

Dry Weather Update

The Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs chaired a “Dry Weather Summit” on 25 July at the Royal Welsh Show with key agricultural stakeholders to discuss the prolonged weather conditions, its impact on farms and to identify what Government and industry can do collectively to mitigate some of the issues.

With only 19mm of rainfall in Wales during June, the availability of water and grazing for livestock and the subsequent impact on crop growth has been unprecedented and there is a recognition of the current difficulties faced by some farmers and likely longer term impacts on access to fodder in the winter.

Farmers have a duty of care for their animals at all times and follow the highest possible standards of animal health and welfare for their livestock.

During times of severe drought if livestock do not have access to adequate water supplies, farmers should consider moving them or alternatively carry water to them. If there is any doubt regarding the condition of livestock, farmers must seek immediate advice from their own local vets

Guidance on managing livestock in severe hot weather on the Welsh Government website: <https://beta.gov.wales/welfare-animals-hot-weather-guidance>

The personal and business impact caused by the weather must not be underestimated either. The work carried out by the rural charities in Wales of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution, the Addington Fund and the Farming Community Network is critical in supporting our farmers health and wellbeing. Farmers are reminded that these confidential services are available for one to one support.

The Cabinet Secretary made a commitment during the Summit to explore what further measures Welsh Government could introduce to support the industry in the short, medium and longer term.

Specific measures which are available to support farmers in the short term are:

Basic Payment Scheme (BPS)

The Cabinet Secretary is considering the option of making BPS advance payments this year, but is conscious only farmers where all checks have been completed on their BPS claim can be paid an advance. Therefore payments may not be targeted at those that worst affected by weather conditions. The Welsh Government will continue to explore the possibility of early payments and work with industry stakeholders on ways of ensuring that any approach doesn't disadvantage some farmers relative to their neighbours.

There was also recognition of the industry needing to support each other by working together. The re-opening of the NFU's Fodder Bank is one good example of how arable and livestock farmers can work together.

Glastir Derogations

There are a number of management options under the Glastir schemes which may not be achievable in the current circumstances or limit the scope for farmers to access grazing or manage land for crop and fodder production. A number of derogations have already been allowed on specific options and Welsh Government will continue to work with contract holders and assess derogation requests on a case by case basis, with particular consideration for the following:

Sward Heights and Stocking Rates

The Welsh Government recognises that, due to the prolonged hot weather, contract holders may be finding it difficult to comply with some Glastir sward height options and accepts, providing the prescriptions for the option have been followed, there is little contract holders can do to alleviate this situation. In situations where customers have little or no fodder for livestock, the Welsh Government will consider derogations on options with specific stocking rates on a case by case basis.

Winter Fodder

Contract holders wishing to consider taking a late fodder crop from grazed Glastir grassland options, or potentially dropping arable options, such as stubbles, for this year in order to establish a late grass ley should contact the Welsh Government. Officials will consider requests on a case by case basis.

Winter Bedding

Contract holders wishing to gather winter bedding, such as rushes from land under Glastir options, should contact the Welsh Government. Officials will consider requests on a case by case basis in order to establish what areas can be cut and gathered.

Access to water

Contract holders experiencing difficulties in sourcing water for livestock and wish to access water in stock excluded options, such as streamside corridors, should contact the Welsh Government. Officials will consider requests on a case by case basis in order to establish temporary solutions.

Derogation requests must be made in writing or via your [RPW Online account](#). The requests should include full details, including field numbers and the options you require a derogation on.

TB Restricted Movements

Farms under TB restrictions and facing animal welfare issues as a result of not being able to move animals can apply to APHA for a movement licence. These licences will be considered on a case by case basis promptly.

Alternative Bedding Materials

In the current situation, access to straw for bedding may become more difficult. It is possible to use alternative bedding materials, and suitable materials for bedding that are not injurious include untreated wood shavings, wood chip, sawdust, de-inked paper fibre. In some circumstances recycled manure solids can also be used, but there are significant biosecurity issues that need to be taken into account.

The use of recycled manure solids from TB restricted herds is not an option, Welsh Government are not planning on relaxing this rule, however, it is an option for holdings not under TB restrictions.

Private Water Supplies

Local Authorities have methods to intervene in cases of depleted private water supplies. However, this only applies to water at human consumption grade and does not cover water for livestock consumption.

If you require assistance please contact your Local Environmental Health Officer within your Local Authority.

Water Abstraction

Land owners are entitled to abstract up to 20m³ (20,000 Gallons) of water from a surface or groundwater source per day, however a common sense approach should be taken so that water courses are not unduly affected by the action. To help land managers, NRW are looking at options for alternative water supplies.

Key Contacts

Welsh Government – Rural Payment Wales Customer Contact Centre	0300 062 5004
AgriAlert**	agrialert@gov.wales
Animal and Plant Health	0300 303 8268
Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water	0800 052 0130
Hafren Dyfrdwy	0800 783 4444
NFU Cymru	01982 554200

NFU Fodder Bank	www.nfuonline.org.uk
FUW	01970 820820
CLA	01547 317085
TFA	0118 930 6130
Forage Aid	www.forageaid.org.uk
Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute	0808 281 9490
Farming Community Network	0300 0111 999
Addington Fund	01926 620135

*** The AgriAlert system is in place to gain a quick snapshot of varying weather conditions across the country. Members of the public can email details or concerns with regards to weather related issues. No responses would be generated from this service. This is **NOT** an emergency contact.*