

Welsh Government Response to the Independent Review of Learning Delivered by Further Education Colleges and the Relevance of that Delivery in Supporting Farm Businesses in Wales



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu
Gwledig: Ewrop yn Buddsoddi
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for
Rural Development: Europe Investing in
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Response and Action Plan

	Recommendation	Response	Responsibility	Action	Timescale	Progress – July 2016
1	That a small group is convened by Lantra consisting of key individuals from the colleges, the sector levy funded bodies and farmer employers to move the agenda forward on the issue of apprenticeships. The FE colleges may be able to identify and disseminate the good practice in other sectors in this regard.	Accept	Welsh Government and Lantra	The Further Education (FE) Apprenticeships Department within the Welsh Government's Department for Education & Skills (DfES) will facilitate the creation of a small group to consider good practices and how employer engagement can be improved in this area. It is anticipated that the group will hold its first meeting during the Summer of 2015.	Summer 2015	Completed. The Apprenticeships Unit, within DfES, in collaboration with Lantra are taking this recommendation forward.
2	That the three primary providers of Level 3 Agriculture courses, namely Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Coleg Cambria and Coleg Sir Gâr should be encouraged and supported to develop a coherent, cooperative and complementary approach to support the vision for agriculture and work up their plans for co-operating as a priority. In this they should work to include other colleges.	Accept (in principle)	Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Coleg Cambria and Coleg Sir Gâr	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and all FE providers who offer Level 3 Agriculture courses in Wales, to set out his vision and encourage cooperation between the FE providers.	Spring 2015	Completed. A successful meeting was held between Professor Wynne Jones and Welsh Further Education Institutions. The Colleges were happy with the report and accept this recommendation. They are currently looking to develop their curriculum, CPD and knowledge exchange techniques and have since formed a Network of Colleges to provide a more integrated pan Wales service. The network has also formed part of the successful tender bid for knowledge transfer under the Farming Connect Framework.

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						The Network of Colleges submitted, in May 2016, a proposal for RDP funding to establish a networking project based on a collaborative approach to provide access to the exemplar college farms and establish training solutions for identified industry needs. The project has received approval in July 2016 and will commence in September 2016.
3	That the Welsh Government puts measures in place to ensure greater integration between service providers when allocating funding. It is important to develop the success of current initiatives such as Farming Connect and build greater capacity in Wales, utilising where appropriate the public resources available. Alignment with other UK platforms and access to funding opportunities from elsewhere should be encouraged wherever possible.	Accept	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government will develop the success of current initiatives such as Farming Connect, through the next RDP, and build greater capacity in Wales, as recommended in the Gareth Williams review of Farming Connect. Through its Planning and Funding Framework, DfES will encourage integration of provision and ensure that there is no nugatory competition.	Autumn 2015	Completed. This recommendation is being addressed under the new Farming Connect programme , which began in autumn 2015, and is delivered through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP). It delivers a pan-Wales programme of knowledge transfer, specialist advice and innovation support and has been developed in consultation with the Agriculture industry and takes account of recent independent reviews and evaluations. Eligibility for the new

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						programme has broadened to enable more businesses and persons engaged in the agricultural, forestry and food sectors to participate. It is aligned with other Welsh Government business support packages and activities including Business Wales and Resource Efficient Wales. DfES are continuing to encourage the integration of provision in its ongoing engagement with FE providers in Wales.
4	As an element of the emerging strategy for Welsh agriculture a group should be established to develop an Agricultural Education and Development Strategy for Wales. The group, initially, should be established on a Task and Finish basis to produce a strategy and action plan. Thereafter, it could be reconvened periodically (every 2 years) to monitor and evaluate progress and uptake of the strategy.	Accept (in part)	Welsh Government, FE and HE representatives	An Agricultural Strategy Framework is being developed to set out the vision for agriculture in Wales and the actions needed by Government, Stakeholders and farmers if that vision is to be realised. The Strategy Framework will consider agricultural education, learning and support for farm businesses in Wales so a separate strategy specifically for education is not considered necessary. The three primary providers of Level 3 Agricultural courses will be encouraged to feed into the development of the Agricultural	Autumn 2015	Ongoing The Colleges understood and accepted the rationale for not having a separate agricultural education strategy. They will decide on a nominee to represent the views of the group to Welsh Government and contribute to the development of the Agricultural Strategy Framework, through the work of the Strategic Framework Partnership Group. The Farming Connect Lifelong Learning and Development Programme Strategic Advisory

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				Strategy Framework as part of the approach agreed in recommendation 2. The Gareth Williams review of Farming Connect recommended the continuation and broadening of the Strategic Advisory Board which will also provide advice on skills development and Continuous Professional Development.		Sub Group will include representatives from Welsh universities and colleges, with the aim of providing advice and guidance on a wide range of skills, training and qualifications, to benefit the agricultural industry in Wales. The work of developing a Agricultural Education and Development Strategy for Wales will be taken forward by a sub group of the Strategic Framework Partnership Group.
5	That the Strategy Group should pay particular attention to structure, content and delivery challenges of Level 3 provision in agriculture. It is essential that the qualification decided upon meets the requirement of industry and National Occupational Standards in addition to the usual educational objectives. In the medium term, it would be desirable to establish this level of qualification as a minimum entry requirement for those wishing to run a farm business in future. Furthermore, the strategy group should also ensure that the Level 4 provision fulfils the technological demands of various agricultural sectors thus enabling continued	Accept (in part)	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government recognises the need for further modernisation and resilience within the agricultural industry in Wales and this is being picked up especially in respect of the Agriculture Strategy Framework. There is ongoing monitoring of the appropriateness of qualifications through the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW). This process verifies the importance of each of the educational courses to the industry. The ongoing review of Qualifications will see the	Ongoing	Completed. Work has been undertaken by Lantra and other sector bodies on regulated qualifications, to assist in the prioritisation of qualifications. The work will be taken forward by a sub group of the Strategic Framework Partnership Group.

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	learning opportunities in those technologies allied to managerial training.			establishment of Sector, Qualification Advisory Panels (SQAP), and will be using the Sector Qualification Priority (SQP) activity, which aims to reduce the number of qualifications entering the system. Sector representative bodies review pending qualifications and provide a sector view on their relevance (in terms of progression to next-stage education or to employment) and value (in terms of broader educational benefit for the learner).		
6	Once the main providers noted in recommendation 2 have formulated a collective approach and close collaboration as learning, development and technology exchange hubs, they need to establish a coherent working relationship with key universities in Wales with strong agricultural education and research specialisms to exploit their joint resources to the full and maximise opportunities. The colleges need to establish within their hubs close links with the Farming Connect service in Wales, the key levy funded bodies supporting Wales and other relevant organisations, including	Accept (in principle)	FE and HE representatives	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and all FE providers who offer agriculture Level 3 Agricultural courses to set out his vision. This meeting should encourage cooperation between all of the providers in Wales and the development of exchange hubs should be discussed and moved forward by the group.	Spring 2015	Completed. As mentioned in recommendation 2, a Network of Colleges has been established to provide a more integrated pan-Wales service. The colleges involved submitted a proposal for RDP funding in May 2016 to establish a networking project based on a collaborative approach to provide access to the exemplar college farms and establish training solutions for identified industry needs. The project received approval in July 2016 and will

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	Natural Resources Wales. It is relevant to consider forming hubs to cover north west, north east, south west and south east Wales.					commence in September 2016. The collaborative partnership will also work with key universities and Farming Connect.
7	In order to embrace the activities related to the proposed broader remit of the FE colleges sector, there is a need for staff development in innovative agricultural technologies to complement their pedagogic expertise. The relevant colleges should engage in discussions with IBERS to adopt the Advanced Training Partnership (ATP) in order to provide for the technical and professional development of its staff in grassland and ruminant agriculture. The ATP for staff could also tap into similar arable and food initiatives operating out of Nottingham and Reading universities respectively.	Accept (in principle)	FE and HE representatives, IBERS	It is expected that the group proposed by recommendation 2 will include within its remit an action to engage with IBERS to develop the Advanced Training Partnership for their staff and to promote best practice.	Spring 2015	Completed. This recommendation was discussed at the meeting (see progress update under recommendation 2) and Professor Wynne Jones has met with IBERS. The Colleges are developing a joint strategy to collate, disseminate and demonstrate best practice to the Agricultural sector in Wales. This will include a range of technical up-skilling opportunities and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for those employed in the sector. They form part of the successful tender for Knowledge Transfer and Innovation through Farming Connect. The Network of Colleges submitted a proposal for RDP funding in May 2016 to establish a networking project based on a collaborative approach to provide access to

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						the exemplar college farms and establish training solutions for identified industry needs. The project received approval in July 2016 and will commence in September 2016.
8	That a database is created to collate and record all students from Wales engaged with FE and Higher Education (HE) agricultural provision. It is difficult to gain any estimate of demand for people in the industry, and hence makes any reasonable assumptions on supply meeting the demand difficult. This data would enable better estimates of demand for new entrants, progression opportunities as well as training and education needs.	Accept (in principle)	Welsh colleges and universities, Welsh Government	The FE and HE institutions in Wales currently record and collate their own statistics on students. The Welsh Government can see benefit and will encourage the FE and HE sector in Wales to share data.	Ongoing	Completed. The recommendation was discussed with the Further Education Colleges in April 2015. Further discussion has taken place to encourage the FE and HE sector in Wales to share data through the group and the FE land based network. The Colleges have agreed a strategy for working in partnership through a College Network initiative.
9	That a serious commitment to professional development is required for those already in the industry to keep up with the evolving technological developments and business competitiveness.	Accept	Industry and Welsh Government	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and industry stakeholders in Wales to set out the vision for professional development. The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development and supports the	Autumn 2015	Completed. The Welsh Government is seeking to deliver on its part of this recommendation through its membership and work of the Strategic Framework Partnership Group and the Vision it shares with the industry for a prosperous, resilient agriculture industry in Wales. The Welsh Government

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				need to keep up with evolving technologies. The Welsh Government aims, through the next Rural Development Programme, to develop the managerial, business and entrepreneurial skills of individuals while continually promoting the use of ICT. This is considered to be a very important building block in the context of the Welsh Government vision for agriculture and the new Agriculture Strategy Framework designed to deliver that vision.		has put a number of levers in place to help this agenda, including, importantly, the Farming Connect Programme. Widespread acceptance of and commitment to professional development within the industry will require sustained action by all key stakeholders.
10	The Welsh Government should invite tenders to develop and operate an accreditation framework for all Continuous Professional Development activity in Wales. The framework will build on and be compatible with the developments on skills passports as well as those existing sectorial CPD programmes e.g. Pig Pro and Dairy Pro. The framework should recognise the considerable comparability between the dairy and red meat sectors in Wales and should have support of these sectors and of the farming unions and other relevant organisations in Wales. At this	Accept	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development and supports the need to record and evaluate the information. In order to achieve this, the Welsh Government will develop and operate an accreditation framework for all Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity in Wales to support and enhance the growing professionalism of Agriculture. The accreditation framework will	Autumn 2015	Completed. This recommendation is being addressed by new Farming Connect programme, which commenced in autumn 2015, and is delivered through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP). The Farming Connect Lifelong Learning and Development Programme will develop and deliver a coherent overarching CPD framework for all Farming

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	stage, it is my considered view that we should adopt a voluntary rather than compulsory approach to CPD.			be integrated and complement existing accreditation and Continuing Professional Development Programmes.		Connect Knowledge Transfer, lifelong learning and development activities.
11	In future, an increasing amount of learning, professional development and technical and business information gathering will take place on the new media platforms. This will require good rural penetration of high speed broadband, easily accessible online learning and coherent signposting to technical data held online by various organisations. I recommended that the colleges and university sector conduct an audit of sources of information on online learning material in the area of farm business and financial management and marketing. Should there be insufficient online material available in this regard, I recommend that the Welsh Government should tender for the development and delivery of such material.	Accept (in part)	Colleges & University sector, Welsh Government	An audit by the Colleges and university sector of information on online learning material in the area of farm business and financial management and marketing to avoid unnecessary duplication and complementarity is welcomed and will be suggested to the three primary providers of Level 3 Agriculture courses group proposed as part of recommendation 2. The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development. There will be an opportunity through Farming Connect to tender for the provision of services under the Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020.	Autumn 2015	Completed. The Colleges' strategy for working in partnership will incorporate this recommendation, which will form part of the resulting action plan. The award of the Farming Connect Framework tender supports professional development and provides a suite of online support through the Lifelong Learning and Development Programme, which commenced in October 2015. Superfast Cymru aims to provide homes and businesses in Wales with access to superfast broadband. As a result of the project, rural areas continue to benefit significantly from the roll out of superfast broadband. So far more than 596,000 premises have been given access to superfast

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						broadband as a result of the project. In addition to Superfast Cymru the Access Broadband Cymru and Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher schemes can support rural homes and businesses to get the connectivity they need. Access Broadband Cymru funds (or part-funds) the installation costs of new broadband connections for homes and businesses in Wales. The Ultrafast Connectivity Voucher scheme provides up to £10,000 to fund (or part-fund) the installation costs of new ultrafast connections for businesses in Wales.
12	That personal development plans should be encouraged as prerequisite to having courses funded by Farming Connect. We need to promulgate the importance of personal development plans as being as relevant as business plans. This is something that the Welsh Government should do working side-by side with other key stakeholders including the farming unions, CLA, YFC, Lantra, Levy Bodies, RWAS.	Accept	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development and supports the need to record and evaluate the information. Individual students who follow FE and HE courses will have individual learning plans and the next Farming Connect programme will consider the	Autumn 2015	Completed. The completion of an on-line Personal Development Plan (PDP) is a compulsory first step for an eligible individual to access the funding for training to the Lifelong Learning and Development Programme. A PDP provides a critical baseline of a customers' level of knowledge and assists in identifying training needs whilst

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				introduction of compulsory Personal Development Plans to identify individual knowledge and skills gaps.		enabling progress/improvement to be measured.
13	That the strategy group engages in an informal discussion to establish momentum within the school curriculum for a more widespread adoption of a GCSE in Agricultural Science. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers in Wales should be given the opportunity to embrace examples from agriculture, food and natural resources more broadly in school curriculums. The profile of staff development in agricultural education should be reviewed within the school and FE sectors.	Accept (in principle)	Welsh Government	DfES officials will encourage collaboration between Schools and Further Education Institutions to share provision. The development of a new GCSE needs to be taken up by Qualifications Wales. Qualifications Wales will be reviewing the whole of the GCSE science suite in 2016. This will ensure that there is a relevant and coherent suite of science GCSEs available to learners in Wales. The strategy group should engage in this activity to establish the need for an Agricultural Science GCSE.	Ongoing	Completed. A suite of reformed GCSE Science qualifications, regulated by Qualifications Wales, has been developed for teaching from 2016. The reformed suite does not include a GCSE in Agricultural Science and there are no plans to develop one. There are currently 27 'agriculture' qualifications approved on Qualifications Wales' register <i>QiW</i> for use in Wales – many of them BTEC/City and Guilds at level 2. Sector representative bodies should pursue the development of an Agriculture GCSE with Wales' independent regulator if they identify a need and demand.

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14	That a service provider takes the leading role working with NFU Cymru, FUW, YFC, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (RWAS), Lantra, Careers Wales and FE colleges in Wales to work with FACE to improve impact and the dissemination of materials to schools, thus enabling them to make a case for the industry and present it as a career of first choice. An ambassador programme could be developed to showcase people who have developed a successful career, to encourage and inspire young people into the agricultural sector. The RWAS maybe in a position to influence other agricultural shows societies within Wales to ensure a network of coverage for all schools in Wales.	Accept (in principle)	All service providers and Welsh Government	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and service providers to discuss the availability of the materials which can be disseminated to schools in Wales to promote the industry as a career option for the students.	Autumn 2015	Completed. Professor Wynne Jones has met with officials from all these organisations and has encouraged them to collaborate in order to deliver the ambition set in this recommendation. Under the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, Farming Connect will continue and develop the Agri Academy initiative that will show case people who have developed a successful career, and encourage and inspire young people into the agricultural sector.
15	The RWAS should build on the current co-location of Lantra, Wales YFC with other land based colleges and universities exhibiting at their annual show to develop the concept of a “learning village” to initiate, develop and reinforce the importance and relevance of our sector as an aspirational career.	Accept (in principle)	RWAS	The Welsh Government supports the recommendation in principle that the RWAS should meet with Welsh colleges and universities to establish a working relationship. This should include a discussion on the proposal to create a ‘learning village’ on the showground which can be accessed by all visitors to encourage the learning and	Summer 2015	Completed The RWAS is committed to supporting youth and promoting agriculture as a career. Several leading colleges and institutions were present at the 2016 Royal Welsh Show with both Coleg Cambria and Harper Adams University situated adjacent to

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				development of the industry.		Lantra and Wales YFC. Certain practical and physical layout constraints limit the potential to create a “learning village” in this area, but these complimentary organisations have helped create an informal learning environment. The RWAS will continue to work with the Welsh Government and other organisations to improve the educational content at its events.