

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS
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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref PO/HIDCC/0089/25

Andrew RT Davies MS
Chair
Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee
Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

31 March 2025

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 24 February as a follow up to the ETRA session on 5 February, regarding the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS).

We have made significant changes to the proposed actions and requirements to make the Scheme more accessible and manageable as set out in the Scheme Outline published on 25 November 2024. It is still my intention to publish the final Scheme as early as possible this summer once the current phase of work with the Ministerial Roundtable and Officials Groups has concluded, and we have the outcomes of the economic analysis and impact assessment.

The analysis is currently underway, and we will have the outputs later in the spring. Ministers will not be making any final decisions until we have this evidence, and it has been discussed with the Roundtable, ahead of the Scheme being introduced in 2026.

Once the final Scheme decisions are taken and the final Scheme design has been made public, we will confirm our engagement plans with farmers. This will provide further information and support to farmers on the Scheme content and the opportunities from Optional and Collaborative Actions available to them. We intend for this to include in person events held across Wales.

I share your views on the importance of providing sufficient multi-year funding to deliver a successful Scheme. We want to get this right with the view to delivering generational change for the future.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Gohebiaeth.Huw.Irranca-Davies@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Huw.Irranca-Davies@gov.wales

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.

We are working with the recently formed Trees and Hedgerows Stakeholder Delivery Group on the SFS scheme level targets for tree planting and hedgerow creation as well as the development of the tree planting and hedgerow creation opportunity plan which will form part of the Universal Layer of the SFS. The information shared with the Group includes the area of land in the low sensitivity area for the Small Grants Woodland Creation scheme: 995,243 ha which represents 48% of land in Wales. The group is considering how the tree planting and hedgerow creation opportunity plan can be designed in a way that enables farmers to take these positive actions in areas which will benefit both their farm business and the wider environment.

In addition to the [Summary Report](#) of the Carbon Sequestration Evidence Review Panel published last November, the full technical report is now being prepared for publication. This includes information on the process of gathering the evidence and subsequent analysis. The full report is expected to be published toward the end of April, once translation and design work are complete.

The Sustainable Farming Scheme is being designed to provide significant and long-term support to create a resilient and sustainable Welsh agricultural industry with high quality food production at its heart. This is a vision that I am sure we all recognise and would agree with.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Irranca-Davies', with a stylized, flowing script.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

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