

National Assembly for Wales
Rural Development Sub-Committee

Foward Work Programme
2009 - 2010



The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

Contact us

The Committee is always keen to hear the views of as many people as possible, and uses the written and oral evidence collected during the course of inquiries to scrutinise and make recommendations to the Welsh Government. If you are interested in submitting evidence to the Committee or if you have ideas about other inquiries you would like to see the Committee to hold in future, please get in touch.

If you have any questions regarding the work of the Committee, or if you are interested in submitting evidence, please contact us using the details below:

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Introduction

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales and holds the Welsh Government to account.

The Rural Development Sub-Committee is a Sub-Committee of the Sustainability Committee. Its remit is to scrutinise the Welsh Government on the Government's areas of responsibility that impact on rural development.

The Rural Development Sub-Committee has identified six inquiries that it plans to undertake over the coming year. The inquiries on the Future of the Uplands and Animal Welfare and Meat Hygiene are already underway, while the others will take place in 2010.

01_ Animal Welfare and Meat Hygiene

The aim of the Committee's inquiry is to assess the effectiveness of current arrangements for ensuring animal welfare and meat hygiene standards in abattoirs and slaughterhouses, and what further action, if any, could be taken to ensure the proper implementation of the relevant legislation.

02_ Welsh Wine, Beer and Cider Industries

The Committee will look at the current condition of the wine, beer and cider industries in Wales and the potential for their development, including opportunities for crop diversification and promotion of Welsh produce.

03_ Rural Tourism

In July 2004, the Welsh Government published the Action Plan for the Countryside Experience which aimed to promote and develop rural tourism in Wales. Since then a significant number of changes have occurred to the organisation of the agencies and Government departments responsible for the delivery of the plan. In addition, the Government's policies and strategies on tourism have evolved significantly.

Despite this there has been no review or update of the Action Plan. The Committee will consider what progress has been on the actions contained within the Action Plan for the Countryside Experience, and look at how support for rural tourism is being coordinated by the Welsh Government in light of the organisational and policy changes.

04_Local Authority Farms and the County Council Farm Network

Tenancy agreements on local authority owned farms have historically been viewed as a key access point into the industry for young farmers who struggle to raise the necessary capital to purchase a farm or to pay for a private tenancy agreement. However, in recent years the network has been under threat with the number of local authority owned farms in England and Wales falling 49 per cent between 1975 and 1999.

Among the questions the Committee will consider are the future contribution of the County Council Farm Network in Wales and the actions stakeholders such as local authorities and the Welsh Government could take to help maintain and develop that network for the future.

05_Farm Advisory Services

Farm advisory services, currently largely provided through Farming Connect, comprise a range of fully and part funded advisory, training and support services covering areas such as business management, environmental compliance, diversification, planning, whole farm plans and skills development programmes.

Given the important role attributed to the service in the delivery of several of the Government's action plans and policies, the Committee will look all aspects of farm advisory services in Wales.

06_Review of Red Tape in the Farming Industry

Following the progress report from the Minister for Rural Affairs on the work of Red Tape Review stakeholder group in June 2009, the Committee will undertake a short review of red tape within the industry, to consider possible reforms which will lead to a reduction in bureaucracy.