



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT

Title: **Launch of Consultation – “*Sustaining the Land*” A review of
*Land Management Support under Axis 2 of the Rural
Development Plan for Wales 2007-13***

Date: **29 September 2008**

By: **Elin Jones, Minister for Rural Affairs**

The Wales Rural Development Plan, agreed with the European Commission (EC), commits the Assembly Government to undertake a wide-ranging review of programmes under Axis 2 of the Rural Development Regulation (Reg. EC/1698/2005), with the aim of modifying the Plan to implement changes arising from the review. Axis 2 covers all our land management programmes: our agri-environmental schemes including Tir Gofal, woodland grants, and Tir Mynydd. As part of this process, I am launching a consultation this morning, Monday, 29th September, “Sustaining the Land”, inviting comments on the broad options available for future programmes under Axis 2.

The review is being undertaken because the Assembly Government has recognised that a number of fundamental issues need to be addressed in the future design of land management support, including:

- the need to tackle wider environmental challenges including climate change – reducing emissions and adapting to climate change;
- meeting the challenges posed by the CAP Health Check proposals – specifically the role of land management in combating climate change, improving water management and maintaining and enhancing biodiversity;
- the need to prepare for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive;
- the need for greater integration between schemes to attain a range of environmental benefits which are responsive to local, as well as national, environmental needs,
- the need to support the family farm, particularly in the LFA, recognising the past importance of Axis 2 funding in providing that support

The review will also help us to respond to the issues raised by the Wales Audit Office's recent report on Tir Gofal.

The Assembly Government will support the consultation process with discussion meetings with farmers and other stakeholders throughout Wales.

The consultation is the first step in the process of developing a new framework of programmes under Axis 2. It sets out the issues behind the review and offers a range of possible broad options for future direction. In the light of the consultation, we will proceed, in close engagement with stakeholders, to work up the detailed design and delivery of programmes. These will of course need to be agreed with the European Commission. The budget for Axis 2 schemes is set out in the RDP until 2013. There are a number of different interests who will wish to prioritise spend in a variety of ways. The Assembly Government is keen to promote schemes under Axis 2 that meet public concerns on climate change mitigation whilst ensuring that farmers are able to continue to manage land for their purpose of food production and maintaining the traditional Welsh family farm.

A copy of the consultation document is attached for your information.

The document is available on the Assembly Government website and hard copies have been placed in the Library.