



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE 27 January 2025 Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DATE 10 February 2025

BY Huw Irranca-Davies, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

In accordance with the inter-institutional relations agreement, I can report to Members I chaired the latest meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 27 January 2025.

The meeting was attended by Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands, Gillian Martin MSP, Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy, Jim Fairlie MSP, Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Andrew Muir MLA, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, and Steve Reed MP, Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.

The Group discussed the work of the UK Government Circular Economy Taskforce. I emphasised the importance of a clear mechanism for UK-wide issues and for governments to work more in partnership with one another.

We held our first deep dive of the year, which focused on environmental land management. This was a useful opportunity to consider respective environmental land management plans and take a holistic view of the common opportunities for improving environmental and economic outcomes across the UK.

The agenda item on Bovine Electronic Identification and the different technologies' advantages and challenges highlighted agreement that electronic identification was important for farm safety and traceability of livestock.

The Group then discussed the role and importance of devolved nations in potential negotiations on developing a UK-EU sanitary and phytosanitary agreement. I stressed the

importance of agreeing how devolved nations would engage in negotiations, stating my preference for real and meaningful engagement.

We discussed the proposed UK Government National Food Strategy, its interaction with devolved responsibilities, and opportunities for collaboration. I emphasised the importance of developing governance structures on how decisions will be taken where there is devolved involvement or interest. I also highlighted that it should be made clear to stakeholders what policy is for England (under UK Government) and what is policy devolved to Wales.

I am pleased that this Inter-Ministerial Group is taking a positive approach to work collaboratively across a range of topics respecting the different policy contexts and priorities within our nations.

A communique regarding this meeting will be published on the UK Government website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inter-ministerial-group-for-environment-food-and-rural-affairs-communiques>