

Minutes

Title of meeting:	Wales Land Management Forum (WLMF) Sub Group on Agricultural Pollution
Location:	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Date of meeting:	21 st October 2024
Members present:	Professor Rhys A. Jones, NRW Board Member (Chair) Dennis Matheson, TFA Sarah Jones, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water Sarah Hetherington, NRW David Ball, AHDB Nichola Salter, NRW Gail Davies-Walsh, Afonydd Cymru Einir Williams, Farming Connect Creighton Harvey, CFF Matt Walters, Welsh Government Andrew Chambers, Welsh Government Chris Thomas, NRW Jon Goldsworthy, NRW Betsan John, Welsh Government Fraser McAuley, CLA Gareth Parry, FUW Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru Marc Williams, NRW Ruth Johnston, NRW Delyth Lewis-Jones, AHDB Lowri Mair Thomas, HCC
Additional attendees:	Nicola Mills, NRW Iwan Williams, NRW Dr Susannah Bolton
Apologies:	Chris Mills, Afonydd Cymru Michelle Griffiths, NRW
Secretariat:	Bronwen Martin, NRW

Item 1. Introductions, Apologies and Declaration of Interest

1. Professor Rhys A. Jones (NRW Board Member and WLMF Sub Group Chair) welcomed all to the Microsoft Teams meeting and noted apologies.
2. The meeting is being recorded for the purpose of capturing the minutes and the digital file will be deleted once the meeting minutes have been approved.

3. No declarations of interest were raised in respect of agenda items.
 - NB: All members of the group have completed declaration of interest forms already but should also declare if they have an interest in anything on the agenda.

Item 2. Review of Minutes and Actions

4. Rhys confirmed that once the meeting minutes have been reviewed and formally agreed by the group, they will be published on the NRW website for the public to access. Therefore, it is important that the minutes are an accurate record of the meetings.
5. The group reviewed the previous minutes from the meetings held on 17th June 2024 and 16th September – both were accepted as true records.
6. Bronwen shared the outstanding actions log and verbal updates were provided where possible.
7. The group discussed the various work that is currently on going within the water quality space and acknowledged the need for things to be joined up in order to prevent duplication.
8. The group was reminded that the [Working Together Consultation](#) is live and closes on 20th December 2024 – members were encouraged to engage in the consultation and share it with their networks.

Item 3. NRW CoAPR Team Update

9. Nicola Mills, NRW joined the meeting to provide an update on the progress of the NRW Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations (CoAPR) Team. A copy of the CoAPR Summary Report for Welsh Government (covering the period from November 2023- June 2024) was shared with the group ahead of the meeting.
10. Nicola's presentation covered some findings to date, including:
 - Number of farm inspections by size
 - Main farm business activity of inspected farms
 - Compliance status of farm businesses inspected.
 - Non-compliances on farms at first CoAPR inspection
 - Farm inspections by animal disease status and ownership
 - Non-Compliances with slurry collection measures and slurry storage measures status
 - Planning consultations & pre notifications
 - Challenges & feedback
11. The inspection programme began in November 2023 and a report has been compiled for initial inspections. As of 30 June 2024, a total of 372 farms have been inspected. Inspections were undertaken across a range of farm sizes where higher risk activities are believed to be carried out and this included a range of farm sizes and business activity. Nichola mentioned that of the 372 farms inspected, 213 farms were non compliant with the regulations and they have outstanding actions that they need to do on farm to become compliant, 136 farms were compliant without intervention and were

fully compliant with the regulations, which is quite healthy figure and 23 farms were brought into compliance after intervention.

12. Dennis Matheson, TFA said it was good that the Cabinet Secretary has taken a sensible approach over wet weather and storage etc. However, having bigger slurry stores does not solve the problem, it only defers it. Dennis mentioned a County Council Farm case where a new slurry store had been installed but it took 4 years from the time the TFA were involved to when the store was fitted and compliant with the regulations. TFA are also very pleased that the Cabinet Secretary is at last taking an interest in getting RPW's cross compliance more aligned with NRW regarding the regulations. Dennis thanked Nicola for the helpful statistics on inspected tenant farms.
13. Gareth Parry, FUW requested clarity from NRW regarding the inspection process and mentioned that a farmer had recently told him that they had received phone calls from an NRW Officer late at night. Nicola said she was not supportive of late-night phone calls and was very interested to know more about the situation so that she could look into it.

AP 21st October 01: Gareth Parry to provide more information about the farmer receiving late night phone calls from NRW Officers so that Nicola Mills, NRW can look into it.

14. Regarding the inspection process, Nicola explained that farmers get a month's notice and are sent a letter informing them. The letter includes contact details for them to get in touch with NRW and encourages them to have an initial chat with the inspecting Officer before the visit. Farmers will receive a post-visit letter from NRW confirming any non-compliances which will have also been discussed on the day of inspection, so there are no surprises. The final check on the Nitrate Management Plans (NMP) are a desktop activity. Officers will look at them on the day, but as there's a lot of information, it is undertaken as an office-based activity. Consequently, we can't confirm on the day regarding paperwork aspects until we've done that final check. Depending on what we found and whether a plan of action is needed, the farmer is given one month to come back to us with details on how they plan to bring that farm into compliance. No contact should be made by NRW Officers until towards the end of that period when they might ring or email the farmer to give them a prompt (if they have not already heard from them). If after the time has passed and the farmer has decided they're not going to engage, then there might be some other concerns such as mental health issues or other challenges. Nicola emphasised the importance of farmers talking to inspectors if they have any concerns, even if it is just a quick check-in email to say that they are working on things, or perhaps they're waiting for a contractor to get back to them, or they have contacted a consultant to do the NMP etc. It is key for some sort of evidence to be provided which demonstrates they are being proactive and working on their plan of action. Nicola acknowledged that some Officers might wait until after milking time to call because perhaps that is the most likely time, they can get hold of the farmer, but late-night phone calls are not supported.
15. Gareth asked Welsh Government about the revised cross compliance verifiable standards. Andrew Chambers, Welsh Government said RPW are going to release information on the changing approach at the end of the month and did not want to pre-empt the announcement. Andrew agreed to take these points back to RPW so they can consider that in the communication.

AP 21st October 02: Andrew Chambers, Welsh Government to feedback to RPW the comments made by Gareth Parry, FUW regarding the revised cross compliance verifiable standards.

16. David Ball asked for clarification regarding the most common noncompliance and suggested there was a discrepancy between the figures shared. Nicola clarified that 127 silage storage measures were brought into compliance. The three most common non-compliances on farms were silage storage measures, slurry management and Nitrogen Management Plans. David discussed Storing Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil (SSAFO) and the new Regulations. Nicola reminded the group that the information shared today was up to June 2024 (e.g. SSAFO was still in place).
17. Creighton Harvey, CFF recalled the presentation Nicola provided on 9th May 2024, where it was mentioned that around 100 farms had been added to the high-risk list due to pollution incidents on those farms. At the time, Creighton requested a breakdown of the locations of those farms and a post-meeting note was added to the meeting minutes - [Natural Resources Wales: WLMF Sub Group meeting minutes - 20th May 2024](#). Creighton asked how many farms have been added to the high-risk list since March. Nicola said she did not have the up-to-date figures, but for the south area, perhaps another 35 farms have been highlighted by the Environment Teams since the end of March. However, Nicola reiterated that the majority of the farms that are referred from the Environment Teams following pollution incidents or spreading outside the closed period etc, are already on the high-risk activity list. Therefore, it is not necessarily creating more work or more visits because they're already on the list. It is more about evaluating the outstanding risk and then assessing whether we pull that forward for a visit.
18. Creighton said we're in a very sensitive time right now particularly as there are various bodies looking at the industry in relation to compliance with the 2021 Regulations. As far as Afonydd Cymru are concerned, geographical distribution is a question which will remain. Creighton requested that every time Nicola provides future updates, she should include information about geographical distribution.
19. Creighton asked for clarification and asked if the 100 farms added to the list were in addition to those that were already on the standard list of high-risk farms for inspection. Nicola said no, the estimated 100 farms were Environment Team referrals because of pollution incident notifications and subsequent risks. Many of these would have already been on the Control of Agricultural Pollution Team list as they come under the high-risk activity category. Creighton asked that in future updates, Nicola also include information on how many additional farms were actually added to the list that weren't already on the high risk CoAPR Team list.
20. Nichola Salter, NRW mentioned that NRW was previously asked about publishing a map of the non-compliances, however, we took the decision not to because we didn't want individual farms being easily identified and putting extra stress on farmers. We have inspected a relatively low number of farms so far, which would likely enable individual farms to be identified (e.g. breaching GDPR). However, once we have undertaken a fuller report at the end of the first 12-months, we might reconsider publishing a map, but it is very crucial that individual farms are not able to be identified within any published information. We care about the mental well-being of farmers and our working relationships with them are very important to bring them into compliance. Creighton said information doesn't have to be published in a way that individual farms can be identified, perhaps NRW can provide that data by county.

21. Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU mentioned GDPR law and reminded the group that protecting the identity of the farmer should be a high priority. Rachel thanked NRW for the report and said it is really crucial to supporting NFU Cymru members with the regulations.
22. Rachel requested clarification on the process for the notification of an inspection because she had heard of instances of NRW Officers turning up on the yard to tell the farmer that they're going to be inspected. Nicola said the procedure is that each farm gets four weeks' notice for the visit. Quite often, the farmer will ring NRW beforehand or send an e-mail to say that that is fine. If we do not hear from the farmer, then Officers are supposed to just turn up on the day at the appointment time. Nicola was not aware of anyone going onto farm prior to the visit, but some Officers might pop in if they're in the area. Nicola asked Rachel to provide details if there is a particular farm that has had someone turning up prior to the visit because that's not the normal procedure.

AP 21st October 03: Rachel Lewis-Davies, NFU Cymru to provide more information about officers going to farms prior to visits taking place so that Nicola Mills, NRW can look into it.

23. Rachel recalled some of the figures for non-compliances, in particular silage stores. This is a really complex area (e.g. buried perimeter drains), so it's really difficult for farmers to demonstrate or retrospectively address any suspected issues. Rachel asked if NRW Officers are picking up on that. Nicola said this is an area of concern and described the types of things observed on farms. We ask farmers to demonstrate, if they can, that things are in place such as perimeter drains etc. We can also suggest that they get a farm infrastructure visit for some additional advice, or consider other options like moving to bailed silage, using field heaps etc. However, this is very much case-by-case, and we have an obligation to inform farmers whether they are compliant or not. The next stage is for the farmer to provide evidence, perhaps that is working with a contractor or potentially providing video footage of drains. We try to offer farmers as much support as possible throughout. Rachel asked whether Officers are undertaking a visual assessment of pollution risk such as pathways to waterways during visits. This regulation should be related to outcomes, but it is much more complex and nuanced. If we're truly interested in outcomes, then surely it is important to understand the actual pollution risk – for example is there a pathway to a nearby waterway, is there an actual visible pollution risk etc. Nicola said Officers work with the Geoscience Team to look at groundwater vulnerability, review the area around the clamp (e.g. rock, soil type, proximity to watercourse etc) and then assess the risks.
24. Rachel mentioned the £52 million that WG has invested since the introduction of the regulations and referred WG to the impact assessment which stated £360 million as the required investment. Rachel asked if WG can provide a breakdown of all the schemes and the windows to which that £52 million was allocated. The vast majority of these grant schemes have an intervention rate of 40%, and farmers are having to find the other 60%, which is really difficult in the current financial context. In terms of a breakdown of schemes and the finance that's been available through those, Andrew said he would be happy to take that back and provide information.

AP 21st October 04: Adrew Chambers, Welsh Government to provide information regarding a breakdown of all the schemes and the windows to which that £52 million was allocated.

25. Rachel also welcomed WG's clarity on cross compliance as there is an awful lot of confusion as a result of the recent statement and changes. In particular, confirmation is needed that the regulations haven't changed, and the closed periods still exist – these regulations are complex. In terms of the communications around changes to cross compliance, Andrew acknowledged that it is critically important that we communicate this properly. Andrew noted that he had seen some things in the press that suggest almost a blanket exemption, which is really concerning, and we obviously don't want farmers to be misled. Andrew reminded the group that we need to remember the context of the £360 million.
26. David mentioned that he is giving a talk to farmers in West Wales next week on these regulations and asked if it would be appropriate to use the information in the report and even the some of the slides to illustrate the areas of common non-compliance. Nicola and Iwan confirmed that the information could be shared.

AP 21st October 05: Bronwen Martin, NRW to share a copy of the presentation from Nicola Mills, NRW on the work of the CoAPR Team.

Item 4. The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021: 4-year review

27. Dr Susannah Bolton (Independent Chair for the Review) was grateful for the opportunity to engage with the group regarding the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 4-year review process.
28. Susannah recapped the approach to the review – this is primarily about the effectiveness of the regulations in relation to tackling water pollution. The review will need to be complete by the end of March 2025.
29. Susannah said she is keen to meet with as many stakeholders as possible to understand the existing evidence base and to listen to commentary. Some initial meetings have already been held with the farming unions, National Association of Agricultural Contractors and supply chain organisations. Susannah is also interested in meeting with environmental organisations.
30. Susannah reiterated some key points regarding the review:
- Effectiveness of the regulations – taking a broad understanding of what 'effectiveness' actually means, both in terms of water pollution, but also the effectiveness relating to the uptake and how useful they have been in driving change.
 - Impact – more broadly, in relation to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Land Management Duty of the Agriculture Act, but also looking at the Future Generations and environmental statutory and international obligations.
 - Review the alternative measures – it's been very interesting to read and understand those and the work that's gone into already thinking about alternatives.
 - The way in which the Agricultural Pollution Regulations sit alongside wider environmental regulations and the regulatory environment in which it operates and understand those links and potential trade-offs.

31. Creighton thanked Susannah for the opportunity for Wales Environment Link (WEL) to meet with her to discuss the review. Creighton offered a steer by referring to Regulation 6 which is in relation to spreading organic manure or slurry to agricultural land for crop need. Creighton recalled a recent television interview with a farmer in relation to the implementation of the closed period. The farmer talked about the need to 'get rid' of his slurry – however, WEL are concerned that people are still talking about getting rid of slurry when Regulation 6 is clearly about crop need. Initially, people were saying it's a valuable nutrient and no farmer would want to waste it but we are often reminded that for many farmers, the issue is not the crop need, it's about getting rid of their slurry because there is too much of it for the available landmass.
32. Fraser McAuley, CLA asked about time frames and next steps. Susannah said this isn't a formal consultation, but she intends on spending as much time over the next few months collecting and to listening to commentary so that the evidence base is as broad and effective as it can possibly be in informing the response to the review. We will need to start preparing the report soon and have an early draft in January 2025.
33. Gareth asked if Susannah could provide clarity on some meeting dates and how she envisages undertaking future meetings (e.g. through the WLMF Sub Group, a separate group or with individual stakeholders). FUW very much welcomed the initial meeting a few weeks ago to discuss some points around this review. Susannah said she was relying on WG colleagues to ensure that a good cross section of meetings are set up. Andrew said those who have not already spoken to Susannah should expect to be contacted shortly to firm up some additional dates. Andrew mentioned the intention to do something on the review at the Winter Fair, but details are still being finalised – this could be an important engagement session for stakeholders. Susannah reminded the group of the challenge of having many interested parties which makes managing this effectively within the time frame very difficult. Some really valuable meetings have already been held already. The review will be informed by all those meetings.
34. Gareth challenged the earlier comments made by Creighton and said the industry is currently in a position where farmers were being forced to dispose of slurry before the closed period – even those that have the storage requirements in place. Gareth acknowledged Regulation 6, but suggested that the regulations in their current form do not take into account the fact that crop need is changing and grass is growing for a far longer period due to the change in climate (e.g. late silage crop is pushing the growing season on, grass growing all year round in some parts of Wales etc).
35. Sarah Jones, DCWW introduced herself and offered Susannah the opportunity to speak with Dwr Cymru Welsh Water to gain feedback from a water industry perspective (e.g. Drinking Water Catchment Teams, Biosolids Teams etc). DCWW look at water quality from a drinking water perspective to serve our customers which might also link into the impacts on the economic and social aspects of the regulations.
36. Susannah said there is a significant evidence base that's been collected from NRW and asked if any other organisation has existing data or evidence that they think would be pertinent to the review. Susannah explained that the format of the report will include an analysis of the evidence and then the detail will be included within an accompanying evidence pack. The report will need to be in an accessible and readable format and a separate evidence pack will sit alongside it. Sarah Jones asked if the requested data and evidence should be qualitative, quantitative or both. Susannah explained that she

is more interested in evidence per se, and that should also include qualitative evidence as well.

37. Rachel mentioned that NFU Cymru currently has a live survey for farmers to feed in their views on the regulations. It has generated a lot of interest, and we would like it to be used as evidence for the review. Rachel asked if there was a deadline to provide evidence because they wouldn't want to miss the opportunity to feed in information from hundreds of farmers. Susannah asked about the closing date of the survey. Rachel said they are flexible as it is being run by NFU colleagues in Stoneleigh – they are looking at closing it at the end of this month. Rachel suggested that findings could be sent to Susannah in November, if that's reasonable. Susannah said November would be very helpful as the evidence pack will be collated by the end of November. However, we won't disregard anything that is received in early December, but the deadline will be looming.
38. David recalled that the review will be looking at the economic and social and asked whether it will also be looking at the actual regulations. Earlier comments referenced the attitudes of farmers saying they need to get rid of slurry because of certain restrictions that are put upon them. However, there must be evidence that led to the closed periods, and there may be newer evidence suggesting that grass growth is now slightly different to what it used to be. David asked if Susannah is able to include evidence that might suggest that the close periods could be replaced with some other method of assessing whether or not spreading slurry, for example, is appropriate or not appropriate. Susannah said the way in which the regulations are implemented, is something that will be looked at as part of the review. One of the objectives of the review is to look at the proposed alternative measures and we will also be looking at whether there's new evidence to support the proposed alternative measures.
39. Dennis mentioned that WG have been a part of the Sub Group since it was formed and are well aware of the problems faced by tenant farmers on any regulations which involve building new structure etc. Dennis recalled the figures from the earlier presentation relating to a small number of tenant farmers that were non-compliant, compared with the total number. TFA Cymru would welcome a conversation with Susannah regarding the review, it's important that concerns are heard and considered. Dennis said the timescale for the review is very tight and suggested that a more realistic timeframe would be to finalise the report in April 2025. Susannah said she looks forward to arranging a meeting with Dennis. Susannah said she wished there was more time but was confident that it can be achieved.
40. Susannah mentioned a very valuable meeting was held recently with NRW. Nichola Salter said she has been tasked with collating NRW's evidence including data relating to the Nutrient Review, SAC Rivers Project, water quality WFD data, pollution statistics etc. Nichola is also collating information from colleagues in Operational Teams, the Control of Agricultural Pollution Teams, policy colleagues and others across the organisation. This will also include anecdotal information about implementing and enforcing the regulations.
41. Susannah discussed understanding the types of data they will be looking at. It's hard to generalise the whole of Wales using quantitative data and because of the phased implementation approach, there's going to be some quite severe limitations. Susannah is also interested in possible case studies or case study catchments that give an indication of what might be possible (e.g. existing evidence of good practise, farmers

making a difference through collaborative community action or working with environmental bodies). These types of case studies would be very informative and asked the group to share any examples for Susannah to explore.

AP 21st October 06: The group to share examples with Dr Susannah Bolton of case studies relating to good practice, collaborative projects, community action or farmers working with environmental organisations etc.

42. Susannah said she is also keen to get out on farm as well and this should also complement the more specific case study understanding.
43. Creighton mentioned that the Interim Environmental Assessor is limiting her examination in relation to agriculture because of this review. However, another of his concerns is regarding fodder growing, particularly maize growing in south west Wales within the intensive dairy belt. Creighton asked whether the review will be considering evidence regarding fodder growing for the dairy industry because there are issues around maize and the lack of ground cover in the winter. Susannah said this is a difficult question because there are certain aspects that are outside of the scope of the review. Susanna said she is interested in highlighting where there are links and important connections but in relation to that specific question, it would need to be checked with the relationship to the regulations. Matthew Walters, Welsh Government said in terms of soil loss and soil loss as a contributor to environmental damage, then the action of soil loss and what may lead to that would be part of the review. We wouldn't strictly be looking at a specific sector doing a particular activity/process. For example, if cover cropping is potentially something we could or should consider, it's something we could look at within the review. Therefore, we'd be more interested in the outcome of not having cover crops and field coverage and the potential soil loss as a vehicle for pollution, rather than it being related to a specific sector doing a certain type of activity. Creighton said his concern is that this issue might fall between the gap and go unexamined either by this review or by the Interim Assessor.
44. Gareth suggested that we should all be mindful of the fact that alongside this review, there's a huge amount of work going on in the background, particularly regarding the development of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). There are certain actions within the SFS which will complement nutrient management within the wider picture. The SFS is going to be a massive step change for the industry and there is no doubt that there will be some knowledge benefits in terms of wider farming practise. Creighton said Afonydd Cymru has spoken to dairy farmers in relation to the SFS and is concerned that a large proportion of them (certainly in this area) will not join the SFS – at the end of the day is a voluntary scheme. There is a risk that there will be a substantial sector which uses practises which could cause increased pollution, which could then also cause flooding and other issues. Creighton asked Susannah to consider these concerns. Rachel referred to Crieghton's points and said we can't draw that conclusion yet – there has been a lot of work taking place over the summer and into the autumn on developing the SFS. The revised proposals for the SFS are not in the public domain at this stage and therefore, farmers are not in a position to judge whether it's attractive and feasible for them to join or not. It's important to remember earlier comments made by farmers were based on previous proposals. A lot of work has taken place to revise those proposals at Ministerial level within the Round Table discussions.

45. Nicola Mills welcomed Susannah to join NRW on a visit and suggested that it might provide some clarity around things on the ground. We can arrange for you to visit a couple of farms one day.
46. David acknowledged concerns around pollution of rivers, particularly from phosphates and sediment. However, the regulations were set up and designed to address nitrate pollution, they do not mention much about measures to help with phosphate pollution or run off from fields. Creighton said that highlights his point that there is a gap in which issues such as this will fall between. Andrew said although the regulations are leaning towards nitrates, they are designed to prevent and reduce pollution to water irrespective of the nutrient and to deliver against a wider range of obligations derived from statutory requirements or international obligations much wider than just nitrates. David mentioned that in England, the Environment Agency (EA) take a very hard line, particularly in the south west where farmers grow risky crops on risky soils – the EA have said if you do that, then you can expect a visit. Although this is in relation to the Farming Rules for Water, which only applies in England.
47. Suzannah asked the group about things other than nitrates. In some instances, the regulation is perceived as an extension of NVZs but that is not the intent behind the regulation, it is broader than that. Susannah wanted the group's thoughts on this and whether they were aware of any existing qualitative and quantitative evidence that might be available (e.g. understanding of the implementation of the regulations, the ways in which they are perceived etc.).
48. Gareth said having robust data as a basis for this review is crucial for all pollutants. FUW welcome the acknowledgment of limitations to the current data base to determine the effectiveness of the regulations in their current form. This group has previously discussed the use of modelling, particularly around limitations linked to predictions and assumptions. The way we look at different pollutants has a direct impact on the way we look at the social and economic impacts of these regulations. It's clear that these regulations aren't perceived as production limiting or livestock number reducing regulations, but in reality, that's what they are in some instances. For example, the nitrogen holding limit of 170 kg/ha effectively sets the factor of stocking rates on farms that are near or above that current limit. We really need to be careful about how the review is considered in that space. Susannah said she is really keen to properly understand the social and economic impacts and to provide some response in the report around the potential impacts (both positive and negative) on farm businesses and the supply chains.
49. Rachel reminded the group that there was a commitment under the Plaid Cymru cooperation agreement and has been reiterated since, that there would be a Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) undertaken for the 170 kg/ha limit. Rachel asked for an update on this process. Andrew said work on the RIA is under way. The outcome is expected mid-November and that will be available as part of the review. Rachel also asked if the Terms of Reference for the review has been published. Andrew said they are in the process of finalising the document and it will be published online shortly. Rachel said previously, the draft impact assessments have been shared with stakeholders to sense check some of the rationale and the methodology approach adopted. Rachel asked if a similar process was planned for the RIA. Andrew said the timeline is challenging so in terms of feeding back prior to that work being completed, that would be too difficult. WG intend on publishing the RIA as part of the evidence pack alongside the review and they would welcome any comments following that.

50. David asked if he would be able to say anything about the 170kg/ha limit next week when he attends the farmer meetings – the Enhanced Nutrient Management Approach (ENMA) was only for one year so are WG suggesting to farmers that they go back to the 170kg/ha rule or is it being reviewed. Andrew said as the regulations stand, the 170 kg/ha rule will come into play for all farms from January 2025. Only 9 farms took up the ENMA, so theoretically that should only impact those 9 farms. We acknowledge there are some difficulties and concerns around the 170kg/ha limit, and these have been raised again and will be considered as part of the review.
51. David recalled a presentation in North Wales regarding the ENMA and the general consensus from farmers attending was that notifying was too complicated. Susannah acknowledged this feedback and said it is important for the review to recognise the barriers to potential support and incentives. Gareth agreed with the complexity of that process, but said it was welcomed because it provided a lifeline for those that needed it. Gareth was concerned that there were far more than 9 farms in Wales that needed it but was not surprised so few notified due to the complexity of it all. Farmers are still coming to terms with what is required of them. Gareth requested that WG consider an extension of the ENMA for those 9 farms that have been operating under it, particularly so that the review can be concluded. Hopefully this will also be considered as part of the wider review, otherwise it will put those farms in a seriously difficult position where they might have to reduce their stock number significantly by the end of the year. Andrew said it is really challenging because we don't want to lead farmers into a position of thinking there will definitely be something coming out of the review. There are challenges around this, but there is time for them to plan to make sure that by the end of the year, they're not exceeding the 170kg/ha limit. Gareth mentioned that from a milk contract perspective, production will be low over the winter, whereas from April onwards (when grass growth is highest and most livestock will be going out to graze), it will be far easier to manage milk production to maintain their contracts than it would be in December. Gareth suggested that there are some practicalities that should be considered, and perhaps an offline discussion between FUW and WG is required.
52. Susannah thanked the group for this really valuable and interesting discussion. Notes have been taken and Susannah will follow up with members.

Item 5. Any Other Business

53. Dennis mentioned that TFA are very busy working with WG on the development of the SFS to make sure tenant farmers get full access to the scheme.
54. The next meeting will be on Monday 18th November 2024.
55. No other business was raised.