

Welsh Government is consulting on proposals for the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) – the main source of support from 2025, replacing the BPS which will be phased out by 2029.

Following our roadshows around Wales, NFU Cymru is collating feedback on the proposals to inform our consultation response.

NFU Cymru is urging all involved with farming, the supply chain and our rural communities to respond to the consultation. Our key concerns are summarised here to help you with your response:



Food production

Universal Actions and scheme requirements lead to a loss of agricultural production with knock on impacts for the Welsh food industry and the continued supply of high quality, affordable food from Wales.



Payment Rates

Payment rates for the Scheme will not be announced until after the consultation has closed.



Funding

The Rural Affairs Budget has been cut and the budget for the Sustainable Farming Scheme has not been confirmed.



Stability

No long-term commitment to a stability payment to secure the continued delivery of economic, environmental, social and cultural outcomes by Welsh farming.

Payment methodology

Cost incurred, income foregone payments mean the Universal Baseline Payment brings NO income onto farm.

Data provision

Data provided should attract a payment as it is valuable to WG. There are concerns around how WG will use and protect the data.

Record-keeping burden

The requirements of the Universal Actions are complex and burdensome.

No independent appeals

Dispensing with the independent appeals panel limits access to justice for SFS participants.

Universal Actions

Universal Actions need to be changed so they work for all farmers in Wales – that's all sectors and locations.



10% tree cover

10% tree cover requirement is not possible on all farms and is a permanent change in land use that will have impacts including on agricultural productivity and land values.



Tenant farming

There is not equal access for farmers who do not own the land that they farm.



Common land

No Universal Baseline Payment on Common land.



Protected sites (SSSIs etc)

Farmers with protected sites will not receive the habitat maintenance element of the Universal Baseline Payment.



It's vital you have your say!

Welsh Government's Sustainable Farming Scheme will NOT Keep Farmers Farming. Please help us to secure changes by responding - to save time we can help you create your own tailored [response](#).

Consultation closes: **7 March 2024**

For more information:
[NFU Cymru \(nfu-cymru.org.uk\)](http://nfu-cymru.org.uk)



NFU Cymru Key Principles For Reform

In 2016, following the EU Referendum, NFU Cymru launched the biggest internal consultation in its history, establishing the following set of key principles to underpin new Welsh agricultural policy:

- A policy that underpins and secures the continued supply of safe, high quality, traceable, affordable food for our nation in the context of future global challenges must be at the heart of future agricultural policy.
- All farmers must be fairly rewarded for the environmental/public goods they already deliver and will continue to deliver in future for society.
- Policies must be simple to administer, easy to understand and target support at those active farmers who take the financial risks associated with food production.
- Investment measures are required to ensure that farming businesses are well equipped to face the challenges and maximise the opportunities of a post-Brexit marketplace.
- The regulatory regime must be proportionate and evidence-based and policies must be adequately funded to ensure that Welsh farming remains competitive with farmers in the UK, EU and globally.

NFU Cymru Vision for Future Agriculture Policy

From these key principles NFU Cymru developed its vision for a new agricultural policy in Wales. This comprises a single, integrated, flexible framework based around the three cornerstones of:



- **Stability measures**
A stability and sustainability payment available to all active farmers to underpin food production, the sustainability credentials of the Welsh food and drink brand and to help with income volatility arising from factors beyond the control of individual farm businesses.
- **Environmental measures**
open to all farmers for activity beyond the conditions required for the stability and sustainability payment delivering the enhancement of farmed land for biodiversity, carbon, soils, air and water.
- **Productivity measures**
for investment in on-farm infrastructure and technology and an incentivised programme of advice and knowledge exchange

Collectively the three cornerstones deliver more than the sum of their parts. Farming businesses need stability to be able to deliver environmental outcomes for society and it is only from a position of stability that farming businesses are able to invest in new technologies and productivity measures.