



General Election Manifesto 2017

Manifesto Etholiad Cyffredinol



#FarmingMatters #AmaethAmByth

Farmers' Union of Wales

We are the independent voice of Wales' family farms.

In 1978 the FUW was formally recognised by the UK Government as being the only agricultural union that exclusively represents the farmers of Wales.

We pride ourselves on the grassroots connection we have with our farmers. We have a democratic and local structure, which mean members influence FUW policy and are the core of the Union.

Lobbying & Campaigning

We lobby and influence Governments at all levels in Westminster, Cardiff and Brussels. We work hard to advance the interests of those who derive an income from agriculture in Wales, and whether on a local council group or national body we are protecting the interest of our members throughout the year.

Information & Development

We also have 11 policy (standing) committees, including Animal Health and Welfare; Milk and Dairy Produce; Livestock, Wool and Marts; Land Use and Parliamentary; Education and Training; Diversification and the Younger Voice for Farming Committees. They meet to discuss key issues, receive information on the latest developments from the policy team, and create action points in the interest of advancing the sector.

These are made up of democratically elected farmer representatives from the Union's 12 county branches, facilitated by a member of the policy team, and chaired by the elected member representative.

Local Support & Guidance

Every county in Wales has a local office, where our team of staff is headed up by a dedicated County Executive Officer. The local CEO is the members' first port of call for a range of support services such as agri-policy queries, appeals, penalties, Glastir and Capital works, farm administration support (including assistance with SAF, BCMS movements and RPW online registration), and they can also provide professional guidance with planning, rights of ways and boundary disputes.

Representation & Local Issues

The county officers meet with local membership to discuss the current state of the industry and help to further shape the FUW's policies. Local FUW officials such as the County Chairman and County President, who have been elected by members, are also hands-on and have an important role to play in representing our members.

Representatives from these groups, the sector committees, the union officials and staff meet quarterly at the 'Ground Council' which is the democratically elected, governing body of the Union. The council reviews the Union's activity as well as discusses current and future agricultural issues affecting Welsh agriculture in a truly grass roots format.

Contents

Table of contents

Foreword by the President	3
Brexit Transition	4
EU Trade	5
Funding	6
A UK Framework for Agriculture	7
Funding	8
The Great Repeal Bill	9
Global Trade	10
Science & Technology	11
Public Procurement	12
Supply Chains	13
Hunting with Dogs	14
Environment	15
Animal Health & Welfare	16
Bovine TB	17



Foreword:

The outcome of last June's EU Referendum marked a unique turning point in the history of the UK, and has led directly to the forthcoming General Election - itself unique, given that the key focus of campaigns will revolve around the single issue of Brexit.

Whilst the Farmers' Union of Wales had a clear mandate from its membership to support the UK remaining part of the EU, we fully respect the referendum outcome, and expect to see the Brexit process implemented.

However, since the 24th June 2016 we have made clear our belief that the process of leaving the EU should take place over a realistic and safe timescale, given the vast magnitude of the work which must be undertaken ahead of and after Brexit.

Failure to take such a pragmatic approach not only risks compromising our ability to achieve positive outcomes for Wales and the UK, but also makes it more difficult to avoid the very real dangers inherent to many of the paths we might take once outside the EU.

Whilst the triggering of Article 50 on the 29th of March has constricted the time period over which vast volumes of work must be done, options which would allow a smooth transition over a safe timescale remain open, and the FUW makes no apologies for supporting a gradual transition rather than a lurch into the unknown.

The mechanics of Brexit will dominate much of the political debate over the coming months and years, but the next Parliament and UK Government must also take the opportunity to shape domestic policies fit for a UK outside the EU.

Those policies must respect the current balances of power between devolved nations, while also taking into account the concerns regarding disproportionate EU rules, regulations and bureaucracy which led to so many voting to leave the EU.

Above all else, those elected must pursue outcomes which negate the risks for those most vulnerable to post-Brexit scenarios - not least our farming families and rural communities - by ensuring domestic support, trade deals and supply chains are fair and fit for purpose.

Since 1978 the FUW has been formally recognised by Governments as representing the views of farmers in Wales. We have no influences from outside Wales, and speak exclusively on behalf of Wales' family farms.

As a neutral organisation not affiliated to any political party, we have a duty to work with both the Government of the day and opposition parties, irrespective of their political persuasions.

For the period of the next Parliament and beyond the FUW is committed to lobbying all those in Westminster to ensure that Welsh agriculture and Wales' family farms receive the attention and respect that they warrant - for the sake of all our futures.

Glyn Roberts, FUW President

Brexit Transition

In February 2017, the House of Commons Library described the review of all EU-related legislation and the transposition of laws under the Great Repeal Bill as *"...potentially one of the largest legislative projects ever undertaken in the UK."*

Yet that process represents just a fraction of the work which must be undertaken as part of the Brexit process - work which includes complex trade negotiations, establishing new border controls and negotiating and establishing systems for sharing important information with the EU and others.

It is for these reasons that on the 24th of June 2016, the FUW called for *"...the UK and EU to agree on a sensible timetable for Brexit ... or risk dire consequences for both the UK and the remaining 27 Member States"*, highlighting that *"There is a monumental amount of work to do in terms of changing domestic arrangements and legislation, including in terms of Welsh devolved legislation, not to mention unravelling us from the EU budget to which we were previously committed, negotiating trade deals and dealing with issues such as border controls."*

Whilst the triggering of Article 50 on the 29th of March has constricted the time period over which such work must be done, options which would allow a smooth transition over a safe timescale remain open. Moreover, failure to find ways to allow sufficient time to undertake that work brings with it major risks.

Foremost amongst these is the damage which will be done to a range of industries, and our economy as a whole, if acceptable trade arrangements are not in place when the UK leaves the EU, and we are forced to default to World Trade Organisation rules.

As such, the FUW calls on the incoming UK Government to:

1. Negotiate Brexit transitional arrangements with the EU which allow sufficient time to reach agreement on trade and other matters which are in the interests of Wales, the UK and the remaining 27 EU Member States

EU Trade

For Wales, the implications of a 'hard Brexit' and therefore losing free access to the EU's Single Market are particularly acute: **around two thirds of identifiable Welsh exports go to EU countries**, while many of our major employers base their companies here specifically because we have access to the EU's 500 million consumers without the costs and hindrance of border controls and World Trade Organisation tariffs.

As an industry, Welsh agriculture is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of losing access to the affluent mainland European markets which are on our doorstep; **a third of Welsh lamb is exported to the continent, and the loss of access to the EU market in 1996, 2001 and 2007 caused catastrophic collapses in farm incomes from which many businesses did not recover.**

As such, if policies have the effect of severing well-established supply chains which currently extend across the current EU, disruption would be widespread, with impacts varying between sectors and devolved regions. Given livestock and livestock products make up 51 and 35 percent of Welsh agricultural output respectively, and the particular importance of the sheep industry, the adverse impacts for Wales of a hard Brexit would be particularly acute.

The FUW therefore calls on the incoming UK Government to:

- 1. Seek to reach a long term agreement with the EU which maintains simple and tariff-free access to the EU's Single Market.**
- 2. Ensure transitional and post-Brexit trade arrangements do not sever established supply chains which are of importance and add value to Welsh and UK produce.**

Funding

Funding for Welsh Agriculture and Rural Development

Wales currently receives around £300 million per year under the Common Agricultural Policy, with Pillar 1 and 2 funding equating to 9 percent and 14 percent of the UK's budgets respectively.

That money not only sustains the farm businesses and rural communities which lie at the heart of Wales' landscape and culture, but also generates employment and economic activities within secondary and tertiary businesses worth many fold more than Wales' financial allocation under the CAP. By comparison, the Barnett Formula allocates a block grant to Wales on the basis of Welsh spending on comparable services in England, given Wales' population compared to England's.

Given that the population of Wales, expressed as a percentage of the population of England, is 5.7%, the incorporation of agricultural and rural development spending within the Barnett Formula post-Brexit would result in a major reduction in the proportion of such monies received by Wales, leading to adverse consequences for businesses across Wales.

Naturally, the combination of such a policy with any reduction in UK spending on agriculture and rural development would have further severe impacts in terms of funding.

Under the current EU Multiannual Financial Framework, the annual EU budget must remain within ceilings agreed for a seven-year period, thereby providing relative stability for Governments and farm businesses alike.

Post-Brexit, there is a risk that significant uncertainty may be introduced, with allocations changing more frequently, thereby fuelling financial instability for businesses and Governments.

The FUW believes the next UK Government should:

- 1. Agree to agricultural and rural development budgets which at least reflect those budgets which would have been in place should the UK have voted to remain in the European Union.**
- 2. Ensure those monies are ring-fenced for agriculture and rural development.**
- 3. Allocate such funding to Wales outside the Barnett Formula, and in a way which ensures Wales' historical allocation of funding is not reduced.**
- 4. Agree to such funding being administered by the Welsh Government in accordance with a UK framework.**
- 5. Establish means or conventions by which to avoid the financial instability which would occur should such budgets be reviewed more frequently than is currently the case for the CAP budget.**

A UK Framework for Agriculture

Farm businesses are the economic, social, and cultural bedrock of our rural areas, spending billions in the wider Welsh economy, whilst producing safe and affordable food for a supply chain that employs hundreds of thousands.

Without the funding provided through the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) framework, the majority of Wales' farm businesses would not survive, leading to the loss of wider economic and social benefits which outweigh the value of Wales' CAP budget many fold.

Under current devolution arrangements, **Wales has devolved powers over agricultural policies** and spending, as well as over a number of areas which impact upon agriculture.

However, all policies and spending must conform to overarching EU Regulations aimed at minimising unfair competition between regions, and ensuring equivalent rules are applied in regions and on farms - an arrangement which allows devolved administrations to implement payment systems and policies which differ, but comply with the overarching principles of various EU frameworks.

Where countries, or groups of countries which form trading blocs, trade with each other, **similar frameworks are generally in place in order to reduce market distortion, either through bilateral agreement**, or (in what are usually significantly less mutually advantageous circumstances) through World Trade Organisation rules.

Irrespective of what trade deals are in place post-Brexit, Welsh farmers will compete against their counterparts in other devolved regions, both within the UK and in other countries, and **the rationale for having a common policy across the UK which minimises unfair competition and market distortion will remain unchanged.**

Given the period over which farmers and civil servants on both sides of Offa's Dyke have dealt with devolution, and the Sewel Convention on maintaining devolved powers, it is essential that such a framework is drawn up in partnership with the agricultural industry and devolved administrations.

Whilst Brexit provides an ideal opportunity to address many of the shortcomings of the current agricultural framework, implementing even relatively minor reforms over short timescales has been shown to cause numerous problems, not least over recent years in England and Scotland.

A UK Framework for Agriculture

Moreover, changes based upon simplistic and idealistic assumptions can have catastrophic impacts, making it essential that detailed analysis and modelling is undertaken before adopting any new policies.

In light of these concerns, the next UK Government should:

1. Recognise the multiple economic, social and cultural benefits of a properly funded agricultural and rural development policy.
2. Acknowledge the current compliance of the CAP support framework with WTO rules.
3. Work in partnership with the agricultural industry and devolved administrations to develop a UK framework for agriculture which prevents unfair competition between devolved regions; protects adequate long term funding for agriculture; and respects devolved powers over agriculture and the need for a degree of flexibility which allows devolved governments to make decisions which are appropriate for their regions.
4. Ensure thorough analysis and modelling of all proposals is undertaken before decisions are made, taking account of impacts on the upstream and downstream supply chains which rely on farm businesses, as well as farm businesses themselves.
5. Agree to a ten year transition period between the current and any future policies.
6. Acknowledge the clear distinction between the direct and wider economic and social value of direct support compared with income foregone payments.
7. Closely monitor developments in those countries against which UK farmers are likely to compete - particularly in terms of reform of the EU's CAP.
8. Exclude charities and inactive farmers from future schemes to ensure funding is directed at family farms.


**Would these local businesses and
services survive without agriculture?**

The Great Repeal Bill

Longstanding frustrations about the impact of EU Regulations in terms of unnecessary bureaucracy and a loss of sovereignty were a key factor in persuading many to vote for Brexit.

While there is no shortage of examples where UK-based administrations have gold-plated rules or failed to take advantage of available derogations, concerns regarding the overzealous and prescriptive nature of many EU rules and requirements were well founded, as were those regarding the dangers of moving towards a federalised Europe.

As such, there is huge scope to review those rules which disproportionately restrict and penalise individuals and businesses, with a view to repeal, or replace with, UK and devolved laws which are fit for purpose.

However, if we are to maintain vital trade with EU and other markets, any such changes must be made in a way which ensures compliance with trading agreements and equivalence with the standards applied in those countries.

Given the volume of work which must be undertaken over a very short timescale in terms of the Great Repeal Bill, described by the House of Commons Library as ***“...potentially one of the largest legislative projects ever undertaken in the UK”***, **attempting to rapidly implement sweeping changes brings with it many dangers - not least in terms of potential threats to trade deals and negotiations.**

The process of transposing EU legislation into UK law also brings with it numerous legal, political and practical problems, since some EU principles do not fit within UK law, while changes which alter the balance of power between devolved administrations and central Government would contravene the Sewel Convention.

As such, the FUW calls on the next Government to:

- 1. Fully assess the implications of repealing, amending or devolving legislation in light of developments such as trade negotiations, and identify those changes which can be made without compromising our ability to access EU and other markets.**
- 2. Ensure the finalised Great Repeal Bill maintains current balances of power between devolved administrations.**
- 3. Where necessary due to time constraints, transpose overarching EU legislative frameworks *en bloc* in a way which maintains balances of power between devolved administrations and the UK Government and Parliament, while committing to reviewing such frameworks post-Brexit.**

Global Trade

International commerce, through trade agreements and other mechanisms, has brought huge advantages to many of the world's nations and peoples, and has served to significantly stabilise international relationships over the past sixty years.

However, globalisation at the pace seen over recent years has also brought with it many problems, not least the displacement of jobs, accelerated destruction of some of the world's most precious habitats and an increase in greenhouse gas emissions.

Recent events in countries such as the USA have highlighted the growing frustrations of those affected by **unchecked globalisation and free trade, and the belief that rapid and uncontrolled trade liberalisation is, by definition, a force for good has been shown to be naïve.**

As the UK seeks to forge a new place in the world outside the EU, there is much talk of free trade agreements with other countries and trading blocs, and the political impetus to be able to demonstrate such agreements can be reached brings with it the danger that deals which disadvantage many of our industries will be hurriedly signed post-Brexit.

For our agriculture and food industries, which employ 3.5 million in the UK, the adverse impacts of a disadvantageous trade deal which liberalises food imports would be catastrophic, while imports from countries which have animal health and welfare and environmental standards which fall well below those demanded in the UK would bring major risks in terms of UK human and animal health, and add to net environmental damage.

Such impacts were highlighted in 2009 by Belfast's Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute, which analysed the likely impact of liberalising current EU rules on food imports. **Their work predicted falls in UK farm incomes and food production which would have dire consequences for our rural communities, completely undermine our food security, and increase global deforestation and food transportation.**

Conversely, Brexit does provide potential opportunities to open up new markets for our agricultural products, which are produced to strict animal health and welfare and environmental standards. However, Governments must be realistic about possible opportunities given past experience in trying to gain access to and expand new markets; the proximity, affluence and sizes of such markets; and the time taken to negotiate most trade agreements.

The FUW would therefore urge a future Government to:

- 1. Investigate opportunities to develop new trading arrangements with other countries and trading blocs which benefit primary producers and open up new markets.**
- 2. Ensure that food security, rural incomes, and local food production needs are a priority during future negotiations.**
- 3. Prioritise negotiations with the large and affluent market which is on our doorstep, in the form of the EU.**

Science & Technology

Research and Development has always been a vital component of a thriving agricultural sector. In future, the need for technological advancement to improve production, and feed an expanding population whilst reducing inputs and mitigating climate change underlines the need for significant public investment into agricultural research.

For many years research has been focussed on lowland agriculture, with genuine agricultural research in upland areas, such as those which dominate Wales, remaining largely ignored.

Commercially driven developments in areas such as precision agriculture have, for understandable reasons, focussed on more intensive forms of agriculture, yet the economic and environmental benefits of adapting such technology for use on more marginal farmland are clear.

Both lowland and upland areas have a key role to play in producing food, as they have done for thousands of years, and policies which have reduced the agricultural viability of upland areas have been shown to have had a negligible and often detrimental impact on ecosystems.

Whilst the private sector has played an increasingly important role in meeting the investment gap caused by cuts to public funding, research priorities and technological developments have naturally become profit driven in a manner **which may not necessarily be in the overall public interest.**

In light of these concerns, the FUW believes that the next Government should:

- 1. Boost research into all areas of agriculture in a manner that properly reflects the importance of agriculture in terms of food security, the environment and climate change**
- 2. Increase funding for agricultural research into upland farming, with a particular emphasis on upland crops, restoring pasture productivity, and transferring technology developed for lowland arable systems**

Public Procurement

Research by the New Economics Foundation has shown that **for every £1 spent on seasonal, local ingredients, a further £1.19 of economic activity can be generated.**

Each year, £2.4bn is spent by Government bodies on food, and while procurement of UK agricultural produce by some Authorities has improved significantly over recent years, there remain significant numbers which fail to support British agriculture, choosing instead to accept produce from countries which often fail to meet the UK's high production standards.

The 2014 launch by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' of Sir Peter Bonfield's Plan for Local Procurement marked an important move towards distinguishing between 'cheapest' and 'best value', and recognition that responsible procurement can bring a range of benefits to wider society.

The decision to leave the EU presents an opportunity to revisit procurement laws and policies in a way which ensures public bodies lead by example in terms of supporting Welsh and UK food and farming businesses.

The FUW believes that the next Government should:

- 1. Further emphasise the benefits of local procurement and work to ensure that the principles laid down in the Plan for Local Procurement are adhered to in a way which results in investment in and benefits to UK businesses**
- 2. Review procurement rules in light of Brexit, with a view to introducing policies which make support for local and British businesses by public bodies a priority**
- 3. Proactively encourage and facilitate public and private sector procurement of UK produce in a manner that supports small, medium and large processors and cooperatives**
- 4. Instigate procurement policies which encourage the creation of new companies and cooperatives which allow smaller businesses to tender for procurement, in order to bring benefits in terms of local employment and redressing imbalances that currently exist throughout the supply chain**
- 5. Do so in a way which raises awareness of and confidence in UK produce, both amongst UK citizens and visitors to the UK**

Supply Chains

Successive changes to policies which govern competition within supply chains have allowed large companies to dominate supply chains in a way that can be grossly detrimental to others, particularly primary producers.

The cross-party support for the introduction of the Groceries Code Adjudicator Act 2013 was therefore welcomed and the FUW supported the appointment of a Groceries Code Adjudicator to police supply chain practises. However, the FUW believes that there is continued justification for expanding the powers conferred to the Adjudicator and also significant grounds for changes to competition rules, both within the UK and across the European Union.

At a European level, moves to address imbalances along the supply chain have been more proactive, and discussions have focussed on promoting a better functioning, more equitable and transparent supply chains, with the central objective of ensuring that consumers pay appropriate prices for food, while farmers, food producers and distributors, get fairer payments for their activities.

The FUW believes that the next Government should:

- 1. Extend the powers of the Groceries Adjudicator to allow decisive actions to be taken which address unfair practices throughout the entire supply chain and not just for the very small number of producers on retailer aligned contracts.**
- 2. Expand the powers of the Groceries Adjudicator to cover significant retailers that would otherwise be excluded from this remit on the grounds that their turnover is less than 1 billion pounds.**
- 3. Review current UK competition rules, with a view to redressing the imbalance of power that exist along the domestic supply chain in a manner that benefits primary producers.**
- 4. Support moves to promote a better functioning, more equitable and transparent supply chain, in order to ensure that consumers pay appropriate prices for food, and that all those along the food chain receive equitable payments for their products and services.**

Hunting with Dogs

Despite the conclusions outlined in Lord Burns' report into hunting, which particularly emphasised the need to take into account the adverse impacts a hunting ban would have on farming and animal welfare in areas such as Wales, The Hunting Act was passed by parliament and has now been in place for more than a decade.

In July 2015, following scientific evidence confirming the Hunting Act's two-dog limit not only **compromises animal welfare, but also undermines the ability to control foxes in areas where pest control is essential to protect livestock and wildlife**, the Government brought forward a Statutory Instrument which would have allowed more than two hounds to flush foxes to guns, thereby addressing such problems.

However, the SI was withdrawn when the Scottish National Party stated it would vote against the change - despite the fact that the Hunting Act does not apply in Scotland, and the change would have brought the English and Welsh law on hunting in line with Scottish legislation.

In a subsequent review of Scottish hunting legislation commissioned by the Scottish Government, Lord Bonython robustly rejected calls for limits on the number of hounds used to flush foxes to be introduced in Scotland, stating that such restrictions "*could seriously compromise effective pest control in the country*".

A survey of 650 Welsh farmers conducted in 2014 found that **75 percent had seen increases in lambs killed by foxes since the 2005 Hunting Act was introduced, while 95 percent suffered reductions in income as a result of predation by foxes.**

As such, Welsh farmers remain burdened with a law which not only compromises animal welfare, but also undermines their ability to protect their livestock.

The FUW calls on the incoming UK Government to:

1. Revoke the Hunting Act in recognition of the scientifically proven and acknowledged adverse impacts the legislation has on animal welfare, agriculture and wildlife.
2. As a matter of urgency, and as a first step towards abolishing the Hunting Act, once again seek to vary Schedule 1 of the Act to remove the limit on the number of dogs which can be used to flush animals from cover, and allow the use of dogs below ground to protect farm livestock - something the Act currently only allows for the protection of game birds.

Environment

Over thousands of years, agriculture has created a myriad of landscapes and environments which define our national identity and play a key part in the physical and mental wellbeing of millions of residents and visitors to the countryside each year.

While many recognise the central role agriculture plays in maintaining our countryside, misconceptions regarding that relationship abound, often promoted by bodies and a media which prefer to scapegoat agriculture rather than accept truths about our natural world which they find unpalatable.

Meanwhile, there are those who are more overt about their contempt for agriculture and the desire to replace our rural communities with an abandoned 'wilded' landscape - moves which would have catastrophic impacts for our semi-natural environment and rural economies.

Such ideas are recognised by most as belonging firmly in the era of colonialism, but there is a real danger that such ideas have gained political purchase amongst some - particularly where misinformation has reinforced existing prejudices.

Yet with appropriate recognition of the role agriculture must play in providing food, protecting the environment and negating climate change, **farming has a central role to play in helping the UK rise to the unprecedented challenges our world faces.**

The Union urges the incoming Government to:

1. **Recognise the key role agriculture plays in maintaining our landscape and environment**
2. **Ensure that environmental targets set for the farming industry do not result in unfair competition and increased imports from countries which have far poorer environmental standards than those which exist in the UK**
3. **Recognise the key contribution the industry makes in terms of local food production, carbon sequestration and food security**
4. **In light of Brexit, Review all environmental regulations in order to ensure they are proportionate and realistic**
5. **Redouble efforts to develop means by which farmers can be rewarded by the public sector for delivering environmental goods**
6. **Increase Government support for existing and emerging forms of green energy**

Animal Health & Welfare

Welsh farming remains proud of its consistently high standards of animal health and welfare, and the industry contributes substantially to the overall cost of animal health and welfare in Wales.

Despite increasing input costs and low profitability, primary producers have to bear significant costs relating to public health and legislative bureaucracy, despite overwhelming evidence that many such measures are disproportionate, inefficiently implemented and/or unsupported by the latest scientific evidence.

The FUW maintains that costs to industry should be minimised and remains fundamentally opposed to a cost-sharing agenda which would further undermine the viability of our farms. Some of the most significant costs to industry and Government have, over the past two decades, resulted from the introduction of exotic diseases into the farmed environment in a manner which is beyond the control of farmers – with Foot and Mouth disease being the most notable example.

There remains a need to recognise the devolved nature of animal health and the need to work closely with the devolved administrations is often overlooked. Indeed, moves aimed at ensuring appropriate monitoring of animal movements within the UK have failed to properly respect devolved responsibilities and the need for joined-up approaches when it comes to the movement of animals between devolved regions – most notably with regard to the creation of sheep movement databases.

The FUW therefore calls on the next UK administration to:

1. **Recognise the high standards of animal health and welfare which exist in Wales, and ensure that costs pertaining to animal health, and any associated bureaucracy, are proportionate, supported by the latest scientific evidence and do not disadvantage Welsh producers in the European market.**
2. **Ensure that Brexit does not hinder the collaborative disease surveillance networks that have been established with EU Member States to share disease information and to provide early disease alerts and warning systems.**
3. **Protect the current GB scanning surveillance budget and ensure that the devolution of animal health powers is properly recognised, including where databases are developed which must monitor movements of animals between devolved regions.**
4. **Increase border controls in a way which significantly reduces the likelihood of exotic diseases, such as Foot and Mouth disease, being introduced to the UK.**
5. **Introduce measures to better control the importation of foodstuffs from Third Countries where exotic diseases may be present.**

Bovine TB

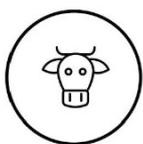
While the problem of bovine TB falls within the broader health and welfare category, and issues relating to the disease are devolved to Wales, bTB policies implemented in England by the UK Government **have a significant impact on Wales and affect the disease status of the UK as a whole.**

Despite differing scientific opinions regarding the efficacy of badger culling, **the presence of TB in badgers is recognised by all credible scientists as a major obstacle to the eradication of the disease.**

Since the last election, the approaches adopted in England and Wales by the UK and Welsh Governments have reversed. Wales replaced a planned badger cull in North Pembrokeshire with a five year badger vaccination programme which was prematurely cut short due to a lack of available vaccine. However, DEFRA's decision to trial the free-shooting of badgers was recently expanded to ten areas of England.

While the Welsh Government's own evidence suggested that **vaccination would be significantly less effective than badger culling**, resulting in increased costs of £3.5 million, the outcome of the English trial remains uncertain, but anecdotal evidence suggests a number of positive outcomes in terms of reducing TB outbreaks and removing long term herd restrictions.

TB levels have returned to epidemic proportions across much of Wales...



1997 number of cattle culled annually due to bTB

613

in 12 months to Oct 2016 number of cattle culled annually due to bTB

9,935



Number of badgers culled in 12 months to Oct 2016

0

TB levels in badgers

14 times higher than cattle

Given the significant financial and personal investments made in the English trials, **the FUW believes that they should continue under any future Government**, and that abandoning them would go wholeheartedly against the purpose of conducting such trials, which is to improve the evidence base upon which key decisions in relation to TB should be made.

As the culling of badgers continues to be the focus of much political debate, the tens of thousands of cattle slaughtered each year and the strict cattle movement controls aimed at reducing the spread of the disease attract far less attention.

Bovine TB

Those controls differ significantly between England and Wales, and the Farmers' Union of Wales believes that there is significant scope for aligning cattle-control policies in the two regions in a way which ensures proportionality while reducing the risk of cattle-to- cattle transmission.

Current levels of bovine TB represent a significant threat to successful trade negotiations, as in many regions, and across England and Wales as a whole, they far exceed the level at which regions can legally be declared 'TB free'. **The FUW believe that the ongoing levels of TB and the absence of a UK plan to control and ultimately eradicate TB in a timely fashion, is a serious weakness in our national negotiations armoury.**

The FUW would look to the next UK Government to:

1. **Ensure that the English badger culling programme continues to be rolled out in order to add to the evidence base in terms of the efficacy of badger control policies.**
2. **Regularly publish detailed statistics relating to TB incidences in badger culling areas**
3. **Implement annual testing across England in order to improve disease monitoring and reduce the risk of infected animals coming in to Wales**
4. **Work with the Welsh Government to introduce uniform and proportionate pre-movement testing measures requiring compulsory pre-movement testing for all cattle in England and Wales, with an exemption from this requirement for 60 days after a clear test for movements from high risk parishes or regions, and 180 days after a clear test for movements from low risk parishes or regions.**
5. **View current levels of TB as a serious economic risk to successful trade negotiations Undertake a formal risk assessment of the implications of current levels of Bovine TB across the whole of the United Kingdom, irrespective of devolved Animal Health responsibilities**
6. **Develop a solution to eradicate Bovine TB in a manner that will confirm the UK is TB free within a timescale that minimises risks to trade**

#FARMINGMATTERS

The only agricultural union that exclusively represents the farmers of Wales, and is recognised by the UK government to do so



Yr unig undeb amaethyddol sydd yn cynrychioli dim ond ffermwyr Cymru, ac yn cael ei chydabod gan Lywodraeth y DU i wneud hynny

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