

Professor Bridget Emmett
UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

4 June 2025

Dear Bridget,

Soil Health in Agriculture

Thank you for giving evidence to the Committee on 30 April, Members found it very interesting and useful. I am writing to ask a follow-up question regarding carbon emissions and soil. In your evidence you said:

"If you think about Wales as the round, soils are a net contributor [to carbon emissions]. Because arables are emitting, and peatlands. Peatlands are four per cent of Wales, but they're contributing nine per cent of the net agriculture and land use, land use change and forestry inventory. As Will said, a lot of our soils are just stable, a lot of our pastures, we can't find trends in those, but the arable is going down, the peatland is going down. So, the first thing is that we must stop that. And then the question is how can you get more carbon into soil."

Last week, we discussed this evidence with representatives of the farming unions. The NFU Cymru told us they "would like to have some more scrutiny on that claim, because the information that we've seen, particularly from the Climate Change Committee report that came out yesterday, would suggest that, actually, carbon within soils is stable and, over historic periods of time, is slightly declining." "So I'm not quite sure where that claim came from. It would be useful to get some more information on that."



Could you please provide more detail on the evidence around Welsh soils being a net contributor to carbon emissions? We would also be interested to hear any views you have on the recent Climate Change Committee report on [Wales Carbon Budgets](#) relevant to the Committee's soil health inquiry.

You also told us that "one of the biggest sources of waste to landfill is soil" because there is no easy way to recycle it. Do you have any more detail on that statistic? We would be particularly keen to know the source of the soil e.g. is it from agriculture, construction or another source? Also, do you know of any work being undertaken to facilitate soil recycling?

Thank you again for your contribution to this inquiry so far and I look forward to hearing your views on these follow-up issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew RT Davies". The signature is written in a cursive style with some capital letters.

Andrew RT Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English

