

EPC(2) 08-05(p3) Annex B

FARMING FOR THE FUTURE- New Actions

	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION	COMMENTS
1	Farming for the Future communications pilot project	<p>The aim of the project, which involves the appointment of two focus groups of farmers plus external consultants, is to determine how the key messages in the Farming for the Future strategy can be better communicated to farming families at the grass roots level. The Assembly Government is funding this project. Aubourn Ltd were awarded the contract in June 2004 to undertake the project with the contract commencing on 5th July 2004.</p> <p>Communication between WAG, industry bodies and farmers were seen as generally poor. The pilot was the first opportunity for grass roots farmers to have their say. Focus groups were recognised a good way of communicating.</p> <p>A structured re-examination of FFF under the pilot programme had increased understanding of the strategy and its implications to the extent that farmers took ownership of work of the Pilot. The report has been completed and delivered to the Minister on 1 March 2005. The only outstanding action remaining is the Minister to meet a small delegation from the Pilot Groups.</p>
2	Entry Level Agri-Environment Scheme	<p>The scheme was opened for applications in April 2005 by means of the new Single Application Form. EC approval is anticipated by end of June 2005. Subject to that approval and secondary legislation being in place, farmers who applied this year are likely to be offered agreements in late 2005 and early 2006, with the first payments being made in the first part of 2006/07.</p>
3	New Environment Strategy	<p>The consultation on the Environment Strategy will be published in July 2005. The consultation will run from July to the beginning of October. The final Strategy will be drawn up on the basis of the consultation by the end of the year.</p>

4	Wide ranging review of TB strategy	<p>Assembly Government consulted in 2004 on the principles on which a new long-term bovine TB strategy would be based. On 1 March 2005, the Assembly Government, Defra and the Scottish Executive published the Government strategic framework for the sustainable control of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in Great Britain. The aim of the framework is to slow down and prevent the geographic spread of bTB to areas currently free of the disease, and achieve a sustained reduction in disease incidence in cattle in high incidence. A number of the short-term measures outlined in the consultation document were implemented from November 2004. The report of the Pre-movement Testing Sub-Group on the introduction of a statutory requirement for bovine TB pre-movement testing in Great Britain has been presented to the Defra Chief Veterinary Officer. The UK Government's response will need to be agreed with the Welsh Assembly Government and also the Scottish Executive and will be followed by consultation on a detailed proposal for pre-movement testing. Timing of consultation is likely to be Autumn 2005. The EPC Committee Inquiry into bovine TB was published in August 2004. Based on its findings, the Committee recommended that the Assembly could put in place a number of measures to contribute to the containment and reduction of bovine TB through its existing powers. In response to recommendation 4 of the Inquiry report, the Assembly has established a Wales TB Action Group in order to look at the other recommendations of the Inquiry in detail. Outcomes of the TB Action group will be considered by the Minister in due course.</p>
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5	Animal Health Planning	Draft action plan prepared on promoting high standards of disease prevention and control through Animal health planning.

6	Development of Community Food Co-operatives in Wales	Funding approved from April 2004 to undertake a 2-year pilot to support the development of local food co-operatives in North & South Wales by bringing together farmers and food suppliers. The objective was to develop a minimum of 26 food co-operatives, with associated links to schools and the communities, to the stage at which they would become self-sustaining. The pilot focuses on socially disadvantaged communities in Communities First areas. A number of local co-operatives have been established. To date 34 co-operatives have been established and discussions are ongoing with other communities across Wales interested in establishing their own food co-operatives. The benefits of eating fresh fruit and veg are recognised and the establishment of co-ops in some of the most deprived communities across Wales is contributing towards Health Challenge Wales – our nationally focused campaign for health improvement. In addition, funding has been agreed for 2007/08 under the Health Challenge Wales initiative to extend the coverage of this scheme.
7	Encouraging schools and hospitals to purchase more Welsh produce	Second public procurement conference held in Wales "supply and Buy Wales 2005 (March 2005). Delegates heard extensive evidence (including case studies) of successes in this area including Welsh organic beef used in school meals in Cardiff, Welsh Beef supplied to North Wales NHS Trust, Locally sourced food supplied to public services in Caerphilly, Welsh meat supplied to schools in Rome. Wales regarded as leading the other UK administrations in this area:
8	New Development Centre on Alternative Land Use	The fifth Farming Connect development centre was launched at the Winter Fair in November 2004.
9	Provision of advice and support on planning matters to farmers	A new planning advice service for farming families was launched by Farming Connect in May 2005. Farmers will be able to take advantage of open meetings, surgeries and one-to-one consultations

10	Young Farmers	The Young Farmers project group is focusing on entrepreneurial opportunities for young farmers, in addition to contact/ share farming. As part of this work, a consultant / facilitator information pack is being prepared to help signpost young entrepreneurs to sources of advice and information.
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11	All Wales Fisheries Strategy	The Assembly is committed to publish a Welsh Fisheries Strategy. The Assembly convened groups have already published reports on commercial and recreational fisheries, and these two reports plus a recent report into UK fisheries, which was produced by the No 10 Strategy Unit, will inform the all-Wales Fisheries Strategy. Delays in the No 10 process means that the Welsh Strategy will now be expected by the end 2005.
12	Rural health and Wellbeing	Contract let to Institute of Rural Health to develop the evidence base for health and well being in rural Wales. Draft Report received and in consideration.

13	Rural Community Action	<p>A package aimed at strengthening working and living in rural Wales, helping to promote sustainable rural communities in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 12 local RCA Partnerships have been established to help build regeneration capacity in local rural communities; ● support is available for rural retail services, including pilot schemes to take retail services back into areas from which they have disappeared, and ● a new Rural Observatory (See below)
14	Rural Observatory	<p>The Wales Rural Observatory has been established to secure the provision of impartial and evidence based support to the Welsh Assembly Government and its partner organisations to improve the understanding and analysis of rural issues. Its activities will cover the whole range of policy issues including economic, social and environmental issues. More particularly, the Wales Rural Observatory will provide the following six key functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data collection and analysis, and the production of rural statistics ● Conduct research on rural issues ● Seek additional funding for research projects ● Track rural findings from studies undertaken in other areas of the UK, Europe and elsewhere ● Evaluate rural policy, including rural proofing and reporting on good practice ● Organise rural policy seminars <p>First Phase Work Programme completed in summer 2004, full reports were published on Observatory website by March 2005. Second phase work commenced over an 18 month period some 11 research projects will have been undertaken by March 2006. Possibility of new contract being considered.</p>

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15	Age Balanced Communities Report - Action Plan	The Rural Partnership agreed to consider the Report alongside proposals for revision of the Rural Statement (see below). But this has been superseded by the development of the Wales Spatial Plan, which requires new delivery arrangements to be developed.
16	Rural Statement	Cabinet endorsed proposals for revision of the Rural Statement on 18 October 2004. However, changed circumstances, eg Spatial Plan and the need to develop a new Rural development Plan post 2006, require a different approach which is now being adopted.
17	Increasing diversity of Assembly Woodlands through Forest Re-Design	<p>The Assembly has introduced a policy to make faster progress on increasing the diversity of tree species on it's estate, through increasing the use of broad-leaves in restocking whilst retaining forest certification.</p> <p>There will be no presumption in favour of replanting with conifers, and the policy will seek to foster more mixed woodland.</p> <p>The Forestry Commissions' Corporate Planning team is working with Forest Districts to identify the cost implications and timescale of the project. A programme of 1500 hectares of direct seeding, including 450 hectares of broad-leaved re-stocking has been identified for the spring 2005 season.</p> <p>The required resources to implement a Prince 2-project management approach are not available and this will lengthen the time needed to complete the project.</p>
18	Increasing the use of Low Impact Silvicultural Systems in National Assembly Woodlands	<p>The Assembly has introduced a policy to accelerate the delivery of Low Impact Silvicultural Systems in Assembly Woodlands.</p> <p>Forestry Commission Planning teams are identifying areas for conversion to LISS management through the Design Plan review process. In some areas this has meant up to 50% of the reviewed area has been designated for future management under LISS.</p> <p>FC are also working closely with the University of Wales at Bangor to implement Tyfiant Coed, an Objective 1 project designed to help predict the costs and management requirements for conversion of even-aged forests to methods of management using low impact silvicultural systems.</p> <p>A second Tyfiant Coed 2 bid has now been approved, and work will now</p>

begin to set up a network of forest demonstration plots throughout Wales that will be linked together on an interactive website. An online distance learning course will also be available on the internet to assist private owners and forestry contractors to develop their skills in the new management techniques.