



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE Government amendments to the Agriculture (Wales) Bill
DATE 03 February 2022
BY Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd

Welsh farmers hold an important position in our society, not only recognised for their role in producing a supply of safe, high-quality food, but also their opportunity to help tackle some of the most pressing challenges our country faces.

We must all respond to the climate and nature emergencies. The need for action at scale and to deliver outcomes at pace, is essential if we are to ensure a sustainable and resilient agriculture sector for future generations. We are all aware of Welsh Government's commitment to a 'just transition' to a new low carbon future, farmers and the communities in which they operate, play a vital role in delivering that just transition and the move to net zero.

The Agriculture (Wales) Bill establishes Sustainable Land Management as the framework, demonstrating the Government's commitment to support farmers to lower their carbon footprint and deliver for nature whilst, at the same time, continue to produce food sustainably through resilient agricultural businesses.

In my Legislative Statement on 27 September 2022, I highlighted the productive discussions with Plaid Cymru, as part of the Co-operation agreement, on amendments to the Agriculture (Wales) Bill which we would publish jointly during Stage 1 of the legislative process.

I am pleased, therefore, to outline the Government amendments which have been agreed with Plaid Cymru's Designated Member, Cefin Campbell MS and intend to bring forward at Stage 2, should Members agree the General Principles of the Bill.

Resilient agricultural businesses are vitally important to Wales, contributing to our thriving rural communities and sustaining Welsh agricultural land for future generations. Businesses that are resilient and adaptive, are more likely to thrive and survive shocks to the sector, such as those caused by pandemics, conflict, supply chain issues and climate change.

- To reflect our joint commitment, we propose to introduce additional text for the first SLM Objective:

For the purposes of the first objective, factors relevant to whether food and other goods are produced in a sustainable manner include, among other things, the resilience of agricultural businesses within the communities in which they operate.

Three additional purposes to the power to provide support (Section 8 of the Bill) have also been drafted, to be inserted within sub section (2) following the first purpose of encouraging the production of food in an environmentally sustainable manner:

- (b) helping rural communities to thrive and strengthening links between agricultural businesses and their communities;
- (c) improving the resilience of agricultural businesses;
- (d) sustaining the Welsh language and promoting and facilitating its use;

The amendments support the resilience of agricultural business through enabling an effective, efficient, sustainable and, therefore, profitable production base and supply chain, which links back to the farmer. Supporting farmers with their own well-being, engagement with their communities, sustaining and promoting the Welsh language and businesses diversification are all aspects which are key to keeping farmers on their land and moving towards a net zero future.