

Spring Conference 2024

TOPICAL MOTION

Welsh Farmers and the Sustainable Farming Scheme

AGREED BY THE WELSH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS CONFERENCE

Conference notes with concern:

- A. The Welsh Labour Government's cuts to the Rural Affairs Budget, unconfirmed budget for the SFS, and the lack of payment rates detailed in the consultation.
- B. That Welsh farming communities have expressed anger and concern during consultation on the 2025 Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS).
- C. The lack of long-term funding commitments, removal of an independent appeals process, unequal access for tenant farmers, the exclusion of existing high-value habitats, and burden of bureaucracy in the proposed scheme.

Conference reaffirms our belief that:

- I. Welsh agriculture's future, key to the social, economic, and cultural well-being of rural Wales, relies on a fair, effective, and suitable funding scheme.
- II. Sustainable farming is key to a healthy natural environment and climate.

Conference calls for a farming payments scheme that:

- 1. Ensures access to fair funding, in line with equivalent UK schemes, for all farmers, regardless of their size, produce type and land tenure type.
- 2. Enables an orderly and just adoption of the new scheme through investment in training and advice, and transition grants for those in need.
- 3. Provides adequate financial support for woodland planting, habitat creation and SSIs based on realistic cost assessments and use of low cost, close to nature approaches.

4. Includes practical and fair schemes for common land participation.
5. Provides certainty of the future, by setting out payments over 10 year periods, and outlining new investment plans at least five years in advance, to make clear how much money will be paid to farmers and land managers for public goods.