# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Appointment of independent chair – statutory review of the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations** |
| **DATE**  | **30 July 2024** |
| **BY** | **Huw Irranca-Davies AS, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs** |

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Susannah Bolton as independent external chair to oversee the statutory review of the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021. This appointment is a key step forward in Welsh Government’s ongoing commitment to ensure policies and legislation designed to tackle pollution in Wales are sustainable for both farm businesses and the natural environment. The review is an integral part of our Programme for Government commitment to work with the farming community to deploy the Water Resources Regulations 2021 taking an approach targeted at those activities known to cause pollution.

**About the chair**

Dr Bolton is Vice Principal for Enterprise and Knowledge Exchange for Scotland’s Rural College, supporting the development of mission-led approaches to address the challenges facing food production and the natural economy. Until December 2021, she was Research Director for the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), responsible for a programme of applied research on behalf of farmers and processors across the arable, horticulture, ruminant and pork sectors of the UK.

Prior to that, Dr Bolton was Knowledge Exchange Director and oversaw the development of the AHDB Farm Excellence Platform, a farmer network of over 70 farm businesses, delivering knowledge exchange, peer to peer learning and benchmarking. She has a PhD in Tropical Agroforestry and spent 3 years working with the research provider EMBRAPA in North East Brazil, following which she was responsible for international relations and external communications at Rothamsted Research.

**Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations**

The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) Regulations were introduced in April 2021 and set out an all-Wales approach to reducing the detrimental impacts of pollution from agricultural activities on our environment and the well-being of future generations, including the sector itself. Implementation has been phased-in over a four-year period and the final set of measures will come into force by the end of the year. A 12-month Enhanced Nutrient Management Approach was introduced for the 2024 calendar year.

**Statutory review**

At least every four years, the effectiveness of the measures imposed by the Regulations as a means of reducing or preventing water pollution from agricultural sources must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised. Preparatory work for the review has been undertaken and the review, which will be overseen by Dr Bolton, will provide a prime opportunity to take stock and to listen further to the wide range of views on the effectiveness of the regulations. As part of this, we will continue to engage with stakeholders, including on the alternative measures proposals, in a true spirit of partnership.

A final report and recommendations from the review to Welsh Ministers are expected by the end of March 2025.

I attach great importance to this review and I am very grateful to Dr Bolton for taking on the role of independent chair. Dr Bolton’s appointment marks an important milestone in ensuring this review is undertaken in a collaborative way and is effective in helping to deliver positive outcomes for farmers and the environment in Wales.

This statement is being issued during recess in order to keep members informed. Should members wish me to make a further statement or to answer questions on this when the Senedd returns I would be happy to do so.