Jones continued, "It comes at a pivotal time for society with the importance and fragility of food affordability and security. This is why the Bill, as a key objective, must underpin the production of a stable supply of safe, high quality, affordable food in Wales."

AIC Cymru's submission to the Bill re-affirms the progress made by acknowledging the need for sustainable food production to be at front and centre of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, along with environmental and climate needs.

“For the first time in Welsh history this Bill will give Wales the opportunity to implement its own food and farming policy, made in Wales for the people of Wales”



Aled Jones
President of NFU Cymru

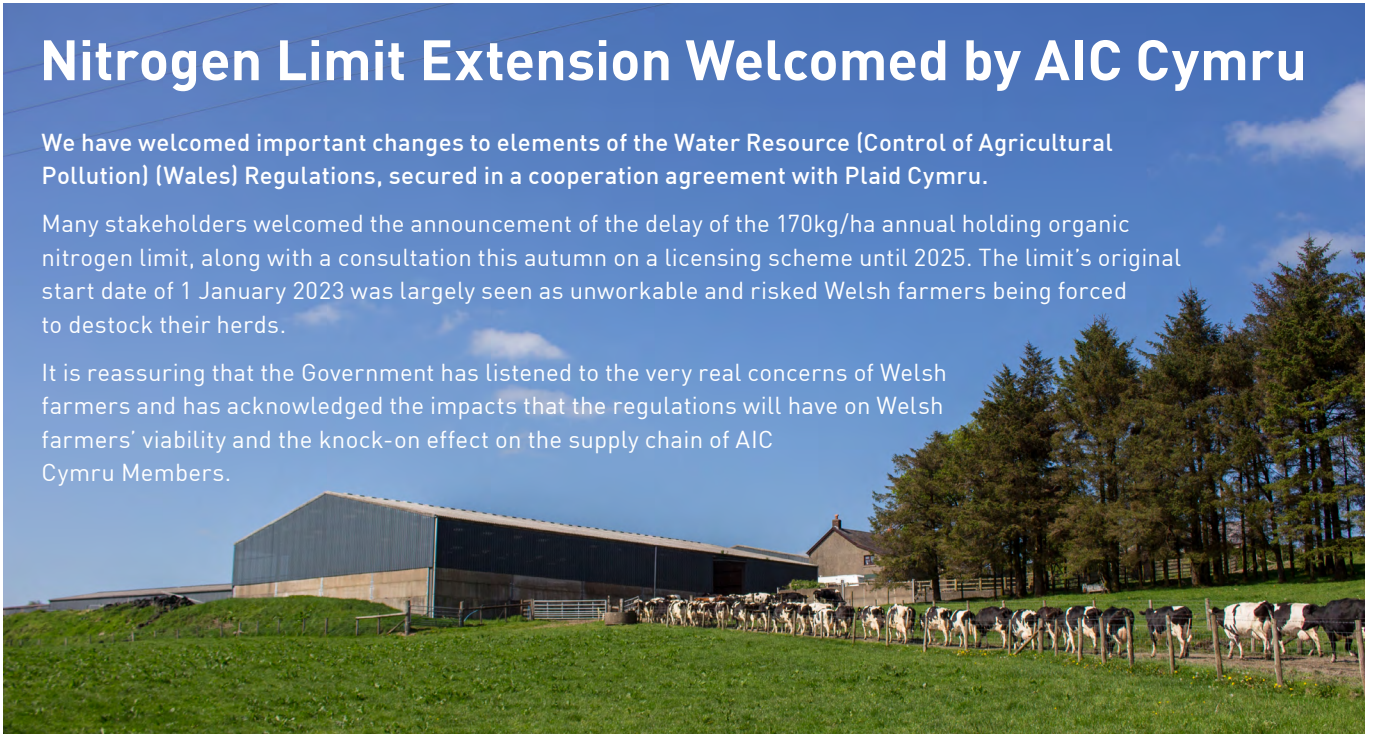


Nitrogen Limit Extension Welcomed by AIC Cymru

We have welcomed important changes to elements of the Water Resource (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations, secured in a cooperation agreement with Plaid Cymru.

Many stakeholders welcomed the announcement of the delay of the 170kg/ha annual holding organic nitrogen limit, along with a consultation this autumn on a licensing scheme until 2025. The limit's original start date of 1 January 2023 was largely seen as unworkable and risked Welsh farmers being forced to destock their herds.

It is reassuring that the Government has listened to the very real concerns of Welsh farmers and has acknowledged the impacts that the regulations will have on Welsh farmers' viability and the knock-on effect on the supply chain of AIC Cymru Members.



Winter Fair Welsh Royal Show Ground 28 & 29 November

AIC Cymru will be attending the Winter Fair on 28 November. While we do not have a stand, we do have meetings arranged with Welsh Government, AIC Members and farmers' unions. Please get in touch if you would like to arrange a meeting with us. We hope to see you there and wish all Members an enjoyable and productive event.

