

I am a retired born and bred Welsh Veterinary Surgeon and I have worked in Wales all my career. I would like to state that most farms in Wales are family farms, and the main crop is grass, which feeds cattle and sheep. I understand that grass is carbon friendly, and it is not fair to compare Welsh farms to the intensive feedlots that I have visited in California and Canada.

I am truly worried about the snippets I have heard from the Welsh Government about re-wilding type policies. We used to have grouse in Wales when the hill ground was kepted- the hills had controlled burning which is an excellent policy. The new growth is highly nutritious for sheep and grouse and is the best method of controlling ticks.

Due to current re-wilding type policies and an extended tick seasons partly due to climate change we now have a serious tick problem on many farms. I have evidence of five tick diseases which is now prevalent on our hills. One of these tick diseases is Lyme's which is very dangerous to humans. Re-wilding will increase the distribution of these infected ticks and Lyme can be devastating to human health even if diagnosed early.

I am very concerned about Lyme's as my brother became Bipolar in his forties and eventually committed suicide. He had the typical reactions of Lyme's after a tick bite, but we will never know now the cause of his mental illness.

Shooting in Wales is very important economically and all of us who shoot enjoy the open air and exercise. This is a huge benefit to our mental health. I can relax and recharge my batteries when I am at one with nature in a wood whereas cities in my view are a real nightmare.

We have a responsibility to look after the countryside and to leave it in a better state than when we were born. It is our duty to look after it. Sustainable near organic food produced by family farms with a mix of game shooting, some trees, some wind turbines to me seems the way forward.

The countryside needs nurturing and looking after for future generations.

John Hughes M.R.C.V.S.