

THE MAGAZINE FOR FARMERS & GROWERS IN WALES

FARMING connect

What changes could you make to
your farm business with £3,000?

Our Farms Network

Farming Connect are recruiting
a new network of 'Our Farms'



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government

ISSUE 1 - April-June 2023
gov.wales/farmingconnect



FARMING
connect
cyswllt
FFERMIO

FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the Technical Publication of the new Farming Connect Programme, which officially started on 1 April 2023. The purpose of the new programme is to support the farming industry in delivering greater sustainability, improved competitiveness and improved environmental performance, in line with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives.

It is a time of change for agriculture as we see new agricultural policies developed, a volatile economic situation and unpredictable weather patterns due to climate change. While these present challenges, what counts is how we respond to them. In order to make the most suitable decisions for our businesses we need information, and Farming Connect is available to give you the latest information.

So, if you want to improve the profitability of your farm, or if you are considering diversifying, changing direction, learning a new skill, improving biodiversity or succession planning, to name but a few things, Farming Connect is here to help you. There is information in this publication about some of the services and opportunities available, including up to £3000 for each business for advice through the Advisory Service; an opportunity to apply for funding to trial a new idea through the 'Try out fund'; an opportunity to be part of a new project to improve Welsh sheep genetics and help to start a horticultural business. To find out more and to discuss your needs, contact your Local Development Officer, in order to prepare and adapt to the changes that are on the horizon.

- Eirwen Williams



EIN FFERMYDD
OUR FARMS

Farming Connect: OUR FARMS

Farming Connect are recruiting a new network of 'Our Farms' who will deliver on-farm projects to test alternative practices and technologies with the aim to improve business performance and build resilience and sustainability for the future.

It has never been more important to evaluate and assess your business in preparation for the future changes with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives.

Farms who have been involved in the previous network learned which systems worked well and which did not, by implementing new or different approaches to achieve their goals. They are now in a stronger competitive position, better placed to deal with market volatility, to thrive and prosper.

The new farms are covering a range of sectors, including dairy, red meat, pigs, poultry, arable and horticulture and also businesses with woodland.

Each farm involved in the new network, will take part in one or more on-farm projects over a one – or two – year period, working alongside

the Farming Connect sector officers and industry specialists. These farms will also open their farm gates to learn and share best practice and new ideas on the back of on-farm projects and trial results.

In the new programme, projects will address the sustainable land management outcomes, featuring sustainable food production; adapting to climate change; maintaining and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and conserving and enhancing the countryside and cultural resources.



The new network of 'Our farms' will be announced at this year's Royal Welsh Show, please keep an eye on our website for further information.

 gov.wales/farmingconnect

What changes could you make to your farm business with £3,000?

Farming Connect's subsidised service providing valuable advice direct to farmers is set to continue. The Farming Connect Advisory Service provides independent, bespoke and confidential advice to farmers to help develop farm business sustainability and improve economic and environmental performance.

Since 2015, over 9,000 instances of advice have been supported by the Advisory Service. Over 90% of farmers report implementing the recommendations set out in their Advisory Service report within the first 12 months of receiving advice to help develop their businesses.

Up to 90% subsidised advice through the Advisory Service will help farming businesses prepare for the future changes with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives, with six new categories of advice available, farming businesses can proactively work on improving resilience, based on informed advice and guidance.

The new categories of advice available include Carbon, Renewable Energy Generation, Bio-security and Energy & Water Efficiency advice. This advice will also be beneficial to you as you consider your approach to reach net zero carbon emissions.

If your business is eligible, you will be able to access subsidised advice on a wide range of Technical and Business issues over the duration of the programme. Please see the list overleaf for the complete list of advice categories available through the Advisory Service.

Up to 90% funding will be available with a limit of £3000 per eligible businesses to access advice on a one-to-one and/or group basis. Development Officers will be on hand to support your businesses journey through the Advisory Service, be that through helping you choose the advice category that would most benefit your business's needs and help to apply for funding.

The Advisory Service will be delivered directly by specialist advisors and vets working for one of seven approved advisory companies. They will work closely with you to understand your farming business, and its needs, to deliver tailored advice for your business.

Contact your local Development Officer, alternatively, for more information call the service centre, or visit the website.



Local Development Officer



03456 000 813



gov.wales/farmingconnect



KEY CATEGORIES ON OFFER:

- Business Planning
- Animal Health Welfare & Bio-security *NEW
- Specialist Veterinary Advice *NEW
- Livestock Management & Performance
- Grassland & Crop Management
- Woodland Management
- Horticulture
- Organic Production
- Agri-environment, Ecosystems Services & Biodiversity
- Energy & Water Efficiency *NEW
- Renewable Energy Generation *NEW
- Diversification & Added Value
- Timber Processing & Added Value
- Carbon Advice *NEW
- Agri-tech *NEW

The Advisory Service will be delivered by advisors working for one of the following seven advisory companies:

- ADAS Wales
- Agri Plan Cymru
- Andersons
- CARA
- Kite Consulting
- Landsker
- Mabis Amaeth

FARMER TESTIMONIALS FROM THE PREVIOUS PROGRAMME:

“The adviser prepared a business plan which assisted us to ascertain the viability of taking on an additional farm. The advice was crucial to our business development”

“Very efficient advisory service - helpful and understanding of our circumstances. The result/performance are in the process of implementation.”

“Excellent, direct advice, very clear to understand and follow. Many thanks.”

“Very sound advice and a clear vision of knowledge & strategy to build on for a sustainable future for the next generation of a family farm. Thank you very much!”

“The adviser was first class, his knowledge and advice was second to none. We are aiming for a grass-based system to fatten lambs, and hopefully we will achieve this with the advice we've been given to correct our soils and enhance grass growth.”

“Excellent, comprehensive advice about ways to progress. Very approachable and keen to find a workable solution that works for the farm. Follow up advice would now be to consider ewe nutrition and feeding plans/budgets and possible mentoring regarding rotational grazing.”

“Excellent advisor - very knowledgeable, very capable at getting info across, very clear. Very pleased with useful advice received. Thoroughly beneficial in saving on fertiliser costs and targeting fertiliser where needed.”



Have you ever wondered how to improve your flock's performance? How could that extra 2kg weight per lamb impact your bottom line?

Think genetics.

Farming Connect is excited to announce a brand new support package for hill and upland sheep farmers in Wales, with the objective of increasing the number of sheep farmers participating in the genetic improvement of their flocks.

The Welsh Sheep Genetics Programme (WSGP) aims to offer sheep farmers technical and financial support, guidance and training to strengthen their flock's performance, improve productivity and increase profitability through improving genetics.

The programme will offer sheep farmers in Wales a fantastic opportunity to start their genetic improvement journey, as well as support flocks experienced in performance recording to continue the process.

By working closely with world-leading genetic experts, Innovis, and AHDB-Signet, the programme will focus on improving the economic and environmental efficiency of Welsh sheep flocks by using data collection and analysis, as well as exploring breakthrough research and innovation.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme will be split into two tiers, Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 will include Welsh hill and upland breeds of sheep.

As well as targeted support for sheep breeds within Tier 1, through the inclusion of Tier 2, the programme will also offer support to specific maternal breeds within the eligibility criteria limited to: Lleyn, Romney, Charmoise Hill and Bluefaced Leicester.

TIER 1

WELSH HILL & UPLAND BREEDS

TIER 2

BLUEFACED LEICESTER, LLEYN,
CHARMOISE HILL, ROMNEY

Applications for both tiers will be open to flocks currently recording as well as flocks that are new to performance recording.

WHAT WILL THE PROGRAMME INVOLVE?

The programme will involve different elements, with the key objective of strengthening the knowledge and understanding of performance recording and selecting EBVs to suit flock requirements.

Participating flocks will be supported to collect vital flock performance data throughout the duration of the programme, with the option of manual recording or using DNA parentage. Ultrasound scanning will also be carried out annually on lambs to assess muscle and fat depth.

One element of the programme will involve collecting KPIs for each flock, and formulating a breeding action plan based on current genetic performance, evaluating genetic trends. The plan will allow farmers to identify traits to improve, helping them select rams with suitable EBVs to target their flock's requirements.

Another element of the programme will involve accessing a tailored Farming Connect support package which will lead to access to a brand new learning model - 'Gearing up to Genetics'.

The 'Gearing up to Genetics' aspect of the programme will offer individuals advice and guidance through various avenues, including for example, workshops, clinics, events and Masterclasses. Participants will be able to access the model depending on their level of experience within genetic improvement.

The programme will also explore innovation and new technologies surrounding sheep genetics. Participants will be offered the opportunity to take part in ground-breaking research, with the objective of formulating traits to target specific issues, e.g. methane emissions and worm burdens.

WHAT WILL YOU GAIN BY TAKING PART?

- ✓ Learn how to use EBVs to maximise your flock's breeding potential, by selecting for key traits relevant to your own flock.
- ✓ Create a breeding action plan with clear recommendations on steps you should take to improve the quality of your flock including performance recording and analysis of key data.
- ✓ Expert advice to ensure your sheep make genetic progress, achieving better flock health and improved economic performance.
- ✓ Through innovative projects, participate in breakthrough research focusing on breeding for lower methane emissions, breeding for worm resistance, and the benefits of routinely using genomic breeding values within your flock.



For more information on eligibility, and how to apply, please visit gov.wales/farmingconnect or contact **Gwawr Hughes - 07498 710951 - gwawr.hughes@menterabusnes.co.uk**

Closing date for applications is 9th June 2023 for TIER 1 and TIER 2.

TRY-OUT FUND

BRINGING YOUR IDEA TO LIFE - funding up to **£5000** available

Do you have a bright idea that could help your business and Welsh Agriculture become more sustainable?

Applications are now open for a new fund where Farming Connect is making £5,000 available for farmers and growers to try-out their ideas and bring them to life.

Farming Connect has developed the Try-out fund, to address specific local problems or opportunities with the aim of improving efficiencies and profitability within agricultural businesses whilst protecting the environment.

There are many changes on the horizon for agriculture and now is a great time to explore an idea that could benefit your farm allowing you to tackle 'real' problems or check if a research idea works in practice on your farm.

TRY-OUT

projects could focus on:

- ✓ producing food in a sustainable manner
- ✓ mitigating and adapting to climate change
- ✓ maintaining and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems and the benefits they

HOW THE FUND WORKS

- The fund is open to individuals or small groups of farmers and growers in Wales who have identified a local or specific problem or opportunity.
- Suitable projects will aim to improve production efficiencies and profitability whilst protecting the environment by aligning with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives.
- Successful projects must be implemented and completed within the timeframe noted on application and the funding from Farming Connect will not exceed £5,000 per project.
- Funding can be used for technical assistance, sampling, testing and other reasonable expenses such as those relating to short term hire of specialist equipment or facilities directly relating to the project. The participating farmers will be expected to provide items such as land, stock and also their time at no cost to the project. Funding cannot be used to fund the purchase of hardware or capital items.
- The results will be shared with other producers in Wales through working with a dedicated member of the Farming Connect team to produce a short report and other knowledge transfer activities such as speaking at events.
- Farmers and growers can apply by completing an application form which will be considered and assessed.

Application Window opens –
22nd MAY until 10am on **12th JUNE**.

Further applications windows will open later in the Summer and Autumn of 2023.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Menna Williams - 07399 849 148
menna.williams@menterabusnes.co.uk

An application form can be found on the Farming Connect website along with further information and eligibility.

 gov.wales/farmingconnect

MASTERCLASSES:

your ticket to business improvement

Developments within agriculture are forever changing, and now more than ever it is crucial to ensure you have your finger on the pulse to new developments and technologies.

If you are eager to learn more about key technical subjects within farming to improve your farm's performance, Farming Connect Masterclasses are just the ticket for you.

Farming Connect will have a host of masterclasses spanning various topics from assessing soil or reducing lameness, to managing grassland – each masterclass is designed to make sure you get the best learning experience and the outcome you need for your businesses.

The masterclasses will range from a few hours, to day courses and some two-day courses with the level of information intensifying as you move through the different levels. These workshop style classes will provide a mixture of hands-on and theory in small groups.

These masterclasses will be available to all registered Farming Connect businesses, and we would encourage you to take the opportunity to hear from experienced farmers, leading experts and advisors on a range of relevant topics to your business.

By attending a masterclass, your knowledge and confidence within a specific subject will increase, and you will have the chance to mix with like-minded farmers attending the workshop to share ideas and experiences.

Keep an eye on the Farming Connect website as new masterclass topics are developed throughout the new programme. You will be able to register your interest in attending via the website.

 gov.wales/farmingconnect



AGROFORESTRY
ARABLE

CARBON

TRACE ELEMENTS
FORESTRY
MANAGEMENT
SOIL ASSESSMENTS

NUTRITION

HEDGEROW
GENETICS

BUSINESS PLANNING
NUTRIENT
MANAGEMENT
HABITAT
MANAGEMENT
MULTISPECIES

MASTERCLASSES

FERTILITY
POULTRY
HEALTH

PIG FARMING
RENEWABLE
ENERGY
ANIMAL HEALTH
GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

LAMENESS
REGENERATIVE
PRACTICES

BIODIVERSITY
MAPPING
HEALTH & SAFETY
HORTICULTURE



MENTORA
MENTORING

Farming Connect has re-appointed a team of mentors to deliver the mentoring programme for the next two years

“Receiving confidential one-to-one guidance and an unbiased perspective from an experienced mentor willing to share their personal experiences ‘good and bad’, saved me from making some very costly mistakes,”

...are the words of one of the Farming Connect ‘mentees’ who have tapped into the previous mentoring programme, delivered from 2015 – 2023.

Einir Davies, Farming Connect’s Head of Skills, attributes the programme’s popularity to the skills and experience of approved mentors, each of whom is well-placed to offer confidential support based on mutual trust and respect with those in need of a second opinion.

“Demand for the mentoring programme has increased significantly as the industry faces unprecedented economic and environmental challenges,” said Ms. Davies.

“Choosing the right mentor will not only help you develop your own communication skills as you listen, learn and exchange views, but you will be encouraged to consider new ways to find solutions to any challenges you might be facing or discuss ideas you want to develop,” said Ms. Davies.

Ms Davies said that in the last six years, more than 800 mentees benefited from the programme.

“When asked to provide feedback, almost every mentee said that having a mentor explaining what had worked out well for them within their own business, as well as highlighting the possible pitfalls, had saved them costly mistakes.”

All approved mentors are required to be good listeners as well as good communicators and each one has the necessary level of personal experience or qualifications within their chosen fields. Topics available include ICT support which can range from assisting farmers wanting to tackle ‘making tax digital’, online record-keeping and form-filling to livestock and land management; business and financial management; social media and marketing.

“Food processing and butchery, sheep dog handling, shearing, regenerative farming, soil biology and interior design for new diversified tourism projects are just a few of the less ‘typical’ mentoring areas. We will continue to support topics such as animal health, soil and grassland management, where we now receive almost daily requests for this type of support,” added Ms Davies.

The Farming Connect mentoring service will provide up to 15 hours of fully funded one-to-one support available to all individuals registered with Farming Connect. An online directory lists key sectors and specialist areas of knowledge for each mentor.

The service is available pan-Wales either face-to-face, online or over the telephone. Applicants must be registered with Farming Connect and the service must be applied for in advance by completing the online application form available at -

 gov.wales/farmingconnect

MEET A MENTOR

One of the newest mentors to join the Farming Connect team is Hefin Rowlands who has more than 15 years’ experience of shearing in the UK and overseas. An open-class shearer, Hefin still shears part-time to fit around his current job as a UK and Ireland territory manager for a leading supplier of sheep shearing equipment.

He is eager to support new shearers to develop their skills and his extensive network of contacts within the shearing industry could help open doors for others looking to follow his path. Hefin’s thorough understanding of the equipment and techniques needed to shear sheep safely, efficiently and quickly makes him a much sought-after mentor, so get your application in quickly!



HEFIN’S TOP TIPS

“Always make sure you use sharp shearing gear and the correct comb for the breed of sheep you are shearing. If you select the wrong comb, you will shear far fewer sheep!”

“Drink plenty, replace your electrolytes and get the right amount of carbs in throughout every shearing day. Get enough protein into your body as soon as you finish shearing, to aid recovery in readiness for the next day’s shearing.”

“Have an effective pattern to ensure you use your legs effectively; turn the sheep over and pull the sheep out correctly – done incorrectly, this can cost you vital energy reserves during the day, and can also lead to muscle strains and aches.”





Continued support for the horticulture sector in Wales

After five successful years of delivery, the work of Tyfu Cymru will continue and be incorporated into the Farming Connect Programme through the Horticulture Support Service.

Horticulture is a target sector for the Welsh Government, with the new Farming Connect Programme designed to reflect the over-arching themes of sustainability, improved environmental performance and greater global competitiveness.

The success of the previous Tyfu Cymru programme is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the growers who have taken part and will continue to work together through the Farming Connect Horticulture Support Service.

The Horticulture Support Service is aimed at driving growth and sustainability in the horticulture industry in Wales and we have two years to deliver an interesting and exciting programme of training, events, and business support.

This will be industry-specific support to build the capacity and capability of the Welsh horticulture sector. It is designed to identify diversification opportunities, help growers across Wales improve their business, reduce their environmental impact, enhance the quality of their produce, and address some of the biggest challenges facing the sector.

Industry collaboration will be a key theme with grower networks providing opportunities for growers to work together to overcome issues.

Reflecting on the success of the Tyfu Cymru programme, Lantra Wales CEO, Kevin Thomas, said, "We are extremely proud of the achievements of Tyfu Cymru over the past five years. Through collaboration and innovation, we have made significant progress in advancing the horticulture industry in Wales, and we look forward to building on this success in the years to come and through the Farming Connect programme".

Commercial horticulture businesses in Wales will be provided with an industry voice and an opportunity to discuss issues facing the sector and have their voice heard by Welsh Government. This will be complemented by a comprehensive training programme of study visits, training days, E-Learning and online sessions delivered across grower networks.

Delivery will be against key industry themes with a focus on sustainability preparing businesses to transition to the Sustainable Farming Scheme. Specialist advice and guidance will be provided on all aspects of running a horticultural operation, including areas such as plant health, grower accreditation, marketing and selling. The service will work across the supply chain identifying opportunities and challenges, building resilience, and improving its viability.

Further information and eligibility can be found on the Farming Connect website.

 gov.wales/farmingconnect

**ARLOESI AC
ARALLGYFERIO**
CADWCH Y DYDDIAD

www.llyw.cymru/cyswlltffermio

21/09/2023

**INNOVATION AND
DIVERSIFICATION**

SAVE THE DATE

www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

 **Innovation and Diversification Wales**
[@InnDivCymru](https://twitter.com/InnDivCymru)

 **Arloesi ac Arallgyferio**
Innovation and Diversification



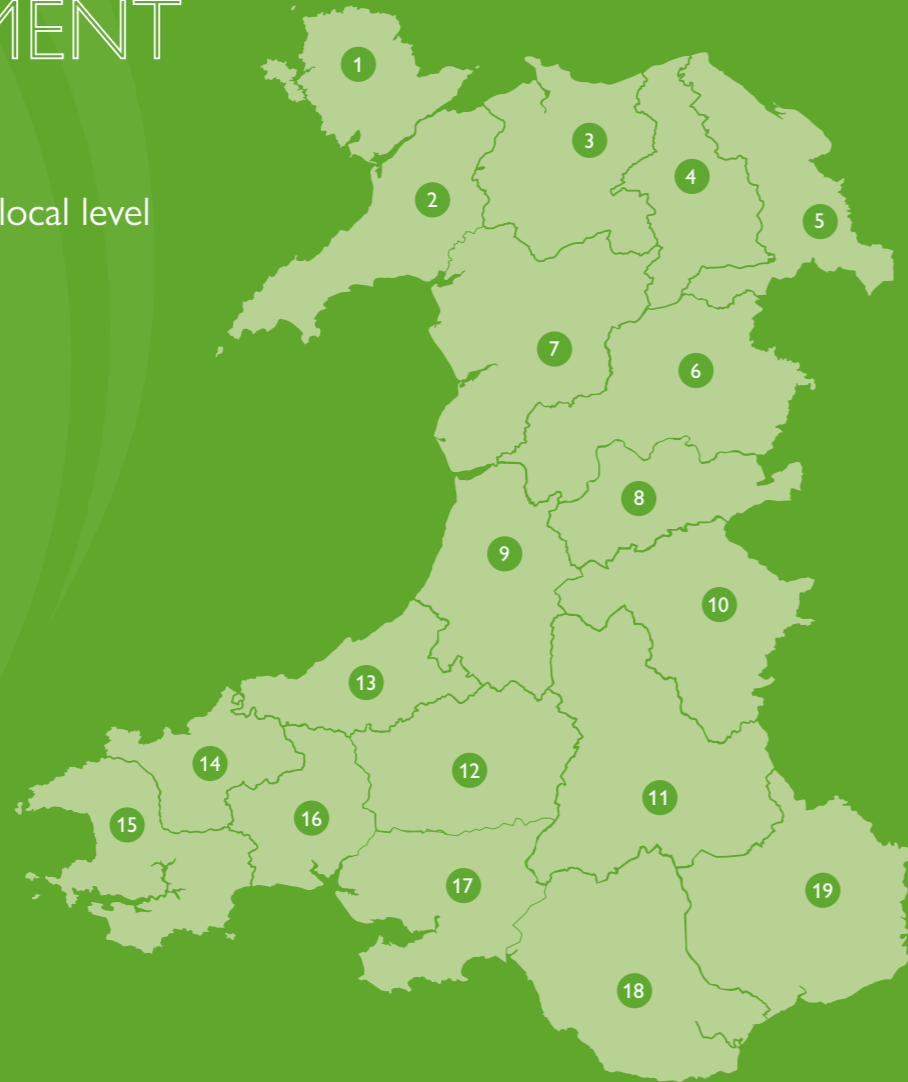
Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government



**FARMING
connect**
cyswllt
FFERMIO

FARMING CONNECT DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

...providing support at a local level



1	Alan Armstrong 07985 379 821 alan.armstrong@menterabusnes.co.uk	8	Elin Haf Williams 07508 867 212 elin.haf.williams@menterabusnes.co.uk	15	Susie Morgan 07867 908 193 susie.morgan@menterabusnes.co.uk
2	Mali Dafydd 07415 757 461 mali.dafydd@menterabusnes.co.uk	9	Marc Bowen 07985 379 887 marc.bowen@menterabusnes.co.uk	16	Carys Jones 07772 694 112 carys.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk
3	Guto Owen 07896 996 832 guto.owen@menterabusnes.co.uk	10	Natalie Chappelle 07985 379 928 natalie.chappelle@menterabusnes.co.uk	17	Dewi Jones 07940 914 508 dewi.jones@menterabusnes.co.uk
4	Elen Williams 07985 379 904 williams.elen@menterabusnes.co.uk	11	Gwen Price 07487 254 843 gwen.price@menterabusnes.co.uk	18	Hannah Wright 07984 251 190 hannah.wright@menterabusnes.co.uk
5	Gwenno Puw Rowlands 07772 694 098 gwenno.puw.rowlands@menterabusnes.co.uk	12	Alun Bowen 07896 262 736 alun.bowen@menterabusnes.co.uk	19	Lisa Powell 07772 694 952 lisa.powell@menterabusnes.co.uk
6	Grisial Pugh 07904 457 316 grisial.pugh@menterabusnes.co.uk	13	Rhiannon Davies 07896 837 725 rhiannon.davies@menterabusnes.co.uk		
7	Eryl P Roberts 07917 895 253 eryl.roberts@menterabusnes.co.uk	14	Rhiannon James 07985 379 927 rhiannon.james@menterabusnes.co.uk		

Animal Health and Welfare Training Workshops

SGILIAU A
HYFFORDDIANT
SKILLS AND
TRAINING

Do you have a specific animal health disease or issue that is having an impact on not only your stock but your business performance too?

The fully funded accredited Animal Health and Welfare Workshops will be delivered by a network of local Veterinary Practices pan Wales on the key animal health and welfare priority topics, including key aspects of biosecurity, disease transmission, diagnosis, treatment and control.

Each three-hour workshop will give key information and practical guidance on specific animal health and welfare issues.

All clients must be registered with Farming Connect before attending a workshop.

Completion of each workshop will be recorded on your Storfa Sgiliau (CPD) record and you will receive a Lantra Awards 'certificate of attendance'.

For further information and to view the current list of workshop modules available, please visit the Farming Connect website or contact your local Development Officer.



Local Development Officer



gov.wales/farmingconnect

E-LEARNING...

your online gateway to fully funded training



- develop new or existing skills
- increase sector-specific knowledge
- improve efficiency across a wide range of topics

- ✓ interactive, informative modules that you can complete in under 30 minutes and download as often as you need

FREE to all registered individuals, our e-learning topics are broadly categorised under 'business', 'land' and 'livestock'.

- ✓ learn in the comfort of your own home at a time convenient to you
- ✓ find out what you have learnt through a short multiple-choice quiz

Get started today...

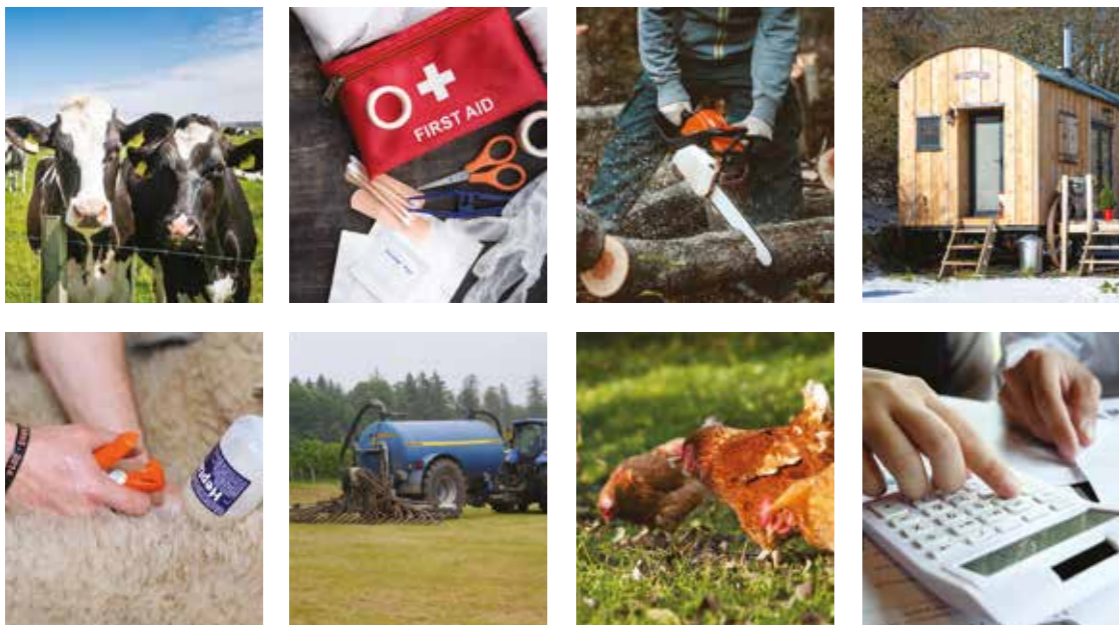
- ✓ You must be registered with Farming Connect
- ✓ Log into <https://businesswales.gov.wales/boss> using your individual username and password
- ✓ All online modules are listed under the e-learning tile on BOSS

FARMING CONNECT SKILLS FUNDING

SGILIAU A
HYFFORDDIANT
SKILLS AND
TRAINING

APPLY NOW TO...

...develop your skills, develop your business ...plan ahead now



The new Farming Connect Programme will continue with the Accredited Training Programme giving individuals registered with Farming Connect the opportunity to apply for funding towards an accredited short training course.

- All training courses subsidised by up to **80%** for registered individuals
 - More than **70 courses** available
- Network of **approved training providers** located throughout Wales

Applications approved on a monthly basis

For the latest information, a full list of courses and/or support on how to register and apply, please contact your local Development Officer, call our Service Centre, or visit the website.

 **Local Development Officer**

 **03456 000 813**

 **gov.wales/farmingconnect**

STORFA SGILIAU



FARMING
connect
cyswllt
FFERMIO

STORFA
SGILIAU

- The secure, online data storage tool for continuous professional development.
- A unique opportunity to record all your personal and professional development records.
- You can access and update your qualifications, skills and professional development data in one secure online place.

Provided you are already registered with Farming Connect, your Storfa Sgiliau 'personal profile' can be just a few clicks away.

STORFA SGILIAU WILL ENABLE YOU TO:

- Have instant access to a downloadable or digital report setting out all your skills, training and relevant academic/professional achievements.
- Provide evidence of training undertaken for Farm Assurance Schemes and supply chain organisations including wholesalers, retailers etc.
 - Access the facts you may need for an up to date CV.

To store and update all your relevant records on Storfa Sgiliau, log into your BOSS account via Sign on Cymru.



KEY MESSAGES:

Working With Machinery

Always make sure you:

- › Follow the safe stop procedure, before doing any maintenance work;
- › Have been trained;
- › Take additional precautions to ensure that machinery remains stationary (e.g. chock wheels);
- › Ensure that any part of the machine that is raised is properly supported so that it cannot fall;
- › When the machine is operating, keep all people clear.

