



SOCIAL RESEARCH NUMBER:

72/2023

PUBLICATION DATE:

13/07/2023

Farm Business Grant Evaluation

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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Farm Business Grant Evaluation

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Social and economic research
Ymchwil cymdeithasol ac economaidd

Full Research Report: O'Prey L, Usher S and Jones T. (2023). *Farm Business Grant Evaluation*. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 72/2023.

Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/farm-business-grant-fbg-evaluation>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Glossary

Acronym	Definition
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
Eoi	Expression of Interest
EU	European Union
FBG	Farm Business Grant
KTE	Knowledge Transfer Event
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RPW	Rural Payment Wales
VS&S	Very Small and Small farms and businesses.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report communicates the findings of research exploring the views and perspectives of farmers towards the Farm Business Grant (FBG). The FBG is a capital grant scheme available to farmers across Wales. The purpose of the FBG is to provide financial support to help farmers develop their agricultural holdings in order to improve their economic and environmental performance. The research set out to explore factors that supported farmer's engagement with the scheme, including in shaping decisions around whether to apply for a grant or not.

Background

- 1.2 The FBG provides support through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 (RDP). The RDP is a flagship investment programme funded by the Welsh Government and the European Commission. The RDP funds a wide range of activities and initiatives, including the FBG.
- 1.3 Overall, the RDP seeks to make investments that support and enhance rural communities and the natural environment. A key objective of the RDP, for example, is to improve farm viability and competitiveness across all types of agriculture. It also seeks to promote innovative farm technologies and sustainable land management practices, with a focus on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry. Together, the RDP seeks to promote strong, environmentally sustainable economic growth across rural Wales.
- 1.4 In achieving the aims of the RDP, the Welsh Government highlighted the importance of targeted financial support aimed at Very Small and Small (VS&S) farms and businesses. VS&S farms account for almost 9 out of 10 of farms in Wales and are important in terms of the large number of people that they support and the extent of the land that they manage ([Bradley et al, 2021](#)).¹ These farms were less likely to access many of the existing capital grant schemes on offer. This was thought to be due to a range of potential factors, including lack of familiarity and confidence in accessing grants, and the smaller scale of the investments these farms required to develop their business ([Welsh Government, 2019](#)). In 2017, the

¹ Very Small farms are those with a Standard Output under €25,000, and Small farms have a Standard Output between €25,000 and €125,000.

Welsh Government introduced the FBG which set out to provide specific capital investments aimed at VS&S farms.

- 1.5 Strategically, the FBG also supports the Welsh Government's Taking Wales Forward 2016-2021 strategy. This includes working towards its goal surrounding the creation of successful, sustainable rural communities. Through the strategy, the Welsh Government set out to 'support community-led projects, promote skills development, job creation, entrepreneurship, community energy, rural transport and broadband access' ([Welsh Government, 2016](#): p5).
- 1.6 The scheme also sought to support farmers in building confidence and skills around business planning and in making decisions surrounding capital investments. This included encouraging farms to reflect on capital investment requirements in an environmentally sustainable way, and in accessing broader support and agricultural extension services and support.
- 1.7 Through the design of the scheme and in the distribution of grants, the FBG actively sought a range of objectives, including:
 1. encourage engagement with Farming Connect and the support available to farms and businesses
 2. encourage attendees to think about and explore sustainable business development, specifically to improve economic and environmental performance through capital investments, and
 3. increase on-farm investment, technical performance, on-farm production efficiencies, and on farm-resource efficiencies.

Scheme Design

- 1.8 The design of the FBG evolved in response to UK's exit from the EU and COVID-19. The FBG is delivered in funding windows, where farms and businesses can apply for a grant. This research focused on examining the experiences and perceptions of farms and businesses that accessed or considered accessing the FBG in windows 1 to 7.
- 1.9 In the scheme's initial design, the FBG provided grants of between £3,000 and £12,000. It provided capital investments in equipment and machinery that have been pre-identified as offering clear and quantifiable benefits to farm enterprises, including in improving their economic and environmental performance. The grant provides a maximum 40 percent contribution towards capital investments across a

range of eligible equipment and machinery. The items available through the scheme covered a range of potential areas of investment, including:

- animal health, performance and genetics
- crop management
- resource efficiency
- energy efficiency, and
- Information Computer Technology.

- 1.10 In setting the grant range at a minimum £3k, this was considered an appropriate level where the on-farm investments would be at sufficient scale to have an impact on the business and respond to the scheme objectives. This level of investment would also require the applicant to consider the potential return on investment and whether the investment was appropriate for the business. Investing in lower value investments, below this threshold, was considered achievable within existing business cash flows. Setting a minimum grant rate also reduced the administrative costs of the grant.
- 1.11 The use of a predefined list of capital items was in order to maximise the potential economic and environmental impact of investments, whilst also streamlining the application process. Through a detailed process, independent assessors calculated standardised costs of individual items by analysing the average purchasing price. These were then used as standard costs for the overall grant value offered for each item. This simplified the application process, providing potential applicants with a clear indication of the range of items available and the potential cost savings and productivity improvements to their businesses.
- 1.12 Prior to window 8, the standard costs of all items were reviewed to reflect any changes in costs. From window 8 onwards, the costs of items increased due to the combined impact of inflation, the UK's exit from the EU and COVID-19, which added supply constraints and reduced manufacturing capacity of many suppliers. This research was based on responses prior to these cost increases.
- 1.13 In order to be eligible for the grant in windows 1 to 7, potential applicants had to attend a Farming for the Future Knowledge Transfer Event (KTE), which were organised and run by Farming Connect. This was a condition of funding and the first step in the application process. From window 8, applicants were no longer required to attend a KTE to be eligible to apply.

- 1.14 The KTE aimed to effectively communicate how the scheme worked and the overall application process. Alongside communicating an understanding of the scheme, the KTE also sought to:
- encourage engagement with Farming Connect, which provides the farming community with a range of support, including advisory and knowledge transfer services and events. This was aimed both at those not already registered with Farming Connect, as well as in raising awareness of the range of support available through the service
 - encourage attendees to think about and explore sustainable business development, specifically to improve economic and environmental performance through capital investments.
- 1.15 Once a potential applicant had attended a KTE, if they wished to secure a grant, they were invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) through Rural Payments Wales (RPW) Online. Applicants were asked to provide a range of information, including providing a list of capital items that they wished to claim against the grant. Applications were then scored against a predefined criterion across:
- animal health & welfare
 - health & safety
 - technical efficiency, and
 - resource efficiency.
- 1.16 The purpose of scoring applications was to allow Welsh Government to rank the EoIs against the funding available in each window. If selected, applicants were offered a contract through RPW Online. Applicants were then invited to purchase the items they selected, before claiming the grant through the Capital Works Claim page on RPW online account.
- 1.17 Together, the scheme sought to balance simplicity with accountability, whilst also maximising the impact of potential investments. The selection of a predefined list of capital items was central to this aim, providing investments that would deliver tangible gains to business and environmental performance whilst also simplifying the application process. In delivering the scheme's broader objectives, including in building farmers' confidence and skills around sustainable business development, the scheme included KTEs as a key vehicle for raising engagement and delivering information and advice.

Scheme Delivery

- 1.18 In raising awareness of the FBG, the scheme was promoted across a range of channels. Information surrounding the scheme was shared online, through partner organisations such as Farming Connect, and with industry press. This included promotion through the Wales Rural Network which raises awareness of all RDP programmes. The FBG was also promoted through the Farm Liaison Service and the Gwlad newsletter which at the time was sent to all farmers as a hard copy and included articles on the scheme. As applicants had to attend a Farming for the Future KTE event before applying, these were organised and run by Farming Connect and therefore widely promoted through their networks. Farming unions also promoted the scheme to their members. The comprehensive promotion of the FBG through these channels ensured that all farms that were eligible were aware of the scheme. Broader evidence from the survey also suggested word of mouth played an important role in raising awareness of the scheme.
- 1.19 Between April 2017 and March 2020, the focus of this research, the FBG has been made available to farms and businesses across seven funding windows. In that time, 57 KTEs were held across Wales. A total of 8,045 farmers attended these events, who subsequently submitted 3,061 successful claims.² Together, a total of £11,763,819 in grants were distributed to farms up until March 2020. This included grants for a diverse range of capital items, including cattle heat detection systems, bulk feed bins, and minimum tillage machinery. For a full list of items claimed against the FBG up until March 2020, see Annex 1. Since the survey was undertaken in 2020, there have since been two further rounds of FBG funding. This increased the total grants distributed to £17,907,087.

Research Objectives

- 1.20 The aim of the research was to understand how the scheme's design and implementation influenced the take up of support offered through the FBG. The focus of the research was on understanding views towards windows 1 to 7³. In order to access the scheme during these windows, for example, farmers had to attend a 'Farming for the Future' Knowledge Transfer Event (KTE). A key objective of the

² This is drawn from December 2021 Rural Payment Wales administrative data.

³ The requirement to attend a 'Farming for the Future' event as part of the application process was removed for FBG window 8; a key objective of this research was to examine the impact of the event on engagement and take up therefore window 8 was not included

research, therefore, was to consider the extent and impact of the scheme's design, including 'Farming for the Future' KTEs, on engagement and take up.

1.21 More specifically, the research sought to explore:

- the reasons why farmers signed up to Farming Connect
- the significance of the FBG in influencing the decision to sign up to Farming Connect
- the reasons why farmers may or may not have applied for the FBG after attending a 'Farming for the Future' KTE
- the aspirations and intentions of farmers attending the 'Farming for the Future' KTEs
- the actions taken by farmers following attendance at a KTE
- for those that applied for and secured a grant, the impact those investments had on productivity and environmental performance of the farm.

1.22 The research also sought to explore broader factors and trends that may have influenced the take up of the grant. This included the characteristics of farms themselves such as its size and focus of production, farmer's own views and attitudes towards farming, and their level of engagement with other support delivered through Farming Connect. This was in order to map different constituent groups of farmers, including those that submitted a claim and those that did not, in order to explore broader factors that may have influenced the take up of grants.

1.23 In order to explore the potential role of farmers' attitudes in driving engagement with the FBG, the research also drew on the Welsh Government's Farm Segmentation Model. The model segments Welsh farm holdings based on the values and beliefs of those managing them. It is intended to support the design and implementation of policies and programming by understanding differences in attitudes and perceptions across different groups of farmers.

1.24 Together, the objective of the research was to inform discussion and generate ideas on how programme design influences engagement and take up of support delivered through the FBG. The aim was to identify programme design elements that are effective in securing engagement and participation in order that they may be applied to future policy and programming in support of the farming community.

Methodology

- 1.25 In achieving these objectives, the research sought the views of farmers across three distinct groups, including:
- those that did not attend a Farming for the Future KTE and did not apply for a grant (n= 177)
 - those that attended a Farming for the Future KTE but did not apply for a grant (n= 305), and
 - those that attended a Farming for the Future KTE and, ultimately, secured a grant (n= 327).
- 1.26 In gathering the views and perspectives of farmers, the authors of this research implemented a detailed survey designed to gather a range of information, including respondent's experiences and perceptions of the FBG. The sample of farms was drawn from information supplied by Farming Connect and RPW. Farming Connect data was used to identify and contact those that did not attend a KTE. Those that attended a KTE and either did or did not make a claim were identified and contacted by combining Farming Connect with RPW data. RPW data held information on individual claimants from windows 1 to 7. This only included information on successful applicants, therefore it was not possible to identify those that submitted a claim but were unsuccessful. The data enabled the creation of a sample frame that held contact information and claim status, consisting of those that did not attend a KTE (n= 3,181), those that attended but did not apply for the FBG (n= 3,781), and those that attended and went on to successfully apply for the FBG (n= 2,779).
- 1.27 In order to ensure that the research reflected the views and perspectives of the three groups, the authors then applied a stratified random sample. Due to the focus of the research and budgetary constraints, a proportional allocation strategy was not employed. The authors instead sought to ensure greater power within the sample for strata that attended a KTE and those that ultimately received a grant. Initial quota targets included n= 150 for those that had not attended a KTE, n= 300 for those that attended but did not claim and a further n= 300 for those that ultimately did.
- 1.28 The survey was implemented between November and December of 2020. The research team working through a randomly ordered list of individual farms and reached out by phone. Once the quota had been achieved the research team then moved onto engaging farms from other strata. Together, 809 farmers kindly took the

time to speak to the research team and completed the survey over the phone.

Response rates across the three groups was 63.6 percent.⁴ Response rates and the general reflections of farmers may have been affected, at least in part, by lockdown measures that were in force at the time which meant many participants were more likely to be at home.

- 1.29 In supporting the development of the survey and the research more broadly, scoping interviews were conducted with a range of key stakeholders. This included key staff involved in the design and delivery of the FBG within Welsh Government and across other agencies. The aim of these conversations was to establish a detailed understanding of the design and operation of the scheme and factors that may have shaped experiences and engagement of the FBG. Two scoping interviews were also convened with farming groups in order to understand broader perceptions of the FBG and any factors that may have influenced engagement that the research needed to consider. These insights were used in the development of the survey.
- 1.30 The survey itself included 88 questions across a range of themes, including experiences and perceptions of the FBG. The survey also included questions emanating from the Farm Segmentation Model, which explore attitudes and beliefs of respondents towards farming in general. For those that received a grant (n= 327), the survey also explored the impact of the investments, including on farm productivity and environmental performance. The draft survey was piloted with colleagues within Welsh Government and 10 farmers to ensure that the survey was clear and generated valuable information. See annex 2 for a full list of questions.
- 1.31 In order to encourage engagement with the survey, incentives were offered for respondent's time. This included a small donation of £2 to the Daniel Picton-Jones Foundation for each completed survey. The charity provides a range of support around mental health to the farming community across Wales, including confidential, free of charge counselling. Together, the research raised £1,620 for the charity.
- 1.32 Once all survey responses had been completed, four focus groups were convened with farmers to test emerging themes and findings emanating from the survey. Survey participants were asked if they would be happy to be recontacted as part of

⁴ Response rates varied by group. Those that did not attend a KTE were least likely to engage in the research, with a response rate of 49.3 per cent. Those that attended but did not claim achieved a response rate of 61.1 per cent, and those that attended and made a claim 75.7 percent.

the research. Those that responded positively were invited to attend the focus group via email. The groups were held in December 2020. Due to social distancing in place at the time, the sessions were held online and in the evening.

- 1.33 The focus groups explored specific issues raised in the survey, including whether participants recognised and shared general views and perceptions towards the Farming for the Future KTEs. The discussions also explored if there were any other issues not raised in the survey, and the broader implications of the findings for farmers. See Annex 3 for a copy of the discussion guide that informed the conduct of the focus groups.
- 1.34 In order to explore specific issues in greater detail, further in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 6 farmers.⁵ This was to develop short, anonymised case studies illustrating specific experiences of engaging with the FBG. These were conducted in January 2021 and held over the phone.
- 1.35 Together, the research was completed between March 2020 and March 2021. The research was conducted during a period of considerable disruption caused by the emergence of COVID-19 and the subsequent containment measures. This caused delays in the design and implementation of the research and in the subsequent analysis of data. It may also have influenced farmers' engagement with the research, including in the views and perspectives they shared.
- 1.36 In terms of making sense of farmers' perceptions and engagement with the FBG, the authors conducted detailed analysis of information collected through the survey and focus groups. Survey data was used in collaboration with Farming Connect and Rural Payment Wales data to complement and expand the analysis. Relationships were examined between and within different variables, including demographic information, levels of engagement with the FBG and Farm Segmentation Model data. Trends in the data were explored through a suite of statistical methods, including descriptive summaries and tests of association, including chi squared and ANOVA. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. **Error! Reference source not found.** observations were brought together within the overall communication of the analysis.

⁵ Purposeful sampling is a form of non-probability sampling that seeks to identify information-rich cases which are illustrative of the range of issues and experiences under investigation.

1.37 There were several limitations with the methodology that are important to note. At inception, the initial emphasis of the research was on understanding the extent to which KTE were themselves a barrier to engagement with the FBG. This influenced the design of the survey and data collection phases, with a primary focus on understanding perceptions surrounding the KTE and its influence on engagement. As the research progressed the impact of the FBG scheme became a more important research question. The subsequent data was however limited in its ability to address this question. There were further limitations with the methodology. This included the reliance on self-reported data which tended to only offer broad estimates of more tangible, short-term impacts of investments resulting from the grant. The study was also not able to compare outcomes of investments against a robust counterfactual. These and other limitations are explored in greater detail in section 4.19 to 4.27.

Report Structure

1.38 In communicating the findings of the research and in considering their implications, the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides an overview of the FBG, the objectives of the scheme and the broader policy landscape within which it emerged and operated.
- Section 3 presents an analysis of the characteristics of respondents to the survey and any observed differences between those that accessed the grant and those that did not.
- Section 4 explores the substantive findings of the research, including analyses.
- Finally, section 5 presents the conclusions, implications and potential recommendations emanating from the research.

1.39 The report now turns to exploring the composition of different groups of farmers, including those that did not attend a KTE, those that did, but did not make a claim, and those that, ultimately, ended up making a claim.

2. Characteristics of the Sample

2.1 This section presents a summary of the characteristics of the farms that contributed to the research by completing the survey. It also explores some of the trends in characteristics between different groups of respondents, including factors that may have influenced engagement with the scheme.

Respondent Groups

2.2 The research was interested in understanding the views and perspectives of three different groups of farmers. These included those that did not attend a Farming for the Future KTE, those that did but did not apply for a grant and then those that ultimately applied for a grant. This was to explore factors that may influence engagement and take up of the scheme. Overall, the research team engaged 809 farmers across the three distinct groups outlined in Table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Number of responses by respondent group:

Group	Number of responses	Proportion of responses
Did not attend a KTE	177	22%
Attended a KTE but did not apply for a grant	305	38%
Attended a KTE and applied for a grant	327	40%
Total number of responses	809	100%

Representative Nature of the Sample

2.3 A range of demographic and background information was collected through the survey, including:

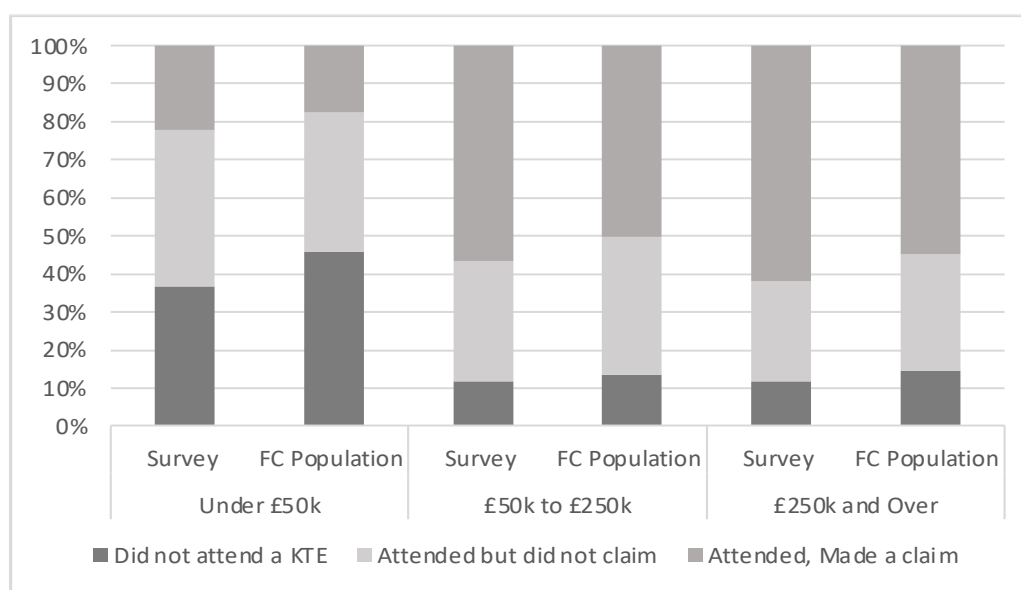
- farm type
- the size of the holding
- turnover, and
- tenure status.

2.4 In order to assess the representative nature of the sample, information from all farms - provided by the Farming Connect database, was compared against the survey sample. This enabled the calculation of the expected values across the three groups by claim status, whether they had not attended a KTE, had attended but did not make a claim, and those that ultimately made a successful claim. A comparison

was conducted between the composition of the sample of farms by turnover and the claim status, with the broader Farming Connect database used as the sample frame.

2.5 Overall, the samples of those attending a KTE, and those that subsequently received a grant, are broadly representative of the Farming Connect population by turnover (see Figure 2.1). The survey sample underrepresents those that did not attend a KTE with a turnover of under £50,000:

Figure 2.1: Turnover by respondent group and population of farms across the sample frame (Sample n= 766, Farming Connect (FC) Population n= 9,283):



2.6 The population is drawn from Farming Connect data that may itself be unrepresentative of the broader community of farms and businesses across Wales. Broader evidence suggests that Farming Connect data tends to underrepresent smaller farms, particularly those with standard output of under €25,000 (Bradley et al, 2021).

2.7 Other elements of the research, including the focus groups and in-depth interviews, were exploratory in nature. Overall, 16 farmers kindly took part in the focus groups, including those that had not attended a Farming for the Future KTE (n= 4), had attended but not applied for a grant (n= 5), and those that ultimately ended up applying for a grant (n= 7).

2.8 Together, the sampling limitations should be considered and thus caution exercised when interpreting the findings of the enablers and barriers to engagement with the FBG. This is particularly the case when interpreting quantitative observations relating to smaller farms that did not attend a KTE.

3. Findings

3.1 This section presents the findings from the research, including analyses of information provided through the survey, focus groups and in-depth interviews. The section first explores underlying characteristics, attitudes and behaviours of farms and the extent of their engagement with the FBG scheme. The section then goes onto explore the experiences and perceptions across the three distinct cohorts of respondents.

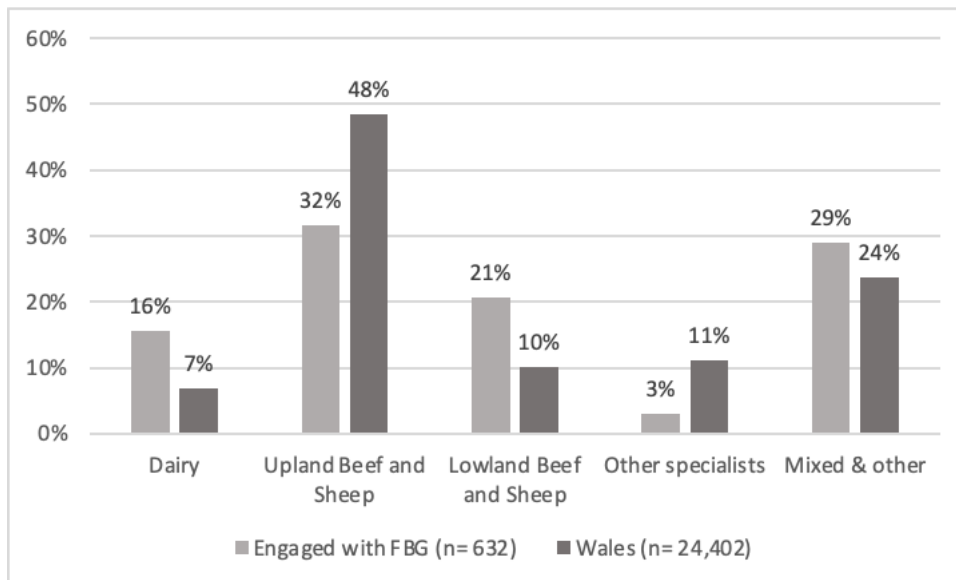
Characteristics and Engagement

- 3.2 The underlying characteristics of farms differed across the three groups. Those that reported higher turnover, for example, were statistically more likely to make a claim than those with a reported turnover of under £50,000.⁶
- 3.3 This trend is also reflected in the size of holdings, where those with smaller reported holdings were statistically less likely to have attended a KTE and apply for a grant.⁷ Together, this suggests that broader economic factors, including the scale of a farming operation, may influence investment decisions and the take-up of the grant.
- 3.4 There was also variation in expected values by type of farm between those that engaged with the FBG, and the estimated population of farms within each sector across Wales. 'Dairy' and 'Lowland beef and sheep' farms, for example, tended to be more likely to engage with the scheme, including in attending a KTE and in making a claim relative to their sector size across Wales. Conversely, predominantly 'Upland beef and sheep' farms were less likely to engage as were 'Other specialists', including horticulture, specialist pig and poultry farms:

⁶ A chi-squared test for independence showed that there was an association between turnover and engagement with the FBG ($X^2(2, N = 766) = 6.718, p = .010$). Under £50k n= 246, £50 to £250k n= 344. £250k and over n= 176.

⁷ There were significant differences in the size of holdings between groups as determined by a one-way ANOVA ($F = 5.48, p = 0.004$). Did not attend n= 175, Attended but did not claim n= 303, Made a claim n= 326.

Figure 3.1: Farm type of those engaging with FBG (n= 632) and population of farms across Wales (n= 24,402):⁸



Source: Wales estimates from Welsh Agricultural Survey, June 2018

3.5 Trends in engagement by farm type may be explained, at least and in part, by the focus of the capital items available through the scheme and historic levels of investment on farm and across specific agricultural sectors. Broader qualitative data within the survey and through focus groups, for example, suggested that for some specialist farms, including pig, poultry and horticulturalists, respondents felt there were no items on offer through the FBG that they needed or that they did not already have. This may account for some of the variation in engagement with the scheme from different agricultural sectors.

Attitudes and Engagement

3.6 The survey also asked respondents a range of questions that sought to understand the attitudes, values and beliefs held by respondents towards farming and their business. Drawing on the Welsh Government’s Farm Segmentation Model, the questions explore a range of themes, including adaptability and innovation and the networks and broader support that farmers draw on (Lee-Woolf et al, 2015). They also explore attitudes towards environmental sustainability, the importance of connectedness with other farmers and the role of new skills and knowledge in running a farm effectively.

⁸ Those that engaged with FBG includes those that attended a KTE but did not claim, as well as those farms that ultimately made a claim.

3.7 The segmentation model then maps these characteristics against five segments or clusters. Each cluster encompasses distinct attitudes and perspectives that influence decision-making on farms. Based upon individual response data, the segmentation model was used to calculate which cluster each respondent belongs to. The model characterises each cluster according to their unique attitudinal tendencies, as well as broader factors, including demographics:

Table 3.1: Summary of cluster characteristics from the Farm Segmentation Model:

Cluster C: Tend to be extremely open to external sources of information and advice, via other farmers and the internet. Likely to believe collaborating with other farmers improves the running of their farm and that socialising with others is also important. Prioritise a good quality of life over the prospect of maximising income. Likely to hold strong positive attitudes towards the environment. Also, tend to embrace the opportunity to acquire new skills and use technology to help manage their holding more effectively.

Cluster Y: Tend to be independently minded, being less inclined to collaborate with other farmers or make time to socialise. Likely to hold strong positive attitudes towards the environment and agree that quality of life is important compared to income maximisation. Generally tend to be interested in learning new skills and knowledge and to apply new technologies on their farm.

Cluster M: Tend to be more traditional, less open to acquiring new skills and information, or in applying new technologies to help manage their farm. Unlikely to seek information from external sources, such as the internet or other farmers. Tend not to connect with other farmers, socially or professionally. Inclined to hold strong positive attitudes towards the environment. Tend to place much greater importance on quality of life than maximising income from their holding.

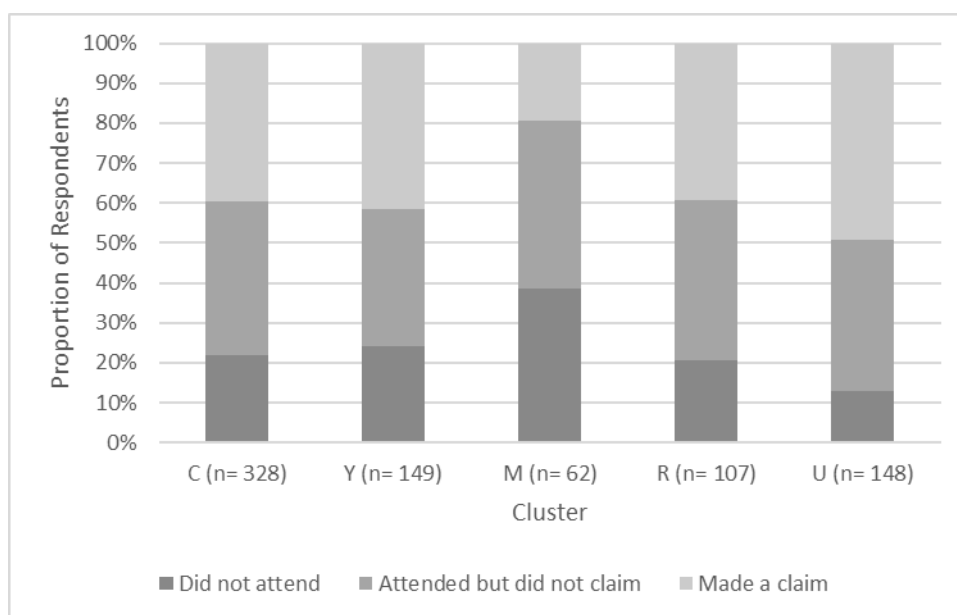
Cluster R: Tend not to prioritise a good quality of life over maximising income. Not inclined to collaborate with others to help improve the running of their farm, though value time spent socialising with other farmers. Unlikely to hold strong positive views towards the natural environment. Tend not to seek out new information, skills or technologies that can be used to run their farm effectively.

Cluster U: Tend to deprioritise a good quality of life in favour of maximising income. Tend to hold weak attitudes towards the environment. Strongly inclined to collaborate with other farmers but tend not to make time for socialising. Tend to be very keen to learn new skills and knowledge they can apply to their farm. Also, tend to be relatively interested in adopting farming technologies as they become available.

Source: Lee-Woolf et al, 2015

- 3.8 There were apparent trends in the relationships between different clusters and levels of engagement with the FBG, see Figure 3.2. Those in Cluster M, for example, were less likely than other groups to attend a Farming for the Future KTE and to make a claim. These farms tend to be more traditional in outlook and are less likely to seek to acquire new information and skills or apply new technologies to help manage their farm. They tend to be older and manage smaller sized farms, which they describe as a ‘smallholding’ rather than a ‘farm’ (ibid).
- 3.9 Conversely, those in Cluster U were the most likely to attend a KTE and make a claim. These farms tend to be independently minded, are interested in learning new skills and knowledge and to apply new technologies on their farm. They tend to be younger farmers, managing larger sized holdings and are likely to hold higher education qualifications related to farming (ibid).

Figure 3.2: Proportion of respondents by Segmentation Model cluster and engagement with FBG (n= 794):



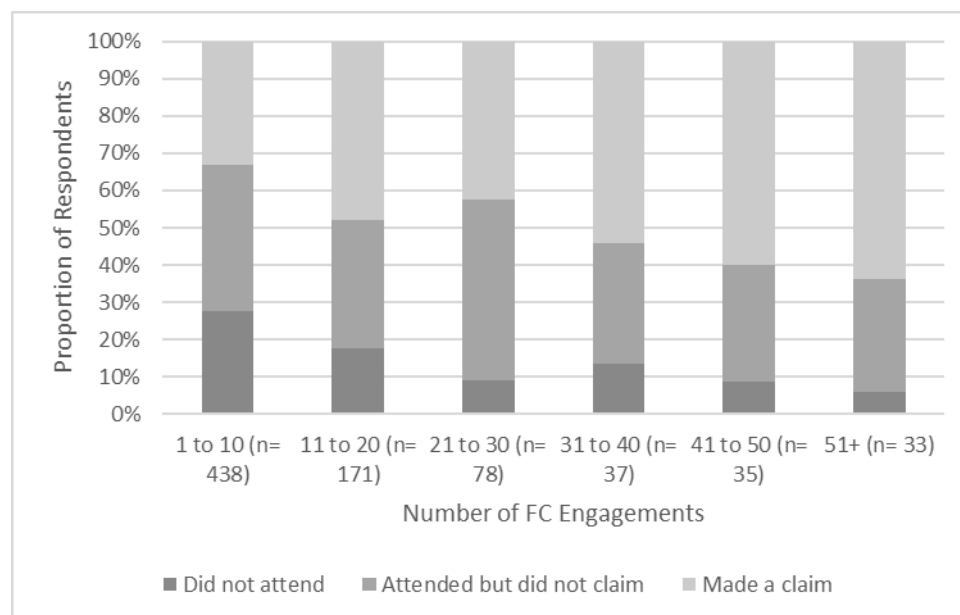
- 3.10 These trends are explored in greater depth later in the section, including in exploring trends within specific clusters of respondents.

Behaviours and Accessing the FBG

- 3.11 There were relationships between broader behaviours of respondents and whether or not they applied for a grant. Those who had greater levels of engagement with Farming Connect, including accessing support such as animal health clinics, e-learning courses, and 1-2-1 advisory services, were more likely to attend a KTE and make a claim. This included accessing Farming Connect services and support both

before and after attending a KTE which enabled them to access the grant. This observation is drawn from Farming Connect records themselves from August 2015 to June 2020. The data gives an accurate and objective measure of established behaviours at the farm level, specifically the extent to which members of a household or working in a business seek and obtains new information and support:

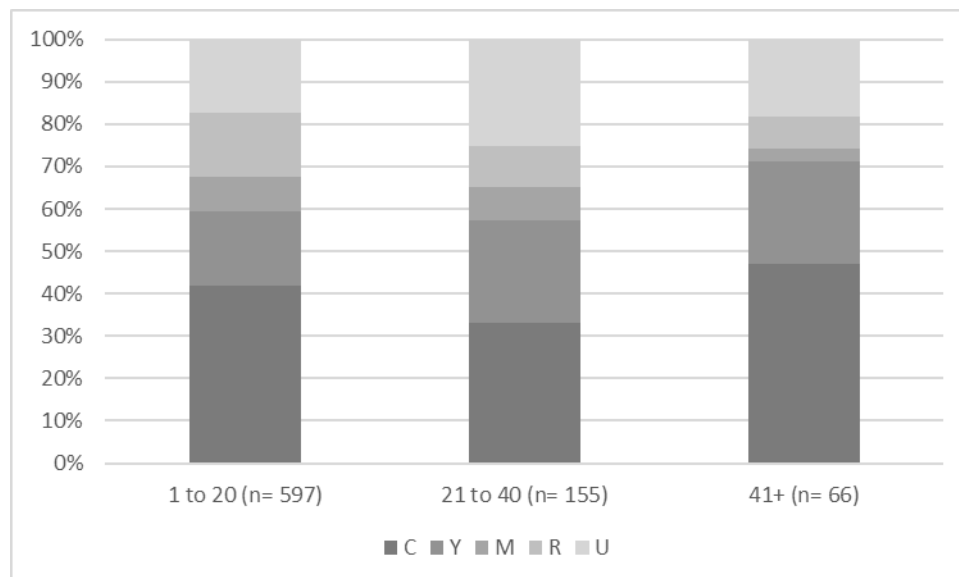
Figure 3.3: Proportion of respondents and number of engagements with Farming Connect support (n= 792):



- 3.12 Exploring the number of actual Farming Connect engagements per farm alongside data from the segmentation model, there were no statistically significant correlations between Farming Connect engagement and attitudes (see Figure 3.3). These observations are open to high levels of uncertainty due to the low number of observations, particularly for those attending 21 engagements or more. There is broader evidence to suggest that there are relationships between attitudes and the behaviours of farmers, including in seeking new knowledge and support (e.g. see Lee-Wolf et al, 2015).
- 3.13 Whilst not statistically significant, the observed trends highlighted in Figure 3.3 do appear to align with generalisations from the segmentation model, particularly around the relative importance of new knowledge and information (see Figure 3.4). Cluster C, for example, tend to be extremely open to external sources of information and are more likely to have attended substantial numbers of Farming Connect KTEs and advice. Conversely, cluster M and R tend to be less open to new information and skills and were found to be less likely to be high users of Farming Connect.

Again, however, these observations should be treated with caution due to high levels of uncertainty within the data⁹:

Figure 3.4: Proportion of respondents by farm segmentation cluster and number of engagements with Farming Connect support (n= 778):

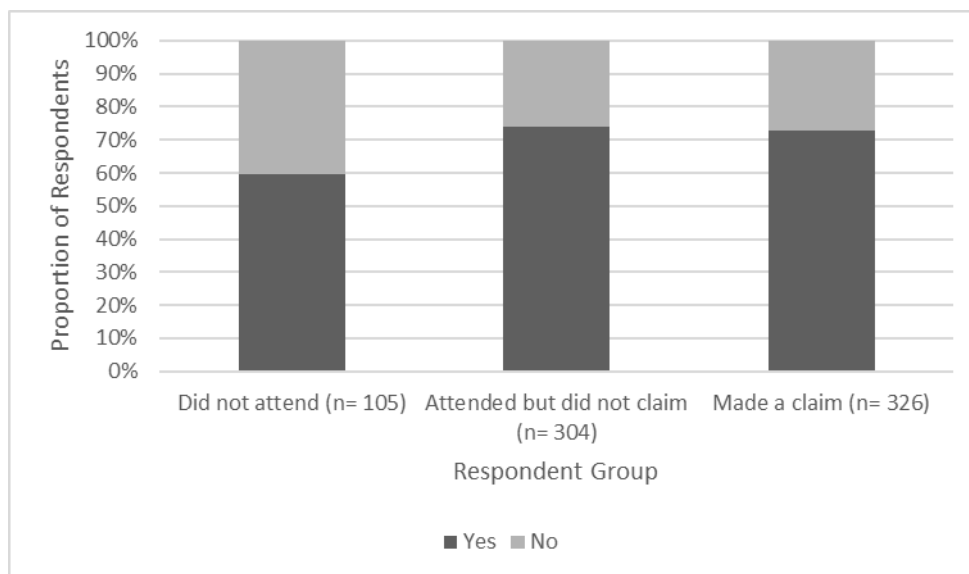


3.14 Triangulating these observations with self-reported survey data, previously accessing other grant schemes was also positively correlated with engagement with the FBG, see Figure 3.5.¹⁰ This was especially apparent for those not attending a Farming for the Future KTE, which were more likely to report that they had not accessed other grants or financial support from the Welsh Government or other public bodies in the last five years. This may be a consequence, however, of the scale of farming operations within this group, which included a greater proportion of smaller farms that may be unable or ineligible to access other forms of support:

⁹ A chi-squared test for independence showed that there was no association between Farming Connect engagement and cluster characteristics ($X^2 (2, N = 778) = 7.069, p = .215$).

¹⁰ A chi-squared test for independence showed that there was an association between prior engagement with grant schemes and claim status ($X^2 (2, n = 806) = 12.726, p = .002$).

Figure 3.5: Proportion of businesses by whether they had accessed other schemes in the last 5 years (n= 806):



3.15 Together, this data suggests that established behaviours such as seeking grants were correlated with engagement with the FBG.

Characteristics, Attitudes and Behaviours, and Engagement with the FBG

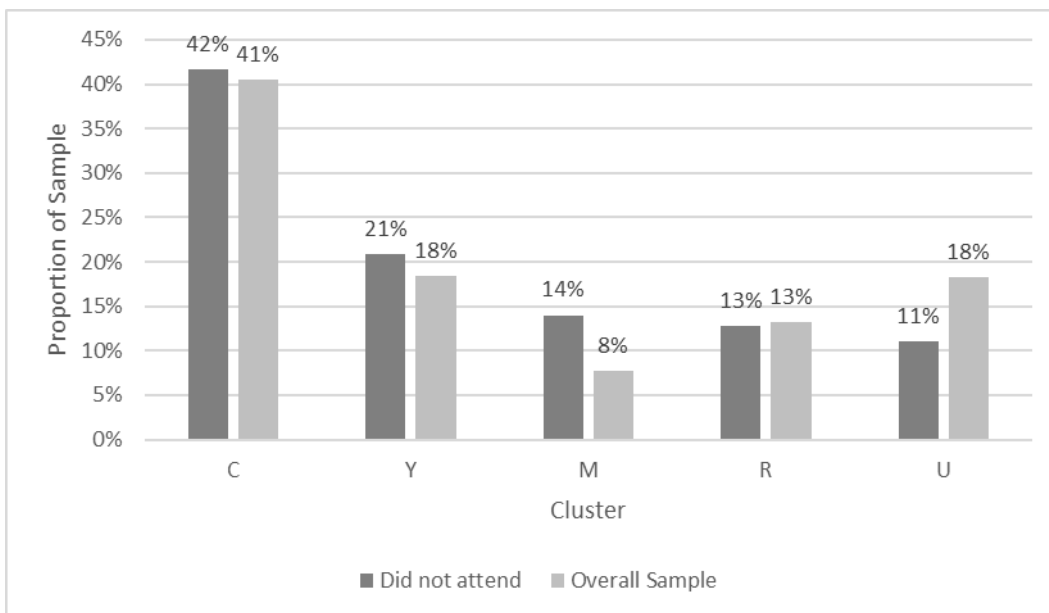
3.16 These observations highlight that economic, attitudinal and behavioural factors affected the level and extent of the engagement and take up of the FBG. There were associations between the characteristics and behaviours reported by individual farms, and the level and extent of engagement and take up of the FBG. Those that operate smaller farms were less likely to engage with the scheme, whilst those that had previously accessed grant schemes or financial support were more likely to engage. The associations between attitudes and engagement were less clear. Responses suggested no statistically significant correlations whereas descriptive trends and broader evidence suggest that there may be subtle correlations between attitudinal constructs and engagement with schemes such as the FBG.

3.17 Together, this suggests that there are factors that shape engagement independently of the way that the scheme has been designed and implemented, including the requirement to attend a Farming for the Future KTE as a condition of funding. These and other observations will be explored in more detail in the following sections outlining the findings against each group.

Those that did not Attend a KTE (N= 177):

In terms of the composition of the group, farmers that did not attend a Farming for the Future KTE tended to have smaller farms, by both turnover and size of holding. They were also more likely than farms across all groups to hold broader beliefs and attitudes consistent with cluster M, see Figure 3.6. This cluster tends to be more traditional in outlook and are less likely to engage in short and long-term planning. Conversely, those that did not attend were also less likely than the broader sample to reflect cluster U. These farmers tend to prioritise income maximisation and recognise the importance of planning and business skills in running a successful farm.

Figure 3.6: Proportion of respondents not attending KTE by cluster (n= 173) compared to the sample as a whole (n= 794):



- 3.18 Respondents to the survey from this group were given a brief description of the FBG. They were then asked whether there were any specific reasons as to why they had not applied to the scheme. Most said they were aware of the scheme (n= 141, or 79.6 per cent). Exploring the reasons why they had not sought a grant, 51 respondents felt they did not require further capital investment on their farm to warrant engagement with the scheme and that their equipment was up to date (28.8 per cent of all those not attending). Similarly, 15 respondents felt that investments could be valuable, however there was nothing suitable in terms of the capital items on offer through the scheme (8.4 per cent). From these perspectives, the investments that they wished to make were not supported through the scheme.

These perspectives tended to be highlighted by those reporting to be engaged in predominantly upland beef and sheep farming (n= 7, 4 per cent).

- 3.19 There were also respondents that felt further investment could be beneficial, however they felt a key factor informing the decision not to apply for a grant was the high minimum outlay, which they felt was prohibitive (n= 35, 19.7 per cent). The following quote from an in-depth interview is illustrative of this perspective:

‘Not sure exactly why I didn’t attend, but I think it may well have been the amount of money you needed to pay out in order to get a relatively small amount back. It would mean having to spend more than you wanted, on things you didn’t necessarily need.’

- 3.20 Together, this suggests that farmers may have been balancing the investment and infrastructure requirements of their farms, with the potential economic savings of applying for the grant. These factors may be closely interrelated, suggesting that farmers were weighing up the economic costs and benefits of investment. Where they were perceived to be marginal, there was a tendency towards not applying for the grant.

- 3.21 More peripheral themes included that respondents were simply too busy to explore the scheme or to attend a KTE (n= 24, 13.5 per cent). Others had not applied because they understood that they were ineligible for the grant (n= 21, 11.8 per cent). Whilst most often respondents cited reasons that matched the eligibility criteria for the FBG, in isolated cases there may have been misunderstandings which meant that respondents did not apply when they may have been able to. Within a focus group, for example, one respondent had understood that they were not eligible when it may be possible that they were:

‘I’d like to, but I don’t qualify being under 10 hectares.’

- 3.22 For those that did not attend a KTE, respondents were asked how they had found out about the scheme. Respondents cited Farming Connect (n= 96, 54.2 per cent), trade media (n= 66, 37.2 per cent), online resources (n= 55, 31 per cent), and word of mouth (n= 44, 24.8 per cent) as key sources of information on the FBG.
- 3.23 Other respondents reflected that they simply weren’t aware of the scheme (n= 36, 20.3 per cent). Cross referencing these responses against the results of the segmentation model, the 36 respondents were over-represented by farmers determined to be in cluster M, those that tend to be less likely to seek to acquire

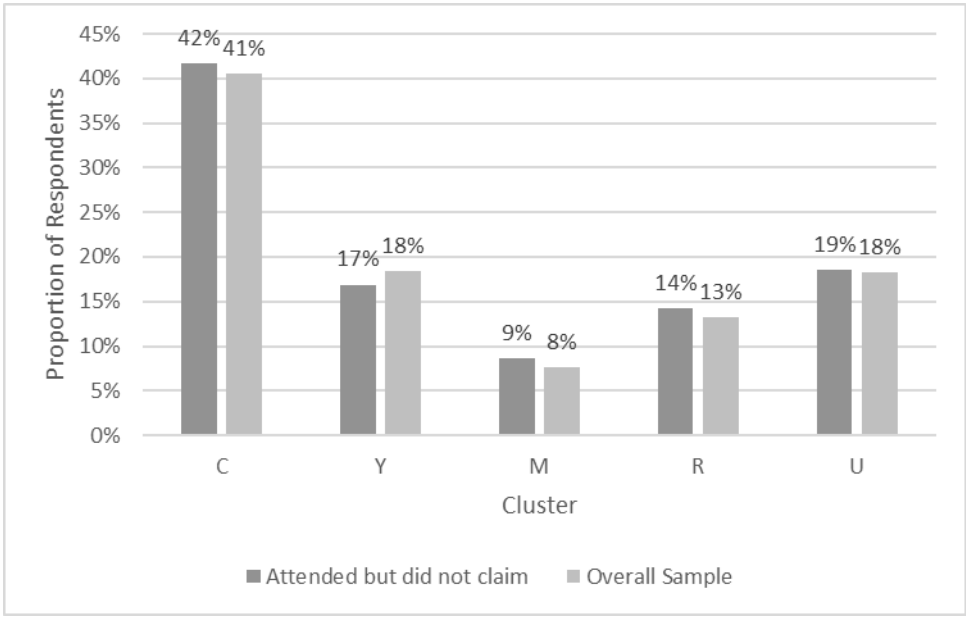
new information skills or technologies (21.3 per cent, compared with 13.9 of all those that did not attend an KTE). When asked whether they would consider applying for the scheme in future, of the 36 reporting that they were unaware of the scheme, 83.3 per cent reported that they would. This finding suggests that there may be a peripheral group of farmers within the broader population that are not actively picking up or responding to communications raising awareness of schemes. This includes support that may, ultimately, be valued by this group.

- 3.24 Whilst the majority of respondents that did not attend a KTE had determined at the time that the scheme was not for them, 76 per cent said they would consider applying in future (n= 133). Of the 24 per cent of respondents (n= 42) that said they would not consider applying in future, similar reasons were raised. This included the understanding that respondents did not need to make any additional capital investments on farm (n= 20, 11.2 per cent of all respondents that did not attend a KTE), or that the initial outlay was too high (n= 13, 7.3 per cent). More peripheral themes included negative perceptions of grant schemes themselves, in which previous experiences had put them off applying in future (n= 11, 6.2 per cent). There were also respondents who were turning their thoughts to retirement and did not wish to make any further capital investments (n= 9, 5.1 per cent).

Attended a KTE, but did not apply for the Farm Business Grant (N= 305)

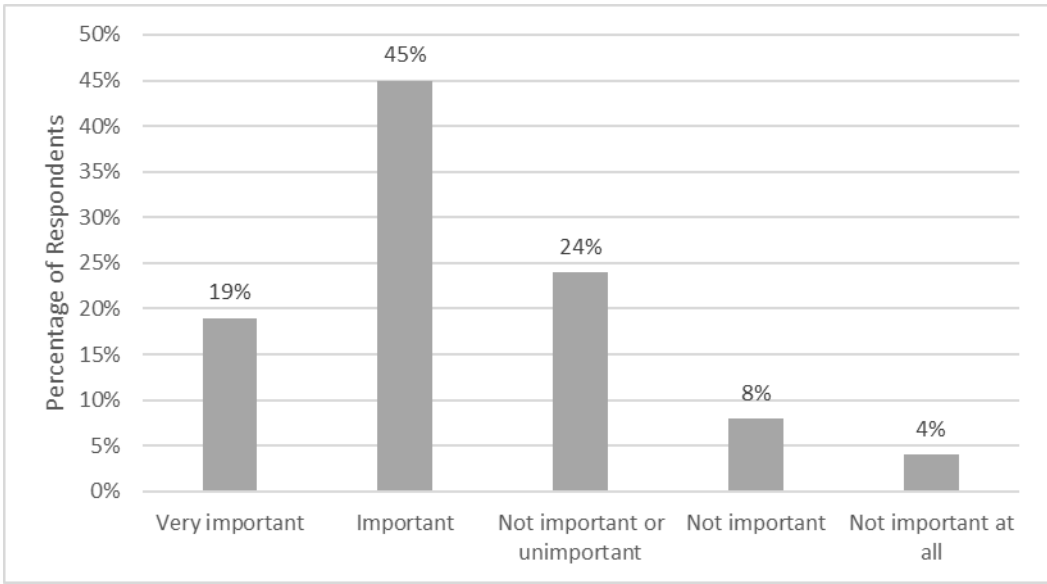
- 3.25 In terms of the composition of the group, those attending a Farming for the Future KTE, but, ultimately, did not apply for a grant, tended to be bigger in size by both turnover and size of holding. They were broadly representative of farms overall across the sample in terms of attitudinal clustering according to the Farm Segmentation Model, see Figure 3.7:

Figure 3.7: Proportion of respondents attending KTE by cluster (n= 302), compared to the sample as a whole (n= 794):



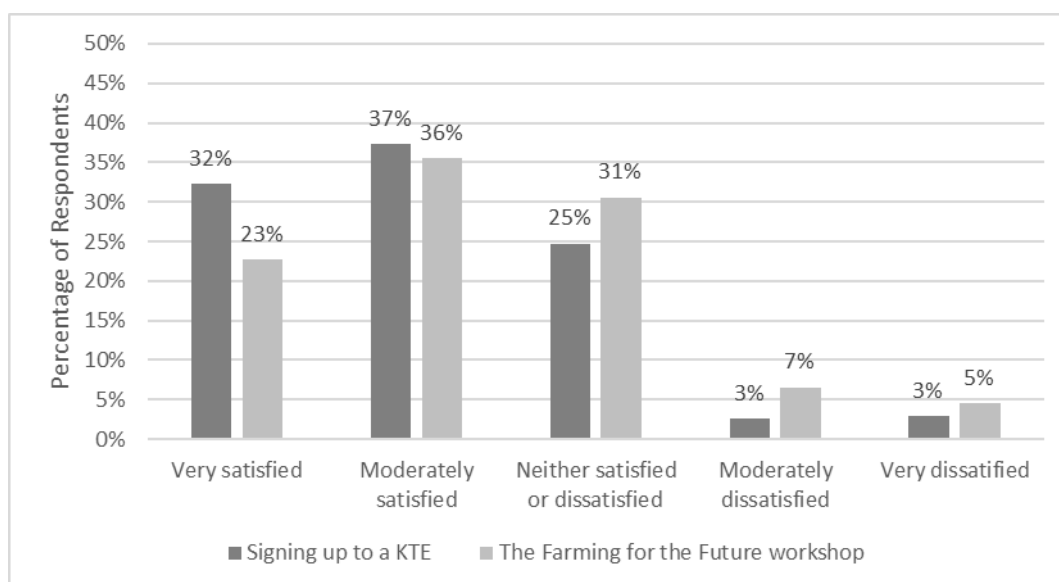
3.26 Overall, the perceptions of those that attended a KTE were very positive, including for those that did not end up applying for a grant. Across a range of themes, respondents, on the whole, found the KTEs valuable and informative. Asked how important the KTE was in understanding how the scheme worked and whether it was right for them, the majority stated it was important or very important (n= 195, 64.4 per cent, see Figure 3.8):

Figure 3.8: Those attending a KTE and not applying for a grant: How important was the KTE in understanding how the scheme worked and whether it was right for you? (n= 303)



- 3.27 This was backed up by comments within focus groups, where respondents felt that the opportunity to hear about the scheme as well as to meet and discuss the scheme with friends, were all important in exploring whether it was the right option for them. Some participants spoke of the social value of the KTEs that it presented rare opportunities to engage with friends and the broader community.
- 3.28 From a practical perspective, survey respondents from this group on the whole felt moderately satisfied or very satisfied with the process of signing up and attending the KTE (n= 211, 69.6 per cent, see Figure 3.9):

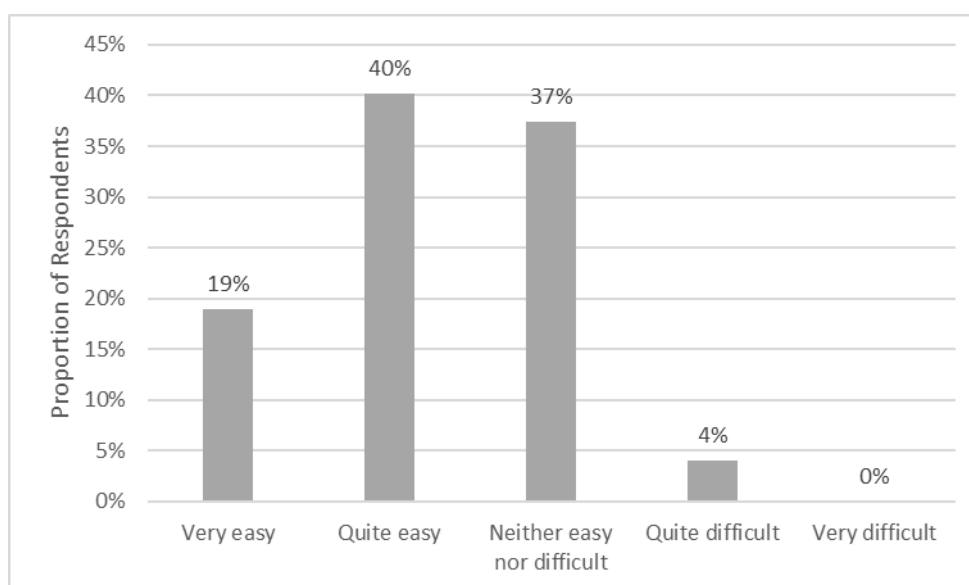
Figure 3.9: Those attending a KTE and not applying for a grant: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with signing up to and attending the KTE? (n= 303)



- 3.29 This suggested that, practically, for many the KTEs were convenient and straight forward to attend. In more open conversations with farmers within in-depth interviews and focus groups, some raised practical issues which had undermined their experience or presented a potential barrier to engagement. Some had to travel long distances to attend a KTE. This may be due, in part, to the fact that later rounds of the FBG were supported by fewer KTEs. This may have resulted in some having to travel further to attend an event than in earlier rounds.
- 3.30 Others had difficulty in signing up because the KTE they had hoped to attend was fully booked. At the KTE, some spoke of being unable to get a seat or having to stand so far back that they were unable to hear the speakers. More negative perceptions expressed by respondents towards the KTEs also tended to view them as just an administrative hoop that had to be negotiated.

3.31 Overall, however, most respondents that attended a KTE but did not apply for a grant were positive about the KTEs. This included views towards the relative ease of the application process more broadly. Most respondents felt that, overall, compared to other schemes, the FBG application process, including attending a KTE, was quite easy or very easy (n= 169, 59 per cent, see Figure 3.10):

Figure 3.10: Those attending a KTE and not applying for a grant: Compared to other grants or schemes that you have accessed, how easy or difficult did you think the application process was? (Including attending a KTE) (n= 286)



3.32 In understanding the views and perspectives of those who attended a KTE but did not make a claim, we engaged with a purposive sample of respondents to the main survey through in-depth interviews. The following pseudo-anonymised case study is illustrative of the views and perspectives of some respondents in the group:

[Mr Evans] runs a fairly small farm [near Aberaeron] and found out about the grant and KTE after receiving an email from Farming Connect. The KTE was well-received, he found it useful and informative. It was delivered bilingually, and he thought it worked well with regards to language – most of the farmers in attendance were Welsh speakers and they mostly communicated with each other and the facilitator in Welsh. The most useful aspect for him was the opportunity to discuss the grant with other farmers known to him who were also present at the KTE.

However, following discussions with other farmers along with information gained at the KTE, further research and close scrutiny of the figures, he decided not to apply for the grant. The main issue was the expected outlay from him and the need to invest £9k to be able to claim £3k back through the fund. He would need to purchase and invest more than was needed for his small farm to have sufficient points to access the grant.

[Mr Evans] also felt that manufacturers of some list items had increased their prices knowing that this subsidy was available, thus negating some of the intended financial benefit and incentives for farmers. [Mr Evans] felt the scheme worked particularly well for arable farmers with items being more readily available and much closer to the market rate, whilst the costs for other items had been driven up since the grant was made available.

[Mr Evans] felt that the grant was very important in enticing improved infrastructure and more efficient and safer farming practices. However, he went on to say it needed to be tweaked for his business to get any value out of it with more consideration around the issue of scale. More generally, he felt that Welsh Government support should be more considerate of the needs of smaller farms. He would often decide not to apply for grants because of a perception that funding would go to larger farms. He also felt that there should be more support around investing in livestock than the current emphasis on machinery, and that greater support was needed for young farmers and new entrants.

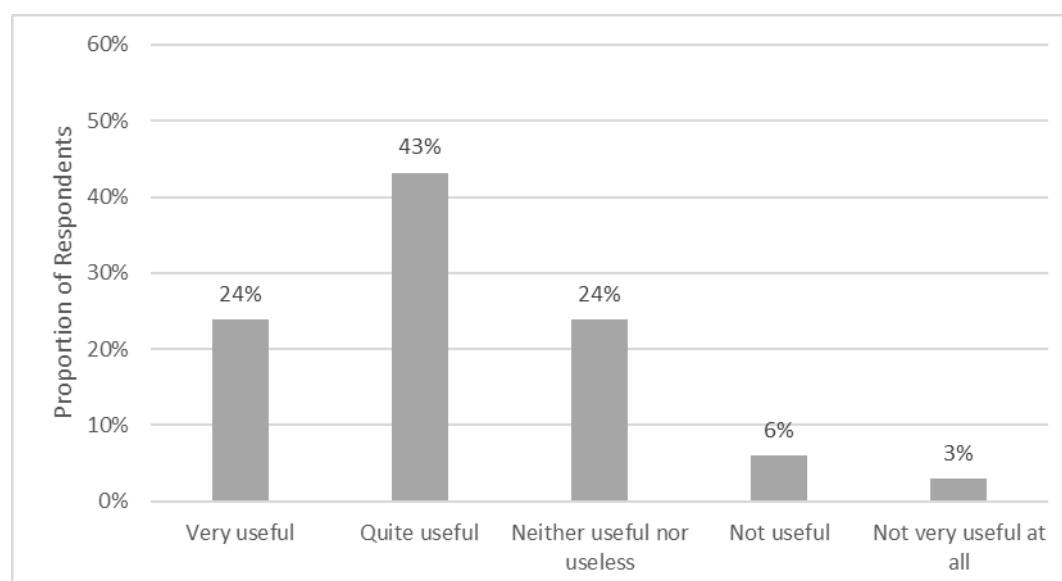
- 3.33 The case study illustrates that there may have been some misunderstandings surrounding the FBG. This included the minimum outlay required, which some understood to be higher than the actual grant value. Farmers also had the ability to negotiate discounts with suppliers.
- 3.34 The issue outlined in the case study surrounding the perceived inflationary effects on prices for capital items was raised in other responses, both within the survey and in focus groups. It does suggest that perceived or actual price fluctuations were, at least in part, influencing decisions to engage with the FBG, including for some that ultimately decided not to apply.
- 3.35 There is broader research and economic theory that suggest capital grant schemes can raise the price of goods by increasing demand (e.g. DEFRA, 2018). This is particularly apparent if suppliers are unable to easily meet increased demand, or if grants are only likely to result in short term fluctuations in demand. Anecdotal

evidence from the survey and focus groups also suggested that those accessing grants sometimes experienced shortages of specific items or delays in receiving items once they were ordered. This suggests that suppliers may have experienced a range of potential barriers in expanding the supply of some capital items.

3.36 Beyond anecdotal evidence, however, the precise nature and extent of price fluctuations as a result of FBG is uncertain. The issue was raised as a potential risk of the scheme's design within scoping interviews with Welsh Government officials. This issue needed to be balanced with other requirements, including simplicity in the schemes design. The issue of price may warrant further investigation, including in understanding the true extent of cost fluctuations of capital items. If found to be significant, exploring and introducing measures to dampen the inflationary effects of the scheme may be valuable in reducing its potential impact on investment decisions. This includes both by those accessing the scheme, and those investing in similar capital items of their own accord. Measures could include, for example, an expansion of the items offered through such schemes which may, if effective, reduce demand for specific items and therefore dampen any inflationary effects of supply shortages.

3.37 Turning to think about the impact of the KTE for this group, reflecting broader perceptions the majority of the group found the information provided quite or very useful (n= 202, 67.1 per cent, see Figure 3.11). There were no apparent differences in opinions between different groups of farms by farm type and farm size.

Figure 3.11: Those attending a KTE and not applying for a grant: How useful did you find the information provided in the KTE? (n= 301)



3.38 Responses to this question may have also included the perceptions of the value of the information regarding the scheme. In more open discussions within focus groups and interviews, respondents tended to think differently about the broader information that was provided through the KTEs, including around sustainable business planning. Some felt the broader topics discussed at the KTEs were of little value. Typically, these respondents felt that the topics covered were not relevant to the challenges that they were facing:

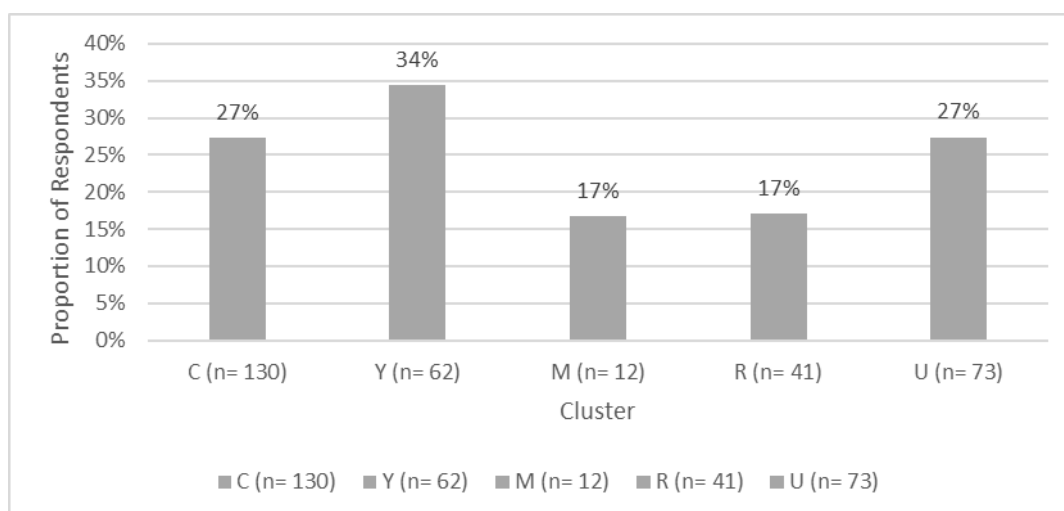
‘Farming for the Future KTE not useful apart from information about the grant.’

3.39 This was explored in more detail in focus group discussions. Some participants felt that some of the topics were too abstract and communicated in a way that made it difficult to link topics with practical challenges they were facing. Others highlighted that they could not remember what was discussed, suggesting that the messages delivered through the KTE may not have been directly relevant to attendees or communicated in a way that was not effective.

3.40 Those that found the information more useful tended to highlight that they felt speakers spoke in plain language about practical examples of issues that they were grappling with on farm. This suggests that more practical, hands-on topics may be valuable for some attending Farming for the Future KTEs.

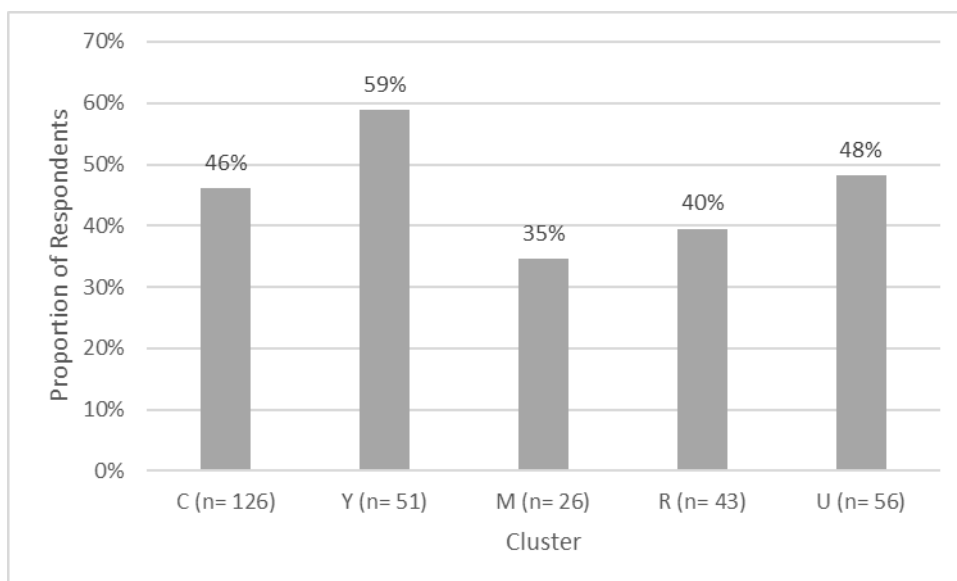
3.41 Asked if following attendance at the KTE whether respondents had reviewed any of their business operations, overall, 82.5 per cent of respondents said that they had not (n= 249). Clusters M and R were more likely to report not reviewing business operations relative to other groups, which, within the segmentation model, tend towards not seeking new information and advice (see Figure 3.12):

Figure 3.12: Proportion of respondents reviewing business practices following Farming for the Future KTE by cluster (n= 302)



- 3.42 The KTEs did have more success in encouraging farmers to engage with other support available to them. Across the group, 22.1 per cent of respondents reported that they had joined Farming Connect in order to sign up to the KTE (n= 63). There were no discernible differences between these respondents and survey respondents as a whole in terms of which clusters they fell into.
- 3.43 Of those that joined Farming Connect to sign up to a KTE, 82.5 per cent went on to access further support and advice from Farming Connect (n= 52). This suggests that the scheme was effective in driving engagement towards Farming Connect, especially for those that were new to the service.
- 3.44 More broadly, across those that attended but did not apply, 46.5 per cent of respondents had since gone onto access other support through Farming Connect (n= 141). Exploring the proportion of respondents by segmentation group, those in cluster Y were more likely to seek further support. Within the model, these farms tend to be interested in learning new skills and knowledge, see Figure 3.13:

Figure 3.13: Proportion of respondents attending a KTE but not applying to FBG that accessed further Farming Connect support following the event by cluster (n= 303):



- 3.45 In terms of the perceptions of those attending a KTE but not applying to the FBG towards subsequent support from Farming Connect, this was very well received. Together, 97 per cent of respondents felt that the support had been quite useful or very useful (N= 137). This was confirmed in broader conversations in focus groups, where participants spoke of the general perception that Farming Connect is a recognised and valued organisation within the farming community.

- 3.46 Together, this suggests that the Farming for the Future KTEs were effective in driving engagement with other services and support, including for those that may not have been previously aware or accessing it. This suggests that mandated attendance may be a valuable and effective mechanism in driving engagement and building positive relationships with farmers, as long as the underlying service or support is valued and trusted.
- 3.47 In terms of the decision to, ultimately, not apply for a grant, responses suggested that investment decisions were complex and multidimensional. In more detailed conversations within focus groups and in-depth interviews, it was apparent that respondents were weighing a number of factors in determining whether to apply for a grant. This included capital requirements of their business, the items available through the scheme, as well as the economic costs and the potential savings, both through the grant and in productivity gains.
- 3.48 For those that ultimately did not apply for a grant, 36.4 per cent (n= 108) of respondents felt that the capital items available through the scheme were not appropriate for their business. In more open answers, respondents expressed the view that they simply did not need any of the items on the list. Others felt that, whilst they did need something on the list, it was either not appropriate or too expensive. One respondent, for example, highlighted that:

‘The specs on some of the equipment on the list is far too big for me. The diesel tank was about 2500 litre that’s much too big I needed 1300 litre and other farmers need smaller than that.’

- 3.49 The size of the grant itself of between £3,000 and £12,000 was also a reported barrier, with 34.7 per cent (n= 105) of respondents citing that it was not appropriate for their business. Of this group, respondents often felt that the minimum spend thresholds were too high and made investment difficult given the scale of their operation (77 per cent, n= 81). A common perception was that:

‘The minimum spend was far too high for me to be able to afford to take part. I would have been wasting money on equipment I didn’t need to reach the minimum spend amount.’

Respondents who did not end up applying for the grant also highlighted other, more peripheral factors in the scheme’s design that presented barriers to engagement. In a small number of cases (2.6 per cent, n= 8), for example, some found that the grant windows with specific time frames prevented them from applying for the grant.

This issue was explored within an in-depth interview, which has been adapted into a pseudo-anonymised case study:

Sheep farmer [Mrs Rowlands] keeps around 700 home bred Aberfield cross ewes on a hill farm in [Caerphilly]. She found out about the FBG through Farming Connect and decided to attend a Farming for the Future KTE. She found the session really helpful. Alongside getting a sense of the scheme, it opened her mind to things that she had not previously thought of, especially in planning and making investments on farm. Following the session, she would have applied for the grant, but was late in making the decision to commit to making an investment in a sheep handling system. As a result, she ended up missing the application deadline. She would consider applying for a grant in future, but felt that it would be beneficial to give more time to potential applicants. For her, this was a big decision that required thought, planning and time.

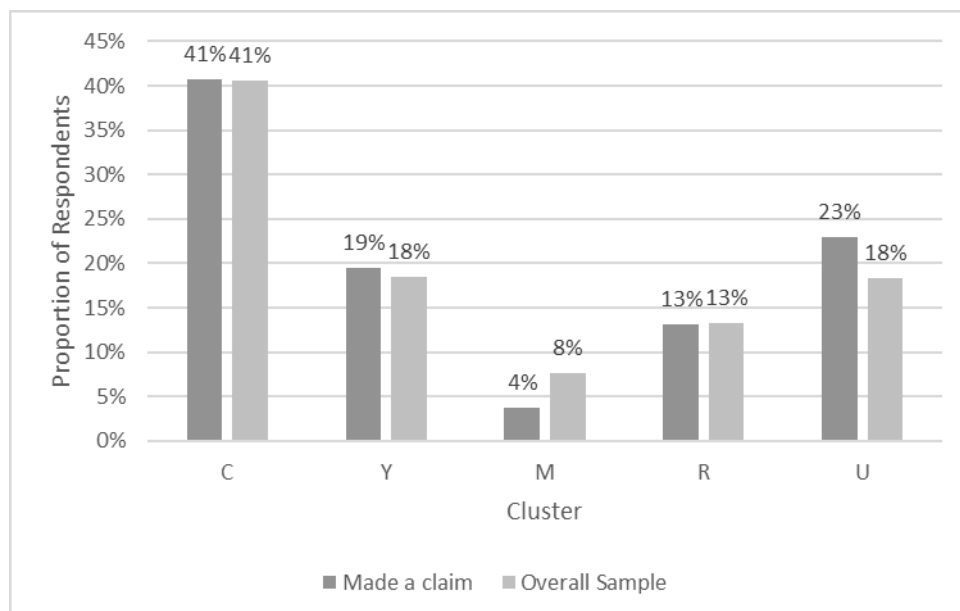
- 3.50 Overall, the evidence suggests that for most respondents the Farming for the Future KTEs themselves were not a barrier to engagement with the FBG. There are other factors, including in the scheme's overall design in combination with broader economic and attitudinal considerations, which may present further barriers to engagement. More specifically, the focus on specific capital items and minimum spending thresholds within the design of the FBG were interpreted by many farmers with reference to capital requirements and cost implications. For many in this group, these factors were central to their decision not to apply for the grant.
- 3.51 Overall, where barriers to applying to the FBG existed within the scheme's design, these tended to focus on the capital items available, which some felt were too narrow. Suggestions from respondents on how the list could be expanded included specific examples, such as training or mobile sheep tracking devices, through to more general suggestions such as more items for arable farmers. Others felt the initial outlay required by farms was too high. Mandatory attendance at a Farming for the Future KTE was not a reported barrier to engagement with the scheme.

Attended a KTE and applied for a grant (N= 327)

- 3.52 In terms of the composition of the group, those that ultimately applied for a grant were larger in size, by both turnover and size of holding. They were also more likely than the broader sample to hold beliefs and attitudes consistent with cluster U, which tend to prioritise income maximisation and recognise the importance of

planning and business skills in running a successful farm. Conversely, cluster M were less likely than others to apply for a grant:

Figure 3.14: Proportion of respondents making a claim by cluster (n= 319) compared to the sample as a whole (n= 794):



3.53 Overall, the views and perceptions towards the KTE of those that ultimately made a claim mirrored those that did not. The KTE was, on the whole, viewed positively and an important source of information regarding accessing the scheme. For example, 68.7 per cent of respondents felt the KTE was an important or very important in understanding how the scheme worked and whether it was right for the respondent (n= 208). A further 67.2 per cent of respondents found the information communicated in KTEs as useful or very useful (n= 217).

Welsh Language Provision

3.54 The Welsh language provisions within the KTEs were also well thought of. Only 5.4 per cent of respondents overall raised concerns around the provisions (n= 16), suggesting that on the whole, the KTEs were accessible. This extended to other parts of the application process, including in completing an Expression of Interest.

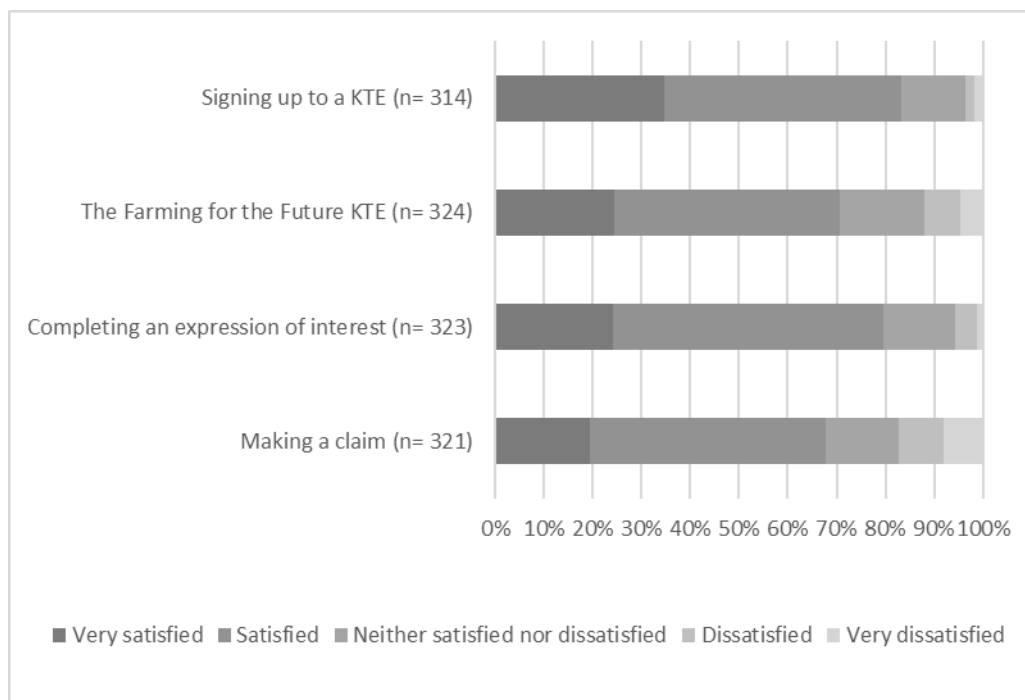
3.55 Suggestions from respondents for improving the Welsh language provisions centred on two main themes. Firstly, that some materials and provisions, including within Farming for the Future events, were difficult to understand in Welsh. Respondents suggested greater use of plain language and pronunciation, with some finding it hard to follow different Welsh dialects. Secondly, there were also English-speaking respondents who found it difficult to follow Farming for the Future KTEs that were

conducted in Welsh. This included the use of simulation translation at events, which some found difficult to understand and respond to.

Application Process

3.56 In terms of the broader application process there was overall satisfaction, with the majority of respondents stating that they were either satisfied or very satisfied (n= 258, 79.9 per cent). There were slight differences in opinion across the various stages of the process. Further into the process, for example, respondents tended to respond less favourably. Signing up to a KTE and completing an expression of interest, for example, received the most satisfaction, whereas making a claim received the most dissatisfaction:

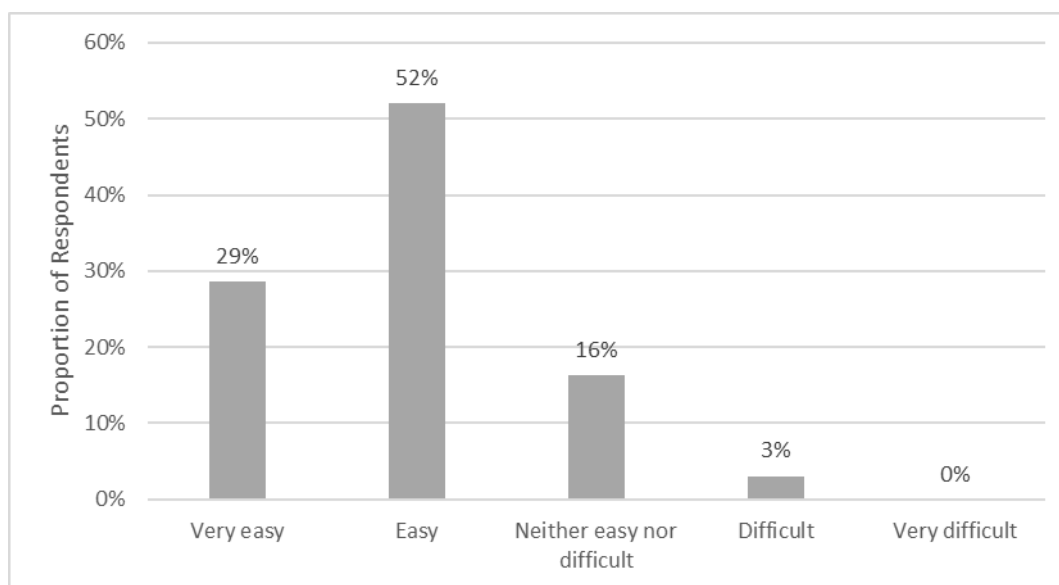
Figure 3.15: Of those making a claim: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following aspects of the scheme? (n= 324)



3.57 In understanding these trends, within more open conversations within focus groups and in-depth interviews, a number of respondents highlighted that they had experienced administrative issues in processing their claim. This included, for example, a number of cases where there were delays in processing claims. This included confusion as to whether a contract had been signed or not, and in one case where a respondent had ordered the items but then subsequently not received the grant. Again, these issues appear to be isolated incidents, and may have been the result of misunderstandings of the application process.

3.58 On the whole, however, most respondents that made a claim felt positively towards the application process surrounding the FBG. Compared to other grants and schemes that they had applied for, the majority felt that the FBG process was easy or very easy to apply (n= 262, 80.6 per cent, see Figure 3.16):

Figure 3.16: Of those making a claim: Compared to other grants or schemes that you have accessed, how easy or difficult did you think the application process was? (Including attending the Farming for the Future Event) (n= 325)



3.59 The report now turns to examining the impact of the scheme.

4. Impact of the FBG

4.1 Through the design of the scheme and in the distribution of grants, the FBG actively sought a range of impacts and outcomes, including:

1. Encourage engagement with Farming Connect and the support available to farms and businesses.
2. Encourage attendees to think about and explore sustainable business development, specifically to improve economic and environmental performance through capital investments.
3. Increase on-farm investment, technical performance, on-farm production efficiencies, and on farm-resource efficiencies.

Engagement with Farming Connect

4.2 In terms of the first objective, in order to be eligible for the grant, businesses needed to be members of Farming Connect. This was to encourage those who were not familiar with Farming Connect to explore and access the services and support on offer. This mechanism was effective in driving engagement across all groups, including those who did not ultimately make a claim. Of those that attended a KTE but did not make a claim, when asked about the reason for joining Farming Connect 21.2 per cent stated that they joined Farming Connect in order to attend a KTE. For those that ultimately made a claim, 19.8 per cent of respondents signed up to Farming Connect in order to attend a KTE.

4.3 Accessing the grant was the major reason for people joining Farming Connect but it had also opened up support and services that they were not previously aware of. Across those signing up to Farming Connect in order to attend a KTE, 73.1 per cent of respondents had gone on to access further services and support. Asked of their perceptions of the subsequent support they had received, 89.2 per cent found it useful or very useful.

4.4 There are also a range of potential impacts that flow from this increased engagement with Farming Connect. The precise impacts will depend on the nature of the support accessed, and the extent to which farms and businesses improve their knowledge, confidence and behaviours surrounding a specific topic or practice. Farming Connect offer a diverse range of support including, for example, clinics on specific farming issues such as proactive animal health, as well as broader support on business planning and management topics. Respondents reported attending a

diverse range of services and support, including training, advisory services, and discussion groups.

- 4.5 Taken together, these findings suggests that the scheme was effective in driving engagement with Farming Connect, especially amongst those previously not members. This suggests eligibility criteria within grant schemes that encourage participation in some form, either with support or through membership, can be an effective route in building links and relationships between farmers and organisations such as Farming Connect.

There can be broader impacts of such an approach, including the cumulative outcomes of subsequent engagement and support access by farmers. These impacts are reflected in the evaluation of Farming Connect published by Welsh Government (2021). This research found qualitative evidence of widespread, small incremental changes to farming practices over time as a result of engagement. Farming Connect appears to have made most difference in influencing farmers' personal development, particularly in strengthening confidence and ambition, and creating the foundations for change. This highlights the potential downstream impacts of the FBG, particularly for applicants that were not members of Farming Connect prior to the programme.

Promoting Sustainable Business Practices

- 4.6 The second objective focused on the KTE themselves, including in encouraging attendees to reflect on and engage in business planning. In terms of the impact of attending a KTE itself, 22.3 per cent of those that attended a KTE ultimately reviewed the business practices, including investment needs (n= 623). This included both those that ended up making a claim, and those that did not. It suggests that the scheme's design, including mandating attendance at the KTE, led to modest but valuable attitudinal change (the value of reviewing operations) and knowledge gains (how that could be achieved in practice) around sustainable business practices and investments.
- 4.7 Those that made a claim were more likely to have reviewed their business operations as a result of the KTE, than those that did not make a claim (26.8 and 17.5 per cent respectively for each group).¹¹ Asked specifically what they had reviewed, the majority cited exploring and implementing new or improved farm

¹¹ The variance between groups was found to be statistically significant, $F(8,48) = 5.94$, $p = 0.003$

management processes on farm. This often linked back to the focus of the investment decisions, such as animal handling. Others spoke of more general reflections, such as reviewing capital investment requirements of the farm.

- 4.8 Within more open conversations in focus groups with this group of farmers, the impact of the event on understanding and engagement with business planning was highly variable, with some suggesting that they did not get much from the session, and others suggesting that it helped advance plans that they already had in mind for their business.
- 4.9 The data highlights that those that applied for a grant were more likely to have reviewed their businesses operations than those who only attended a KTE. This suggests that KTEs on their own may be less effective than other, more practical and tangible approaches that require follow up action, such as through the FBG application process. Within more open conversations within focus groups, for example, some applicants undertook commercial reviews of their business following the KTE. The grant then enabled them to prioritise investment decisions and act on the review. This finding suggests that within scheme design, information dissemination may be more effective when combined with more practical activities or follow up action. This is especially the case for programmes that seek forms of behaviour change as part their objectives, including embedding more sustainable land management practices within farms across Wales.
- 4.10 In terms of encourage attendees to think about and explore sustainable business development, overall the data suggests that the impact of the KTEs themselves on business planning was modest. The odds of farms reviewing their business practices were 1.77 times higher for those that ultimately made a claim compared to those that only attended a KTE (95% CI 1.20, 2.61). There are two considerations in understanding the significance of these findings: firstly, that another key objective of the KTE was to communicate the FBG objectives and application process to potential applicants. Against this objective KTEs were very effective, and they were welcomed by the vast majority of attendees. Secondly, given the extent of engagement, with 57 KTEs together reaching 8,045 farmers, and the format of the events addressing relatively large audiences, the modest impacts reported may represent a cost-effective way of delivering such support and advice.

Technical Performance and Production Efficiencies

- 4.11 In terms of the third objective, evidence suggests that investments supported increases in on-farm investment and subsequent improvements to technical performance and production efficiencies. In terms of the impact of grants and investments themselves, for those that ultimately ended up securing a grant there was general perception that the grant was valued and had a positive impact on the performance of their business. Together, 75.2 per cent of respondents reported improvements to production and the resource efficiencies of their business following the grant (n= 170). Similarly, 72.7 per cent of respondents that had received the grant reported that they had seen improvements to the technical performance of businesses (n= 165).
- 4.12 In terms of technical performance, more specific improvements tended to mirror the focus of investment. Those investing in animal handling systems, for example, tended to cite improved health and safety on farm, and efficiency in managing herds and flocks. This is exemplified in the following case study drawn from an in-depth interview:
- [Mr Price], a sheep farmer from [Gwynedd], found the overall process of applying for a grant through the FBG very straight forward. He really welcomed the support it offered, including in helping him to invest in a mobile sheep handling system. On and off, [Mr Price] had wanted to invest in one, but the grant made it possible. Once it was delivered, he found it easy to use and really sped up sheep handling. It hadn't revolutionised the way he looked after his sheep, but it had allowed him to do what he was doing before much more efficiently. It was a real time saver. Asked if he was able to quantify the impact of the system, [Mr Price] wasn't able to say. He did think, however, that the time savings had meant he could focus on other aspects of the farm that he wanted to work on, including around flock health planning.
- 4.13 Within the survey grant recipients were also asked *how* investments had improved the technical performance of their business. Qualitative evidence highlighted impacts across a range of domains, including increased energy and water efficiency (n= 22, 13 per cent). These efficiencies were generated through a broad range of investments such as GPS systems, which improved the accuracy of tractor passes making fertilisation more efficient and bore hole equipment which reduced reliance on mains water. A further 14 respondents (8 per cent) highlighted improved animal

welfare from investments such as electronic weighing scales. For these farmers, improved infrastructure allowed more accurate and closer monitoring of animal health.

- 4.14 Some respondents within focus groups and interviews also highlighted the broader benefits of investments. A key theme in responses was new and improved processes on farm that were enabled through the purchase of new equipment, from more efficient processes, and improvements to animal handling and welfare. This included the implementation of more efficient processes which enabled other activity to take place, including for example reviewing pasture management and broader environmental performance of the business. This suggests that there are potential improvements to technical performance as a result of investments that had further, downstream impacts on farming operations, such as from time savings.
- 4.15 Some respondents were able to offer more quantitative estimates of the impacts of investments, including around the productivity of the farm unit. In total, 38 respondents were able to offer estimates of the cost savings to their business as a result of the investment (12 per cent of all respondents that applied for a grant). These should, however, be interpreted with caution, both due to the low number of observations, the accuracy of the estimates, and variation in the nature and size of the investment. Those that were able to offer estimates reported, on average, a saving of £2,724 in the last financial year.
- 4.16 Where grant transfers have a distributional impact and result in downstream efficiencies there are broader economic implications. If we assume that cost savings increases the profitability and purchasing power of farms and businesses that claimed for a grant, it may lead to multiplier effects for the Welsh economy more broadly. An income multiplier, also referred to as a consumption or induced multiplier, is associated with increased local expenditure as a result of savings distributed through regional supply chains. Whilst the impact of individual grants may have been modest, at the aggregate level the impact of the programme as a whole may be worth further exploration. This is, however, largely hypothetical and could be incorporated in a subsequent theory of change surrounding the FBG. It is beyond the scope and ability of this research to understand these potential impacts.
- 4.17 In terms of the further understanding the broader economic impacts of the scheme, farms and businesses were required to match grant funds with their own investments. The impact of this mechanism included stimulating investment that

may not have occurred without the grant, as well as in advancing investment decisions amongst some farms and businesses. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that both occurred, however it is not possible to determine with accuracy the extent to which this is the case from the data that was collected. Increased investment and subsequent productivity gains can itself have broader downstream impacts, both for the agricultural sector and broader local and regional supply chains.

Challenges and Methodological Limitations in Understanding Impact

- 4.18 There are a number of gaps in our understanding of how effective KTEs and the subsequent investments made through the FBG were in driving positive outcomes. These are due to empirical and practical challenges in understanding and measuring impacts across a range of domains.
- 4.19 The employed research design of this study was limited in its ability to accurately assess impact from either a theoretical or experimental standpoint. The employed research design was not able to generate a robust control group and counterfactual data from those that did not apply for a grant. This was due, in part, to the inability of the study design to implement the random assignment of prospective farms into control or intervention groups (i.e. those that did not attend a KTE, those that did and did not claim, and those that ultimately claimed). Farms were able to self-select whether they attended a KTE or not, and that choice may have been driven by underlying factors that ultimately may have influenced any variation in outcomes between different groups.
- 4.20 Further, the research team were unable to identify a fourth group, including those that attended a KTE but were unsuccessful in securing a grant. This was due to the structure and extent of administrative data shared with the research team.
- 4.21 At inception, the initial emphasis of the research was on understanding the extent to which KTE were themselves a barrier to engagement with the FBG. This influenced the design of the survey and data collection phases, with a primary focus on understanding perceptions surrounding the KTE and its influence on engagement. As the research progressed the impact of the programme became a more important research question. The subsequent data was however limited in its ability to address this question, however.
- 4.22 The reliance on self-reported information on the impact of investments, for example, limited the precision of observations surrounding impact. Respondents were often

only able to offer estimates of the broader impacts of the grant on subjective measures, such as time savings. Few were able to offer information on the cost savings of investments. The research does, however, provide evidence surrounding the potential impacts of the FBG that could be included within a broader theory of change and further research.

- 4.23 The extent to which attitudes and knowledge gains from KTE attendance led to behaviour change and direct improvements in the environmental and technical performance of a farm, for example, are difficult to determine with precision. This is due, in part, to the fact that environmental and technical performance of farms and farm businesses are complex and multifaceted. They often operate over long-time frames and can be shaped by broader factors, such as climate, soil composition, and geophysical variability. Single investments also operate within complex farm systems that are themselves shaped by a range of factors, including the attitudes, capabilities, behaviours and resources of farmers themselves.
- 4.24 The inherent complexity within farming systems can make it difficult to objectively isolate the impacts of single investments or changes to farming practices. These impacts can be incremental, uneven, and crucially, difficult to observe and measure. This presents challenges in estimating farm level impacts, especially for more distal outcomes such as environmental or technical performance. Within this research, for example, farmers often highlighted more immediate and tangible outcomes, such as improved animal handling or time savings. Respondents were often unable to offer more detailed or precise observations.
- 4.25 Difficulties in estimating farm level impacts also present further challenges in understanding the aggregate impacts of the programme as a whole. Impact assessments are further limited by the inability of the research to make robust causal inferences. This includes the extent to which changes in on farm conditions (e.g. proximal outcomes including knowledge gains and direct investments in the business), **caused** material changes in environmental and economic performance (distal outcomes).
- 4.26 Together, this limits the extent and precision of the impact assessment of the FBG as a whole. In better understanding impact of grant schemes on environmental and economic performance, future research could employ a range of techniques and approaches. This could include drawing on existing data, for example, such as the June Agricultural survey. This could enable the development of datasets that would

allow historical analysis of grant schemes and impacts on farm level performance on certain indicators over time.

- 4.27 If practically possible, future research exploring the impact of programmes such as the FBG could also include employing experimental and quasi-experimental research designs, such as Randomised Control Trials. These can offer more robust impact estimates by controlling for factors that can influence farm performance independently of the investment or programme. Future policy and programming could consider how impact is measured and understood at the design stage. This includes drawing on more objective measures of environmental and financial performance in supporting analyses of impact.

Summary of Findings on Impact

- 4.28 Together, the data suggests that there are a range of potential impacts for individual farms and businesses, and for the broader economy. This included direct improvements to the economic and environmental performance of farms, as well as broader downstream impacts derived from increased engagement with Farming Connect support.

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

- 5.1 The aim of the research was to understand how the scheme's design and implementation influenced the take up of support offered through the FBG. The objective was to identify programme design elements that are effective in securing engagement and participation in order that they may be applied to future policy and programming in support of the farming community.
- 5.2 In achieving these objectives, the research sought the views of farmers across three distinct groups, including those that did not attend a Farming for the Future KTE, those that attended but ultimately did not apply, and those that ultimately made a claim. In terms of expectant values within the sample of farms engaged as part of the research, those that attended a KTE, and those that subsequently received a grant are broadly representative of the population by turnover (see Table 2.2). The survey sample underrepresents those that did not attend a KTE with a turnover of under £50,000.
- 5.3 Overall, the research found that perceptions of the FBG were positive (e.g. see Figure 3.10). Many found the application process simple and straight forward. The Farming for the Future KTEs were generally well received, and they were effective in driving engagement with broader support and advice offered through Farming Connect (e.g. see Figure 3.8 and 3.11). Those that ultimately made a claim often valued the support offered through the scheme. The use of a pre-defined list of capital items and the subsequent simplicity of the application was well received, especially relative to other schemes respondents had accessed.
- 5.4 There were apparent differences in the characteristics of farms and levels of engagement with the FBG. This included the economic size of farms, farm type, the views and perspectives of farmers themselves towards innovation and the role of new knowledge and information, and levels of engagement with broader support through Farming Connect. They were all found to be correlated with the level and extent of engagement with the FBG (see Figure 3.1, Table 3.1, Figure 3.2, and Figure 3.3 respectively). Whether a farm had previously accessed other schemes was also a factor determining engagement with the FBG (see Figure 3.5). Together, this suggests that there are factors that shape engagement with the FBG independently of the way that the scheme has been designed and implemented.

- 5.5 Where barriers do exist in the design of the FBG, these tended to focus on the extent and nature of the capital items offered through the scheme and the minimum outlay required of applicants (e.g. see para 3.49). Signing up for Farming Connect and attendance at a Farming for the Future KTE was not found to be a significant barrier to engagement (e.g. see para 3.51). In terms of addressing potential barriers in the FBG's design:
- 5.6 **Recommendation 1:** Review options that broaden support available to farms less likely to have accessed the FBG, including those with a turnover of under £50k. This is in response to the finding that those with a turnover of less than £50k were less likely to seek a grant through the FBG (see Figure 3.1). For example, this could include reducing the minimum outlay required to access the grant, and/or slightly expanding the list of available items. It could also include exploring alternative approaches to support these farms to develop their technical and environmental performance.
- 5.7 On the whole, those attending KTEs found them helpful and informative in exploring the FBG (e.g. see Figure 3.11). Across the survey and in more open conversations in focus groups, some respondents highlighted that they felt they had not fully understood elements of FBG, or in responses there were apparent misunderstandings of the scheme's design, eligibility and application process. These were peripheral perspectives however as overall respondents found communications effective and clear.
- 5.8 **Recommendation 2:** Review communications across the FBG scheme to explore where messages may be simplified or clarified around the objectives, eligibility, and application processes surrounding the FBG. This includes messaging within the KTEs and in broader documentation and guidance. This could include, for example, greater use of infographics that help to communicate an overview of the scheme.
- 5.9 Including broader support alongside capital grants was an effective approach in advancing the objectives of the FBG. Encouraging potential applicants to sign up to Farming Connect expanded and deepened engagement with support offered through organisation. The KTEs themselves showed modest impact on knowledge and behaviours around sustainable business planning.

- 5.10 Together, the approach of including training and other support alongside investment shows promise in improving the effectiveness of capital grant schemes with specific objectives. Technical and environmental performance on farm are shaped by a range of factors, for example, including in the ways in which infrastructure and farm practices are utilised on farm (Roberts, 2014). Complementing training alongside investment may provide farms with more rounded package of support, ensuring that investments are ultimately more effective in producing improvements to technical and environmental performance. Broader evidence also suggests that peer-to-peer support can be effective alongside more in-depth one-to-one support in improving outcomes for farms ([Welsh Government, 2021](#)). Therefore, including a mix of support, with grants alongside advisory services and information, as well as peer-to-peer support may be valuable in increasing the impact of schemes such as the FBG.
- 5.11 **Recommendation 3:** Consider the future role and potential of broader packages of support that surround capital grant schemes. This could include the provision of training as part of an application process, or other mechanisms such as facilitating peer-to-peer learning that support and encourage information dissemination and discussion, such as through KTEs.
- 5.12 In terms of the broader impacts of the programme, there was indicative evidence to suggest that investments had stimulated improvements in the technical efficiency of farms (e.g. see para 3.70). This included time savings, making processes more effective and efficient, and ultimately savings to the farm or business. There was also potential downstream impacts deriving from increased engagement with Farming Connect support.
- 5.13 Together, the FBG offers important examples of effective practice in the design and implementation of capital grant schemes aimed at supporting the farming community.

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Annex 1: Capital Items

Item Code	Item Name	Quantity
BG20	Pig Fixed Handling System	1
BG35	Liquid fertiliser storage	1
BG56	Shallow injections systems	1
BG60	GPS and flow systems	1
BG27	Yield mapping	2
BG36	Robotic silage pusher	2
BG58	Trailed compartmented	2
BG49	Rapid milk cooler – preinstalled renewable energy	3
BG70	Digital weather station	3
BG39	Pasture Plate Meter (Trailed)	4
BG84	Auto ID Drench Gun	4
BG21	Pig Electronic Weighing facility	5
BG64	Hydraulic ram pumps (water).	5
BG67	Calibrating trays for fertiliser spreaders	6
BG57	Hose reeler umbilical	7
BG85	Hand held automatic teat washing system	7
BG54	Trailing shoe slurry system including macerators	8
BG23	Air mixing fan system	9
BG24	Calf milk pasteuriser/dispenser	9
BG87	Dribble Bar	11
BG28	Variable rate controller- sprayers & fertiliser sp	12
BG34	Chemical storage	13
BG43	Milk Transfer Pump	13
BG08	Cattle Auto ID Shedding Gate	18
BG82	Additional feed station	19
BG50	Energy efficient milk storage tanks	20
BG62	Water harvesting equipment.	20
BG81	Auto calf feeder with washing facility	21
BG12	Cattle Automated footbaths	25
BG31	Minimum tillage/cultivation machinery	26
BG73	Large Group Calf shelter	26
BG42	Variable Speed Drives on vacuum &/or milk pumps	28
BG61	Water storage tanks for Plate Heat Exchanger	29
BG41	Heat recovery unit	30
BG44	Plate Heat Exchanger (PHE), inc.solenoid valve	31
BG01	Cattle Mobile Handling Systems	36
BG32	Arable crop roller	37
BG16	Mobile Handling Systems (100 sheep)	46
BG29	Subsoiler	46
BG76	Badger Proof Lick Holders	49
BG53	Integrated wash down facilities for parlour	50
BG45	Efficient water heater/thermostatic controls	51
BG03	Cattle crush (Squeeze)	52
BG72	Small Group Calf	54
BG13	Cattle Heat Detection System – Base Unit	55

Item Code	Item Name	Quantity
BG30	Aerator	55
BG33	Grassland Seed drills	56
BG48	Electric scraper systems	56
BG38	Pasture Plate Meter (Handheld)	60
BG77	Rotating cow brush	60
BG46	Efficient compressor/condensers	61
BG74	Cattle crush (automatic)	66
BG02	Cattle Fixed Handling Systems	92
BG69	Farm Business Software	100
BG06	Cattle Electronic Weigh System	105
BG09	Cattle Foot trimming add-on to crushes	112
BG75	Badger Proof Feed Troughs	112
BG88	Minimum tillage/cultivation machinery	134
BG26	GPS for precision farming	141
BG10	Cattle Calving detector per unit	157
BG79	Sheep Handler	171
BG07	Cattle Weigh Bars / Platforms	180
BG37	Weed wiper	180
BG17	Sheep Fixed Handling Systems	202
BG71	Calving Gate	216
BG18	Sheep Electronic Weigh Scales	251
BG15	Mobile Handling Systems (250 sheep)	255
BG04	Cattle crush (manual)	279
BG19	Sheep – EID handheld devices	282
BG05	Cattle Head scoop	320
BG11	Cattle Cluster Flush per unit	326
BG66	Borehole	361
BG68	Computer hardware	391
BG40	Electric Fencing Energiser	478
BG25	Bulk feed bins (10 tonnes)	505
BG47	Fuel Tanks (Diesel)	853
BG83	Feed Barrier	1,416
BG78	Cattle Hurdle	2,695
BG14	Cattle Heat Detection System – Collar	7,280
BG80	Sheep Hurdle	10,890

Annex 2: Survey Questions

Farm Business Grant Survey

This survey seeks to understand your views and experiences towards the Farm Business Grant offered by the Welsh Government. The questionnaire explores a range of issues, including why you did or did not apply, your views towards the 'Farming for the Future' workshops, and the application process more generally. It should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete.

As a thank you, we will donate £2 to the DPJ Foundation. The charity provides a range of support around mental health to the farming community across Wales, including confidential, free of charge counselling. We are aiming to gather the views of 800 farmers, and together your contributions will make a big difference. For more information on the support available through the DPJ Foundation, [click here](#). The research is being completed by Wavehill, an independent research agency based in Aberaeron, Ceredigion. The research has been funded by the Welsh Government and aims to improve the way support is delivered to the farming community across Wales in future. Your involvement in this research is completely voluntary, and any information you provide will be treated confidentially. For information about how we obtained your details and how we will handle the information you provide us, please click here [Webpage removed]. If you any further questions regarding this research, please contact either xxx or xxx. Thank you in advance for your time.

Are you happy to continue with the survey? Please note you can withdraw your consent at any time during the survey.

Please note that by starting the survey that you confirm that you are happy for the information that you provide to be collected and used as described previously. If you stop part way through the questionnaire the information that you have provided will be recorded. If you would like to delete any of the information that you have provided, please contact xxx

Questions

In order to understand your level of engagement with the Farm Business Grant, is the following information we hold on your application correct? Farm Trading Title / Status of Claim

Please could you tell us your farm trading title

Did you attend a Farming for the Future Event which explained how the Farm Business Grant worked and how you could apply?

Following the event, did you apply for a grant by submitting an Expression of Interest?

We understand from our records that you applied for a Farm Business Grant

Were you awarded the grant?

Did you subsequently claim the grant?

Demographics - Why do we need this information? This will help us to understand the views and experiences of different farmers across Wales towards the Farm Business Grant:

What is the main activity on your farm?

What size is total area of your farm? Would you prefer to give your answer in hectares or acres

What size is total area of your farm holding?

What is the tenure status of your farm?

Approximately what was total turnover of the farm in the last financial year, 2019-20?

Have you received any other grants or financial support from the Welsh Government or other public bodies in the last five years?

Which schemes have you received financial support from?

On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is 'not at all important' and 5 is 'very important'), how important is talking to other farmers as a source of information and advice for you personally?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is 'not at all interested' and 5 is 'extremely interested'), how interested are you in accessing information or advice about farming on the internet?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Achieving a good quality of life is more important to me than maximising income from my holding					
All farms should strive to be as environmentally sustainable as possible					
Collaborating with other farmers improves the running of a farm					
I always make time to socialise with other farmers (
I am always looking to learn new skills and knowledge that I can apply to my smallholding					
I am keen to apply new technology on my holding as it becomes available					
I am happy to take advice about managing the natural environment on my holding (7)					

Farming for the Future Workshops

How did you hear about the Farm Business Grant scheme?

Did you join Farming Connect when you found out about the Farm Business Grant scheme?

Why did you join Farming Connect?

Did you attend a Farming for the Future Event which explained how the Farm Business Grant worked and how you could apply?

How important was the Farming for the Future workshop in understanding how the scheme worked and whether it was right for you?

What other sources of information about the scheme did you access?

Of all the sources of information you accessed, which did you find the most useful and why?

Currently, which of the following sources of information do you use to keep up to date with developments in farming and government support?

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following aspects of the scheme?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Signing up to a workshop					
The Farming for the Future workshop					
Completing an expression of interest					
Making a claim					

What specifically were you satisfied about?

What specifically were you dissatisfied about?

Was the list of eligible items appropriate to your business?

What items were missing?

Grants were offered between £3000 and £12000. Was the size of the grant suitable for your business?

What are the reasons for your answer?

Compared to other grants or schemes that you have accessed, how easy or difficult did you think the application process was? (Including attending the Farming for the Future Workshop)

Were the Welsh Language provisions of the 'Farming for the Future' workshop adequate?

What could be done differently in order to better support Welsh Language provisions?

Were the Welsh Language provisions of the application process adequate?

What could be done differently in order to better support Welsh Language provision across the application process?

Impact of the Workshop

How useful did you find the information provided in the workshop?

As a result of attending the workshop, have you since reviewed any of your business operations?

Could you describe how you have changed your business operations?

Decision to Apply

What are the reasons for choosing to apply for the grant?

What challenges did you encounter in the application process?

Impacts of Grant

What was the grant used for in terms of the capital items you bought under the scheme?

As a result of the grant, have you seen any changes in the technical performance of your business?

How has the technical performance of your business improved?

Have you seen your costs reduce as a direct result of the grant?

Could you estimate the cost savings to your business in the last financial year?

Have you seen any changes in the production or resource efficiency of your business?

How has the production or resource efficiency of your business improved?

Are there any other benefits that you have seen from the grant?

Subsequent Support

After attending the Farming for the Future Workshop, have you accessed any other support offered by Farming Connect?

What types of support have you accessed?

How useful has this support been?

Are there any reasons why you have not accessed support offered by Farming Connect?

Farming for the Future Workshops

How did you hear about the Farm Business Grant scheme?

Did you join Farming Connect when you found out about the Farm Business Grant scheme?

Why did you not join Farming Connect?

Did you attend a Farming for the Future Event which explained how the Farm Business Grant worked and how you could apply?

How important was the Farming for the Future workshop in understanding how the scheme worked and whether it was right for you?

What other sources of information about the scheme did you access?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 is 'not at all useful' and 5 is 'Very useful'). How useful were these sources of information?

Currently, which of the following sources of information do you use to keep up to date with developments in farming and government support?

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied with each of the following aspects of the scheme?

	Very dissatisfied	Moderately dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied
Signing up to a workshop					
The Farming for the Future workshop					

What specifically were you dissatisfied about?

What specifically were you satisfied about?

Was the list of eligible items appropriate to your business?

What items were missing?

Grants were offered between £3000 and £12000. Was the size of the grant suitable for your business?

Why was the size of the grant unsuitable?

Compared to other grants or schemes that you have accessed, how easy or difficult did you think the application process was? (Including attending the Farming for the Future Workshop.)

Were the Welsh Language provisions of the 'Farming for the Future' workshop adequate?

What could be done differently in order to better support Welsh Language provisions?

Impacts

How useful did you find the information provided in the workshop?

As a resulting of attending the workshop, have you since reviewed any of your business operations?

Could you describe how you have changed your business operations?

Decision to Not Apply

From our records it suggests that after you attended the workshop you subsequently did not make a claim. Are there any reasons why you chose not to apply for the grant?

Subsequent Support

After attending the Farming for the Future Workshop, have you accessed any other support offered by Farming Connect?

What types of support have you accessed?

How useful have you found this support?

Are there any reasons why you have not accessed support offered by Farming Connect?

DID NOT ATTEND A WORKSHOP

Farm Business Grant is a Capital grant scheme available to farmers across Wales. It is designed to help farmers in Wales to improve the economic and environmental performance of their agricultural holdings. The FBG provides for capital investments of between £3,000 and £12,000 in equipment and machinery that have been pre-identified as offering clear and quantifiable benefits to your farm enterprise.

Is there a specific reason that you have not yet applied for the scheme?

Given the brief description of the scheme, would you consider applying for the grant in future?

If yes: prompt where to find information on the scheme.

Are there any reasons why you would not apply for the scheme?

Where do you generally find out about the support available to you, including from Welsh Government grants?

Is there anything else that you would like to add about your experiences?

Would you be interested in taking part in an online feedback session around 1:00 pm or 7:00 pm on December 8th or December 10th about the Farm Business Grant?

Could you please give us the following details to contact you about the feedback session

Which of these sessions would you prefer.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

Annex 3: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Farm Business Grant Focus Group Discussion Guide

Objectives

The focus groups will have three broad objectives:

To test the issues and themes raised by respondents within the survey to ensure that they are valid and significant.

To ensure that we have not missed any potentially relevant observations.

To begin to explore the implications of the findings for the farming community, in thinking about the future design of programming.

Introduction, 5 Minutes

Welcome and many thanks for taking the time to speak to us today. This feedback session will explore your views towards the Farm Business Grant. It will also explore some of the issues that other farmers have raised through a questionnaire. The aim of the session is to improve future schemes that support farmers across Wales.

The information you provide will be confidential and will not be passed onto anyone, including the Welsh Government who have funded the research.

In order to ensure that we accurately understand your views, we are hoping to record this session. Does anyone object to me recording this conversation?

If you have any questions about any aspect of the research, including how we gathered your details or how information will be handled, please do get in touch with me directly.

How the session will work, I will pose some questions to you, and I would be very interested to know what you think. Everyone will get a chance to contribute, if at all possible to allow someone to finish what they are saying before

Does anyone have any questions?

Warm up, 5 minutes

To start we will conduct a straw poll: *Note: This is to encourage participation in the group and to validate our own data on the status of participants claims:*

OK, to start I would be interested in your engagement with the Farm Business Grant. You should be able to see a poll on your screen. Did you ultimately?

Not attend a Future for the Farming workshop.

Attend a workshop but did not submit an expression of interest.

Attend a workshop and submitted an expression of interest.

Discuss findings of straw poll, a mix of respondents, different experiences etc.

General perceptions of the programme and workshop, 15 minutes

We will start by exploring your overall perceptions of the Farm Business Grant.

Guiding questions:

Turning to those who attended the Farming for the Future workshop, can I ask what you thought of them?

Did you find them valuable in helping you to understand how the Grant worked?

Did you find the additional information presented at the workshop useful?

For those that did not end up applying for a grant, can I ask why you felt the Grant was not for you?

Enablers and barriers to accessing the grant, 15 minutes

Turning now to explore what you felt worked well, and what could be improved for future schemes,

Guiding questions:

What were the strengths and limitations of the Grant from your perspective?

For those who did not attend a workshop, did you know about the Grant before we contacted you? Was there a reason you did not apply?

Compared to other schemes or grants you may have accessed, how easy or difficult was the Farm Business Grant to access?

Was the Farming for the Future workshop a barrier to accessing the Grant?

For those who ended up making a claim, did you experience any challenges in accessing funds?

Did broader factors influence your decisions either to apply for a Grant or invest in your farm?

Implications and impacts, 15 minutes

Turning to the implications of your experiences of the Farm Business Grant.

Guiding Questions:

- For those applying for a grant, what impact did the grant have on your farm?
- Do you think such support is important to you and your business?
- What practical steps would you recommend to improve future schemes such as the Farm Business Grant?
- Prompt previous discussions with questions such as: what are the implications of the specific issue/barrier we raised earlier, and what do we need to do to overcome it?
- For those who ultimately applied for the grant, would you have been able to achieve what you have without it?

Close, 5 minutes

Concluding question:

Of all the things we've discussed today, what would you say are the most important issues that we should reflect back to Welsh Government?

Many thanks everyone, that has been very useful discussion. We are in the process of making sense of the views and experiences of over 800 farmers across Wales. This discussion will support us in making sense of what some of the main issues are, and in feeding back to Welsh Government. Again, everything discussed here is confidential, and we will not include anything.

Many thanks again, have a good day/evening!