



Dathlu Cymru Wledig
Celebrating Rural Wales

Rheinyddiaeth Cwledig Cymru
Wales Rural Network



Blaencennen Farm

Woodland & Forestry

FARMING AND CONSERVATION WORKING IN HARMONY

Farmers and landholders in Wales are committed to helping maintain our natural resources, and thousands participate in the Welsh Government sustainable land management scheme, Glastir.

One of the many farmers and landholders taking advantage of the scheme is hill and upland sheep farmer Garry Williams of Blaencennen in Gwynfe, Carmarthenshire. Garry's farm has 295 acres, including 25 acres of woodland.

Garry manages Blaencennen's land, ensuring that he produces food as efficiently as possible and, like many farmers, he is fully aware of the effects farming has on the environment.

Therefore, while looking for opportunities to enhance the environment and biodiversity on his farm, Garry saw the potential benefits of joining the Glastir Advanced scheme.



BENEFITS OF THE FUNDING

Glastir, which is Welsh Government's sustainable land management scheme, offers financial support to farmers and landholders for the delivery of specific environmental goods and services aimed at combating climate change; improving water management and maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. Glastir Advanced is one of the several strands of the scheme and is a five-year whole farm commitment.

Since joining the scheme, Garry has carried out environmental work on the farm, including hedge coppicing and the introduction of root crops into his grazing rotation. Garry plants around 400-600 new trees each year. All woodland is fenced out to exclude livestock, and trees have been planted to aid regeneration. Along with hay meadows, the farm has semi improved and unimproved grassland to provide a variety of different habitats. Streamside habitat corridors have also been fenced out.

The scheme has allowed Garry to work the land for both farming and environmental benefits yet his endeavours go beyond the farm gate. He and likeminded fellow graziers now manage the local common under the Glastir Commons agri-environment scheme.



Farmers have used common land as a grazing resource for generations, and it is integral to the management of important landscapes and habitats. Common land not only functions as an agricultural and environmental resource, but it is also used for recreational and cultural purposes, making it an important asset to rural communities.



THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT...

Blaencennen is a great example of farming and conservation working in harmony.

"The financial support received through the Glastir scheme has been so important to our business and to the environment here, in Gwynfe. We use some fields for food production, while other fields are used for woodland and grasslands. I believe that it is essential that the business and the environment can thrive in tandem.

"Food production is important to me as it is my core business, but I believe that looking after the environment is equally as important. We, as farmers, need to look at the bigger picture. Everything affects our food production, such as fertiliser prices, soil health, carbon uptake, organic matter, aeration of soil, long-term health of the soil, and clean water. There will be a bigger need for local food supplies, together with looking after the environment, and this is where Glastir can support us.

"Looking after our environment is important and will support our businesses and our future, but we need more young people in the industry. The number of farmers in this area is deteriorating, and we now need to keep our young people in the area for business to thrive. By joining schemes like Glastir, which helps us out financially with the environmental aspects, it allows us to invest in other areas of the business, making it more resilient, and in turn, will keep our local community alive and resilient too."

Garry Williams, farmer and owner of Blaencennen Farm