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Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid
Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Rebecca Evans AS/MS

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Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Andrew RT Davies MS
Chair, Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

18 March 2026

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your follow-up letter from the ministerial scrutiny session on Trade and Borders held by the Economy, Transport and Rural Affairs Committee on 5 March 2026.

We are pleased to provide clarification on all the points you have requested, as follows.

Trade and Borders

An outline of how Wales is represented in conversations with the UK Government and EU negotiators.

Welsh Government Ministers and officials remain in regular contact with our counterparts in UK Government to ensure that Welsh interests are represented during negotiations. Ministerial discussions take place through regular Inter-Ministerial Group meetings, including the EFRA IMG (most recently held on 5 February), Trade IMG (held on 4 March), and IMG UK-EU Relations (held on 21 January). In addition, the Deputy First Minister has participated in three quadrilateral meetings with Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP, Minister of State for Food Security and Rural Affairs, to discuss the ongoing Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures negotiations.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Officials are also meeting regularly with UK Government officials, including fortnightly meetings with Cabinet Office officials who are coordinating the EU reset work.

On SPS engagement is very positive with DEFRA at official level. Officials have dedicated DEFRA – Devolved Government engagement group meetings which provide pre-brief and de-brief sessions between negotiation rounds. This group meets at least weekly depending on the frequency of negotiations. Officials also have a dedicated DEFRA-DG legislation group to discuss the approach to the legislative changes which may be required when any agreement is reached. WG officials are also represented on the DEFRA EU Delivery Programme Board and at the twice weekly DEFRA EU Delivery Programme Ops Board.

In addition to these overarching meetings WG officials attend policy groups across all impacted areas and are part of approximately 25 other DEFRA-DG meetings to discuss specific, technical considerations for the SPS agreement. Each of these meetings give WG officials the opportunity to ensure Welsh Government priorities and positions for the agreement can be made clear to DEFRA officials.

Officials meet with the Department for Education (DfE) on a fortnightly basis to discuss Erasmus+, with officials from the other Devolved Governments also in attendance. Since October, officials have additionally held separate, ad-hoc meetings with DfE and the Devolved Governments focused specifically on the legislative work required to enable re-entry into Erasmus+ from 2027.

For Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), officials have senior and working-level meetings with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) officials, and across the UK ETS Authority, to discuss EU linking including negotiation positions and progress. Officials meet approximately bi-monthly at a senior level and monthly at working levels with additional ad-hoc meetings as necessary.

Officials also meet with DESNZ officials every 3 weeks to input into discussions, and provide the Welsh perspective, on the potential agreement of integrating the UK into the EU's internal electricity market. Officials are also attending workshops which focus on specific areas of the electricity market.

An update on meetings with the UK Government regarding fair payment on scrap metal.

Any update which can be shared on whether the UK Government has plans to align itself with the move by the EU to restrict the export of scrap to non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, who can't demonstrate that they can process scrap sustainably. I would appreciate this also including detail on how the Welsh Government plans to meet environmental targets whilst driving forward on the circular economy, as offered. Information on how Wales can ensure that we maximise better quality scrap for the products we do not wish to be importing steel for.

The issues raised by the Committee in connection with the scrap industry - fair payment, the export of scrap, and quality of scrap - are expected to be part of major policy areas arising from the soon to be published UK Steel Strategy. These are areas in which the Welsh Government expect to strongly participate.

The development of the scrap metal industry in Wales is already important to 7 Steel. We are engaging with Tata Steel to better understand their scrap metal plans and needs going forwards so we can support any additional opportunity this might present. Recycling metals is important in terms of how we approach our net-zero goals and transition toward a circular economy, as well as sustaining our steel sector and wider economic security. Wales's recycling rates have regularly been in the top three to five in the world. Our strict waste separation laws (in force since April 2024) have produced higher-quality, less contaminated material, which is better suited for high-value closed-loop recycling.

Rural Affairs

An update on progress of the Welsh Government's 'Our Animal Welfare Plan for Wales 2021-26', particularly in relation to the linked PFG commitments.

The [Animal Welfare Plan for Wales](#) sets out our approach to delivering Programme for Government commitments and wider animal welfare priorities. With the Senedd term drawing to a close, I have been reviewing our progress, and the latest annual update of the Animal Welfare Plan for Wales will be published shortly.

We have published our response to the consultation on licensing animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits, alongside our proposed next steps. This forms part of our commitment to creating a national model for regulating animal welfare. As part of this work, we are moving to ban greyhound racing as soon as practicably possible. We are also developing proposals to regulate animal welfare establishments, including rescues, sanctuaries, rehabilitation centres and rehoming organisations.

Animal Licensing Wales continues to deliver improved animal health and welfare outcomes by supporting Local Authorities with complex welfare cases and enhancing inspector qualifications to strengthen the professional status of the role. To support this work, we have awarded Animal Licensing Wales a further £1 million in funding for 2026/27.

We are also working to further strengthen farmed animal welfare standards. This includes joint UK-wide consultations on lamb welfare and on phasing out cages for laying hens. Restricting the use of cages for farmed animals is a Programme for Government commitment, as was the requirement for CCTV in all slaughterhouses—a commitment we fulfilled in June 2024. CCTV is now mandatory in all slaughterhouses in Wales.

An update on the operational agreements in relation to the Fisheries Act

The Operational Agreements (OAs) sit under the [Fisheries Management and Support Common Framework Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU). The MoU was published in February 2022, and a list of OAs is set out in Annex 1 of the MoU. The OAs set out how the fisheries policy authorities work together to deliver the statutory requirements of the Framework, and collaborate on wider fisheries management issues of interest, whilst respecting the devolution settlements. Oversight of the OAs remain part of the Fisheries Senior Steering Group's work programme. The majority of OAs are in place, with the Fish Export Service OA remaining in development (given its relationship to the intended SPS agreement). OAs are providing a valuable mechanism to support collaboration and are developed, reviewed and updated when needed, by relevant cross administration policy specific working groups.

Clarity around the rules for a non-AFU setting as contrasted with an approved finishing unit setting, in terms of post-movement TB testing on cattle - including the justification for, and effectiveness of, these rules.

Approved Finishing Units (AFUs) were introduced to provide an outlet for the rearing, fattening and/or finishing of clear tested cattle from TB restricted holdings. There are differences between commercial fattening businesses and TB Approved Finishing Units:

- Commercial fattening farms – are officially TB free herds and can trade as they wish. Cattle can be sold onto other farms and do not necessarily have to move to slaughter.
- TB Approved Finishing Units - are permanently restricted and are only allowed to send cattle to slaughter, or in Wales a single move to another AFU. In Wales, they are only permitted in housed units and operated under strict biosecurity rules. They must be a totally separate business, under a separate holding registration. In Wales, an AFU cannot be approved in the Low or Intermediate TB Area.

Reasons for Pre-movement (PrMT) and Post-movement (PoMT) testing:

- Epidemiological evidence suggests bought-in cattle are an important source of new infection being introduced to herds. PrMT helps reduce, but does not eliminate this risk entirely because cattle can become infected after being tested or because they may be at the earliest stages of infection, which is too early to be picked up by the test.
- In Wales, cattle also need a PoMT within the period 60-120 days after arrival on a holding, when they are moved from a higher risk TB area into a lower risk TB area, to reduce the impact of undetected infected cattle spreading TB.
- The need to PoMT cattle moved from higher risk areas is intended to change behaviours and encourage farmers through informed purchasing to source cattle from lower/comparable incidence areas.
- Similar rules apply in England and the purpose is reduce the risk of transmission of *M. bovis* on the receiving holding.
- GIt is important to ensure good biosecurity, including to isolate and test before imported cattle are allowed to join the resident herd.

Rules and exemptions to PrMT and PoMT can be found online: [Bovine TB: pre-movement and post-movement testing | GOV.WALES](#)

Detail of the organisations who are members of the task and finish group responsible for carrying out the agricultural pollution regulations review.

List below of member organisations to the CoAP Review Recommendations Task and Finish Group.

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board
Afonydd Cymru
Dwrcymru
Farmers' Union of Wales'
NFU Cymru
Soil Association Cymru
TFA Cymru
West Wales Nutrient Management Board
Wildlife Trusts Wales
WWF Cymru
The National Association of Agricultural Contractors
NRW
CLA

Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC)

An update on the corporate culture at HCC, including how HCC has been reporting to the Welsh Government on this matter, and the systems in place to continue reporting into the next Senedd term.

The Welsh Government continue to support Hybu Cig Cymru (HCC) in ensuring the organisation continues to deliver its important work for the red meat sector in Wales.

Ministerial meetings are held on a regular basis with the HCC Chair and Chief Executive to discuss a broad range of topics, including organisational culture. Welsh Government officials hold quarterly Governance meetings with HCC and ensure 'corporate culture' is a standing agenda item at these meetings, which is monitored appropriately.

A strong corporate culture is essential to an organisation's success, fostering engagement, productivity, job satisfaction, and revenue growth. HCC undertakes various initiatives aimed at improving employee well-being.

Any detail on Welsh Government discussion with HCC as it developed its Vision 2030 document, particularly on governance and funding arrangements.

The Welsh Government met regularly with HCC to review and approve the Vision 2030 document before its publication and in line with the requirements of the HCC Framework Agreement.

The Welsh Government acknowledged HCC's significant collaboration with the industry in developing a new vision for Wales's Red Meat Sector.

The introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) provides opportunities for working with a cross section of organizations, including HCC, to deliver bespoke research and innovative solutions to farmers.

HCC is integral to the process and Welsh Government will work collaboratively to ensure the SFS and the development of HCCs Vision are aligned.

Information on when Vision 2030 is expected to be published.

The HCC Vision 2030 was published on 10 March [Vision 2030 - Hybu Cig Cymru](#).

Yours sincerely,



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