



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs meeting, 5 February 2026**

DATE **19 February 2026**

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 attended the latest meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 5 February 2026.

The meeting was chaired by Andrew Muir MLA, Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs from the Northern Ireland Executive. The attending ministers from the UK Government were Emma Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs; Baroness Sue Hayman, Minister for Biosecurity, Borders and Animals; and Dame Angela Eagle DBE, Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs. Mairi Gougeon MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands; and Jim Fairlie MSP, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity attended from the Scottish Government.

The meeting opened with a discussion on allocations for the UK Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund. Devolved government ministers expressed disappointment that the Barnett formula had been used as it did not reflect the funding allocations from previous funding rounds, nor the relative size of the fishing sector in each of the devolved nations.

Next IMG discussed engagement and progress on the EU UK SPS Agreement negotiations. Devolved government ministers noted and appreciated the good level of UKG engagement with them to date and emphasised the importance of this continuing throughout the negotiation process. Ministers also agreed the importance of maintaining effective border and biosecurity arrangements whilst the SPS Agreement is being negotiated and implemented. Ministers identified that the process for making legislation to implement an agreement across the UK was a significant issue because the process may need to account for devolved legislatures processing and scrutinising regulations to implement the agreement.

Following this, ministers discussed the UKG Farm Profitability Review (Batters Review) and the UKG Food Strategy, both of which are for England but include recommendations and actions which may affect the other UK nations. Ministers highlighted the need for collaborative working and Defra expressed interest in learning from the devolved governments.

The meeting concluded with Ministers agreeing that legislation to ban the use of peat in horticulture is best done by a joined-up approach and Defra committed to tabling timeline options. Defra ministers shared devolved government ministers' concerns that proposed changes to UK work visa rules would impact the availability of sheep shearers and stressed that discussions were continuing within the UK Government.

Ministers agreed to hold the next IMG in March 2026 ahead of the upcoming legislature elections in Scotland and Wales. A communique regarding this meeting will be published on the UK Government website at: [Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs communiqués](#).