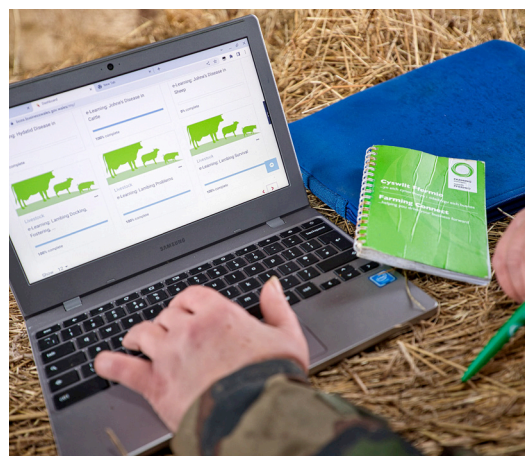


Knowledge Transfer Programme 2023 - 2025

FARMING CONNECT



Ariennir gan
Lywodraeth Cymru
Funded by
Welsh Government



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1. Introduction

The next Farming Connect will be delivered via the following Programmes, each with their own key objectives:

Knowledge Transfer Programme (delivered by Menter a Busnes)

An innovative programme to support the farming industry in delivering greater sustainability, improved competitiveness, and improved environmental performance for farming businesses in line with Sustainable Land Management (SLM) objectives (please see Annex A).

Lifelong Learning and Development Programme (delivered by Lantra)

To deliver a more professional industry through its support for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), action learning, mentoring, accredited training, e-learning and clear focus on personal development.

Advisory Service (delivered by Menter a Busnes)

To provide independent bespoke advice across a broad range of specialist technical and business management areas to improve the sustainable management and the economic and environmental performance of farming businesses.

Service Centre (delivered by Menter a Busnes)

The main point of contact for all beneficiaries to register and promote all activities and services available through Farming Connect.

Knowledge Transfer Dissemination & Events Programme (delivered by Menter a Busnes)

An innovative programme, disseminating knowledge transfer activity and events for the benefit of the farming sector in Wales to help transition farming business to the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS).

Welsh Sheep Genetics Programme (delivered by Menter a Busnes)

An innovative programme of activity suitable to support the needs of the Welsh sheep sector working with businesses in identifying their current baseline performance, identify the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the businesses, and create an action plan with clear recommendations to improve Welsh Sheep Genetics.

Horticulture Support Service (delivered by Lantra)

A support service for commercial horticulturalists in Wales which will foster innovation, business success and more environmentally-friendly farming. At the same time, it will facilitate collaboration between producers and processors to improve the viability of supply chains. The Service will provide horticultural stakeholders an opportunity to discuss issues facing the sector and have their voice heard by Welsh Government.

BASELINES

The Farming Connect offer will be based on the three key themes of Business, Land and Livestock. These themes will help focus the customer's journey through the programme with all farmers being able to relate to one or all of them.

The baselines for each of the themes will be promoted as best practice and will be the starting point of a customer's journey, ensuring Farming Connect support is based on need. Whilst not mandatory, acceptance to certain Workshops / Surgeries / Clinics will only be on the basis that the need can be evidenced on one of the baselines identified under the 3 themes.

The identified baselines are:

Theme	Baseline
Business	Business Plan (BP)/Benchmarking*
Land	Nutrient Management Plans (NMP)*
Livestock	Animal Health Plans (AHP)*

*The baselines don't necessarily have to have been delivered by Farming Connect

The Personal Development Plan (PDP) is applicable to all three themes. The PDP will provide a critical baseline of a customer's level of knowledge, assisting in identifying skills gaps enabling signposting to a provision of Farming Connect to meet individual and industry needs, whilst enabling progress to be measured.

The key sectors as outlined by Welsh Government, namely Dairy, Red Meat, Arable, Poultry, Forestry, Horticulture and Pigs will continue to provide the basis of the programme. The scheme will aim to achieve the Sustainable Land Management outcomes – clean air, clean water, enhanced access and engagement, high animal health and welfare, maximise carbon storage, mitigate flood and drought risk, protect natural landscapes and historic environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, maintain and enhance resilient ecosystems and resource efficiency.

2. Knowledge Transfer Programme

Through the Knowledge Transfer programme, a coordinated and modular offering will be available to support the progression of businesses through current and upcoming challenges and opportunities. Key messages and strategic aims and goals of the Welsh Government together with information on leading industry research and innovation will be disseminated whilst at the same time providing opportunities for farmers to provide feedback on the practicalities of implementation.

The Programme offers a range of delivery methods to disseminate knowledge to the Welsh farming sector to provide an effective knowledge transfer approach, motivating change behaviour and attitudes to maximise the uptake of new ideas.

INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE:

2.1 Farming Connect Our Farms Network

The Farming Connect Our Farms Network will support the increasing importance of testing alternative ways of farming and proactively strive to demonstrate environmental management and methodologies to reduce emissions and build resilience to a changing climate via integration of innovative practices and integration of new technologies and/or management approaches as the industry prepares to transition to the new SFS.

Different project work across the Farming Connect Our Farms network will include:

- Small Scale projects for a duration of 2 years
- Best practice & Agri-Tech demonstrations for a duration of 1 year
- Practical projects via discussion groups
- Pan-Wales projects on multiple sites
- Try-out projects focusing aligning with SFS characteristics.

Examples of existing projects delivered within the current Farming Connect programme can be found on the [website](#).

2.2 Discussion Groups

Farming Connect discussion groups will be delivered under the three themes; Business, Land and Livestock. Under each theme, there will be a bespoke programme of activity for each sector and will be built on a modular learning approach with groups being delivered via three different levels of knowledge and learning from entry, advance and advance+ levels. Example of this approach can be found in the previous Farming Connect Prosper for Pasture discussion group model.

2.3 Masterclasses

Masterclasses will be delivered via two levels; entry and advance, and will be integrated with the delivery of discussion groups as well as focusing on ensuring that participants who complete a masterclass will be able to action their learnings.

Masterclass entry: will be delivered under the three key themes and aligning with one of the SFS characteristics to help transition farmers to the new scheme via a one-day workshop format.

Masterclass advance: will be delivered as a two-day intensive course and will be more topic specific. Farming Connect will continue to offer masterclasses that are sector specific and in addition to the continual delivery of the current masterclasses there will be further masterclasses developed in line with supporting farmers to transition to the SFS.

2.4 Benchmarking

Benchmarking will be a key part of Farming Connect. It will be compulsory for all discussion group members and individuals that attend masterclasses to undertake physical and financial benchmarking of their businesses. This will include collecting data on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will support businesses to become more financially and environmentally sustainable.

The current Farming Connect benchmarking tool, 'Measure to Manage' (M2M), is available to all red meat and pig businesses and will be developed to include other Sectors. The tool allows businesses to measure, record and manage physical, environmental and financial data within their business by:

- Allowing benchmarking of physical, financial and environmental data KPIs through to full cost of production.
- Allowing businesses to review their strengths and weaknesses.
- Allowing businesses to benchmark their business against industry baselines.

2.5 Knowledge Exchange Hub

Farming Connect has developed and deployed a Knowledge Exchange (KE) Hub which has provided an interface between academics, advisory professionals and farmers across Wales. The centre of the KE Hub infrastructure will be hosted by IBERS and will include Bangor University going forward.

The Knowledge Exchange Hub translates the latest UK-wide and appropriate global research findings, re-purposing the scientific papers and practical know-how to deliver accessible knowledge via multiple distribution channels for Farming Connect.

2.6 Start to Farm

A targeted package of support for new entrants into agriculture building on the success of the Venture programme. Support will be fully funded and tailored for individuals at different stages in their farming careers to provide the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to start a farming business. The matching service will advertise opportunities on behalf of farmers and landowners who wish to take a step back from full-time farming and will provide information, mentoring, business planning and legal advice to establish a new joint venture. Alongside this, new entrants can take part in targeted events, workshops, masterclasses, training courses and E-Learning modules to support them on their journey.

2.7 Succession

The programme aims to encourage mobility within the agricultural industry in Wales, by providing advice and guidance to support business owners and their families to develop a succession plan. Farming families can be supported to have fully funded facilitated family meetings to discuss succession and develop a plan. Those without a clear successor can use the matching service to find a potential business partner and access information, mentoring, business planning and legal advice to establish a new joint venture.

3. Lifelong Learning and Development Programme

The aim of the programme is to deliver a more professional industry through its support for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), action learning, mentoring, accredited training, E-Learning and clear focus on personal development.

INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE:

3.1 Personal Development Plans (PDPs)

Farming Connect staff (where required) will assist beneficiaries with undertaking the PDP process, identifying opportunities for personal development and highlighting any development needs. The programme will develop an updated PDP template that will help individuals consider long term objectives and short-term goals.

Customers seeking support through either accredited training, Animal Health and Welfare Workshops or Development and Mentoring will need to complete a PDP as a baseline indicator.

3.2 Accredited Training

Supported by a network of procured Training Providers, the programme will introduce new course titles across the three themes, Business, Land, and Livestock, to the existing list of 70 accredited courses.

Specific training will be developed to support the understanding and implementation of the new Sustainable Farming Scheme.

Eligible individuals can access up to 80% funding for training courses listed.

3.3 Animal Health and Welfare Workshops

Animal Health and Welfare Workshops will be delivered by a procured network of local Veterinary Practices, across the existing priorities of the Wales Animal Health and Welfare Framework and will develop a further five new topics.

3.4 One to One Mentoring

The mentoring programme is targeted at farmers of all ages and business status, including:

- new entrants;
- businesses considering significant strategic change in direction (diversification, added value, expansion, new enterprises);
- individuals looking to exit the industry;

Support is also available to individuals looking for a second opinion, sounding board and support with day-to-day business.

Eligible mentees can access 15 hours of fully funded mentoring with their chosen farming mentor.

3.5 Agrisgôp

Individuals can join an Agrisgôp group if they want to develop an idea, solve a problem or drive forward a project. Agrisgôp is a fully-funded action learning programme which brings together 6 – 8 forward-thinking, like-minded individuals to support and challenge each other with individual and group projects. Guided by their Agrisgôp Leader, members can learn new skills, build their network, access specialist information and make things happen.

3.6 Agri Academy

The Agri Academy will have two distinct programmes and will have an annual intake of 12 members for each programme.

- Business & Innovation - aimed at supporting and inspiring the next generation of farming entrepreneurs and trailblazers in Wales.
- Junior – aimed at supporting young people aged between 16 and 19 years who hope to carve out a career or set up a business in the food or farming industries.

The programme will involve four sessions, three of which will be residential, including an overseas study visit. Programme activities will be aimed at supporting personal development, building networks and enabling peer to peer support. The Agri Academy application window for the class of 2023 will open in April.

3.7 E-learning

The programme will design and manage a suite of online course material to engage beneficiaries, facilitate learning through interactive and rich learning material. Content will be available across the three themes of the programme: Business, Land and Livestock, and the SLM framework's strategic objectives and outcomes.

A list of current courses can be found on the Farming Connect website and accessed via a BOSS (Business Online Support Service) account: <https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/e-learning>

3.8 Continuous Professional Development / Storfa Sgiliau

Farming Connect will develop an accreditation framework for all activity delivered through the Programme, to support and enhance the growing professionalism of the industry in Wales. All training and development undertaken within the Farming Connect Programme will continue to be recorded within their secure, on-line Storfa Sgiliau account. Training and development undertaken outside of Farming Connect through either organisation like Levy Bodies or Supply Chains will also be able to be stored within a non-Farming Connect tab within the platform.

4. Advisory Service

The Advisory Service will provide quality assured independent, bespoke and confidential one-to-one and group advice to farmers, targeted at improving the sustainability, economic and environmental performance of individual businesses. The Advisory Service will help transition farming businesses to the SFS.

Eligible businesses will be able to access subsidised advice on a range of specific issues over the duration of the project. The list below outlines the key categories on offer, six new categories have been introduced in the new programme:

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

Up to 90% funding will be available with a limit of £3000 per eligible businesses to access business and technical advice. Development Officers will be on hand to support businesses to apply for funding.

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

5. Service Centre

5.1 Service Centre

The Service Centre will be the main point of contact for all beneficiaries to register and promote all activities and services on offer across Farming Connect.

Farming Connect will be undertaking an exercise to check the contact details of all individuals who are currently registered with Farming Connect to ensure they are up to date and correct, ensuring customers preferences for receiving relevant marketing material are updated.

The three baselines (NMP, BP, AHP) will form an integral part of the validation process, where the fully bilingual Service Centre will check whether businesses have undertaken baseline plans and update their records accordingly. This information will inform discussions between the Customer and the Development Officer as they discuss priorities for their journey through Farming Connect.

5.2 Data Gathering

This will include undertaking an impact analysis survey with Customers as well as targeted research to characterise non-participants through Focus Groups to better understand why they are not engaging with the Programme to strengthen the underpinning evidence base for future programmes.

6. Knowledge Transfer Dissemination & Events Programme

The Knowledge Transfer and Dissemination and Events programme will play a key role in communicating messages to the industry through various events, publications, articles, press releases, podcast and encourage engagement and develop our online presence.

INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE:

6.2 Strategic Awareness Events

The programme will deliver Strategic Awareness Events on a wide variety of topics ranging from Diversification Events to Sector Specific Roadshows, Drop-In Events and Workshops. Events will be delivered digitally and face-to-face and content will align with SFS outcomes and industry needs. Farming Connect will work closely with key stakeholders and industry bodies to ensure an integrated, co-ordinated approach to all delivery.

6.3 One to one Surgeries and Clinics

One to one surgeries for engaging with the harder to reach businesses that wouldn't normally access expert advisory services or be comfortable in participating in one-to-many knowledge transfer activities. Clinics are available to provide expert guidance on relevant topics and act as a mechanism to raise technical skills, knowledge and awareness.

The fully-funded clinics and surgeries are offered in slots of between 1 and 2 hours, some held on farms, some at a designated venue or digitally. The topics to be addressed will be in line with SLM objectives with flexibility to be responsive to the needs of the farming industry. Topics could include:

- Succession
- Planning
- Benchmarking
- Marketing

Further details about topics, dates and locations for all events are available on the Farming Connect website.

6.4 Ear to the Ground Podcast

The "Ear to the Ground" podcast will share technical information, advice, support and inspiration to the farming community in Wales. Episodes are just 20 to 30 minutes long and will include interviews with farmers and industry experts on a range of topical themes.

The podcast will be available to listen to on the Farming Connect website and audio streaming platforms.

6.5 Website

The Farming Connect website acts as both a Knowledge Transfer and communications tool. It is hosted by Welsh Government on the Business Wales platform. On the website, users can register with Farming Connect, apply for training funding, participate in a live chat with one of the Farming Connect team and gain access to the E-Learning platform (BOSS) and knowledge transfer resources, including factsheets and technical articles.

6.6 Technical Publications

Four annual technical publications will be produced per year. The publication disseminates knowledge and information from Our Farms and other projects by raising awareness of issues in conjunction with industry requirements, Levy Boards and the Welsh Government's strategic priorities. The creation of the content is largely led by the project Technical Officers and Our Farms Network. Article content will also be linked with wider Farming Connect services where possible.

6.7 Factsheets, Guidance and Technical articles/press releases

Technical articles are professionally written by in house experts, strategic partners, members of sub-contracting organisations or other experts.

Factsheets are produced on findings from Our Farms projects; these are particularly appropriate if there is a tool or process that that can be implemented practically on other farms.

All News articles, Case Studies and Technical Articles are available to view on the Farming Connect website ([see link](#)).

6.8 E-Bulletin

Farming Connect will produce monthly *e-bulletins* to update customers, stakeholders and delivery partners, to update on priorities and key messages specific to Farming Connect. The e-bulletin will be sent to all customers registered with Farming Connect who have provided a valid email address.

6.9 Shows, exhibitions and livestock markets

In order to engage with the industry and promote uptake of the programme, Farming Connect will attend agricultural shows, exhibitions, sector-specific events and sales and livestock markets across each region, with a planned programme which reflects both geographic and sectoral requirements in order to reach target audiences. Joint attendance with the Farm Liaison Service (FLS) at some events will ensure an efficient and integrated service is provided to customers.

6.10 Dashboards

Farming Connect use dashboards to inform stakeholders, delivery partners and beneficiaries on progress made with the delivery of the programme and content will align with the delivery plan for the quarter.

These can be viewed [here](#).

7. Welsh Sheep Genetics Programme (WSGP)

With the aim of further expanding the genetic improvement of Welsh sheep flocks to improve the overall economic and environmental efficiency of the sheep industry in Wales, the programme will focus on increasing the number of sheep farmers participating in genetic improvements of their flocks and the number of farmers recording and utilising Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) for their own breeding purposes and when making purchasing decisions.

Following recruitment of farms, there will be a focus on identifying and recording KPI's for each participating farm and an action plan will be created and implementation support will be provided through a support package including Gearing up to Genetics Workshops which will provide farmers with the opportunity to receive training, view innovative management practices, share best practice and learn from their peers with the aim of implementing management changes to improve the understanding and use of EBV's.

Recruited farms will benefit from;

- A financial support package towards completion of data collection - DNA parentage, backfat scanning – annual Signet cost.
- Advice and guidance on setting achievable targets for genetic improvements within each individual flock by the setting of KPIs and implementation of Breeding Action Plans.
- Opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding of performance recording methodology.
- Opportunities to be involved in data collection for breakthrough research – e.g. breeding for reduced methane production, breeding for worm resistance and the routine production of genomic breeding values.
- Benefit from Farming Connect Support package.
- Opportunities to improve knowledge on developments in sheep genetic field, including innovative technology.

Dissemination of key findings will take place throughout Farming Connect to improve the knowledge and understanding of genetic improvement through the industry.










8. Horticulture Support Service

The Service will provide support for commercial horticulture businesses, delivering an industry voice and opportunities to discuss issues facing the sector.

Recruited businesses will benefit from a comprehensive training programme of study visits, training days, E-Learning and online sessions delivered across grower networks with a focus on sustainability and preparing them for 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. All scales and types of horticulture business will be eligible with the Service working across the supply chain to identify opportunities and challenges, building resilience and improving viability.

Annex A

SLM outcomes:

Clean air	Air which has limited pollution (human made particles and harmful gases) including fine particulate matter, ammonia and non-methane volatile organic compounds	
Clean water	The water environment (including inland water) is sustainably managed to support healthy communities, flourishing businesses and biodiversity.	
Enhanced access and engagement	People are more easily able to enjoy the countryside for health and wellbeing benefits.	
High animal health and welfare	Animals are healthy, productive and have a good quality of life.	
Maximise carbon storage	Creating new and enhancing existing carbon stocks on farms, for example; through increasing soil carbon content, restoring peatland, tree and/or hedge planting and farm woodland management.	
Mitigate flood and drought risk	Farms prepare for periods of low or high rainfall, reducing the risks to the farm and communities from flooding, drought and coastal erosion, including through nature-based flood management.	
Protected natural landscapes and historic environment	Conserve and enhance natural beauty, cultural heritage and the historic environment.	
Reduced greenhouse gas emissions	Farms reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, including through making efficient use of fuel and energy, minimising external inputs and having productive livestock and crops.	
Resilient ecosystems	Maintaining and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems delivering benefits for biodiversity, species and habitats.	
Resource efficient	Taking a circular approach by keeping resources and materials in use for ourselves as long as possible and avoiding all waste.	