

[A Woman's Place: Cabinet Secretary calls for increased visibility of women in agriculture](#)

Lesley Griffiths has challenged Wales's agriculture industry to increase efforts to promote farming as a rewarding and sustainable career for women by developing their skills, experience and confidence.

The Cabinet Secretary recently met with members of three regional Women in Agriculture groups, set up by the Welsh Government shortly after the UK voted to leave the EU. The groups, supported by Farming Connect's Agrisgôp programme, presented a paper to the Cabinet Secretary setting out their vision of the future of farming in Wales.

Many of the women first got together at a Farming Connect 'women in agriculture' forum last year, when the Cabinet Secretary invited delegates to set up their own regional forums and provide their perspective on key issues facing the industry.

Since 2011, the Welsh Government has, through [Farming Connect](#), supported 35 women only groups through Agrisgôp and 60 events have been held specifically for women in agriculture.

The Cabinet Secretary also stressed the importance of improving women's confidence to apply for senior positions within national farming organisations.

Earlier this year, the Cabinet Secretary appointed [ten new members](#) to the Board of Hybu Cig Cymru. The advertisement was worded carefully to encourage applications from women and five were subsequently successful in achieving positions on the board. Further, two are past members of Farming Connect's Agri Academy Rural Leadership programme, which last year boasted a 2:1 female-to-male ratio.

Lesley Griffiths said:

"Women play a critical role in the development and sustainability of agricultural businesses. Many though have additional responsibilities such as looking after children or caring for elderly relatives. Few, therefore, take a salary and their contribution often goes unrecognised. They truly are the industry's unsung heroes.

"This needs to change. As a government, we have a role to ensure the relevant support services are in place to give women the confidence to apply for leadership roles. We must also word adverts for senior positions in a way that encourage more women to apply, indeed this applies right across the board – not just in

agriculture. This was an approach we adopted when recruiting for members to the board of Hybu Cig Cymru and I was pleased to subsequently appoint a gender neutral board.

“In addition we have established a number of forums for women to inspire, motivate and support each other and it is encouraging to see an increasing number of women within young people’s groups set up by industry bodies like FUW and NFU Cymru. My challenge now to the wider industry is to build on these positive developments and do more to raise the profile of women in agriculture.

“That is because diversity is a strength. As we face a future outside the EU we must pull together and utilise as wide a pool of talent as possible. This is how we can best achieve our shared vision of a prosperous, resilient agriculture industry promoting Wales’ present and future well-being.”

Agrisgôp leader, trained coach, mediator and farmer Alice Lampard, emphasised the importance of empowering and encouraging women to ensure their voices and opinions are heard and valued:

“Women are recognised as having a hugely influential role in many farm businesses. Often expected to manage farm and work commitments alongside family duties, there has never been a more important time for us to get together and speak out.”