

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales  
Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, Amgylchedd a Materion Gwledig | Climate Change,  
Environment and Rural Affairs Committee  
Ymchwiliad Bioamrywiaeth | Biodiversity Inquiry  
BIO 21  
Ymateb gan : Y Grŵp Cynghori ar Ffermio a Bywyd Gwyllt  
Evidence from : Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

Thank you for inviting FWAG Cymru to comment issues surrounding your inquiry into biodiversity.

We offer the following comments:

1. It is of paramount importance that farmers themselves produce the management plan for their farms to deliver on the public goods scheme, and in particular the biodiversity elements of such a scheme. This ensures their ownership of the plan, their commitment to it and that their expertise is harnessed in its implementation. The Government is to be applauded in having the foresight to work along these lines within the Nature Fund and subsequently the Sustainable Management Scheme albeit that the latter, unfortunately, will probably fail to realise its full potential due to cumbersome administrative detail.  
A financial contribution towards the production of a management plan for public goods could be included in the payment for the scheme – the farmer would be free to write this him or herself or alternatively use the payment to fund buying in the services of individuals or organisations – this approach worked very well in Tir Cynnal, for the production of resource management plans, of course.  
The plans submitted could be scrutinised by Welsh Government staff and either approved or amendments requested etc.
2. Priorities need to be identified and payment within schemes must realistically reflect the value of the biodiversity safeguarded or enhanced. There still seems to be a problem with all involved grappling with the idea of placing a financial value on biodiversity – the real value being far higher than any of the price tags put on it to date, we would suggest.
3. Clarity is required on how financial assistance can reach those delivering on biodiversity, under World Trade Organisation rules.
4. SSSIs – our prime sites are not currently being given the attention and financial input required. The reduction in Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru's Section 15/16 budget and the organisation's reluctance to finance the delivery of biodiversity on these sites is of great concern and does nothing to ensure that the farmers and landowners are proud of their sites and work to enhance them. This situation needs to be turned around as soon as possible, we suggest.