

All Wales regulation to tackle agricultural pollution: “a measured and necessary response” – Lesley Griffiths

The new Regulations will replicate good practice measures adopted already by many farmers across Wales.

It follows claims by the FUW the announcement on regulations to be introduced next spring is simply a knee-jerk reaction to recent media coverage. The FUW further claimed the Welsh Government is not committed to partnership working.

In response, the Cabinet Secretary has written to the FUW robustly dismissing these claims, which divert attention from the real issue; ongoing pollution from agriculture.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“The issue of agricultural pollution is not new. Despite recent efforts to tackle the issue via voluntary action, we are seeing ever increasing incidents, with in excess of 100 incidents having been recorded annually for a number of years.

“I receive images and correspondence from concerned members of the public on almost a weekly basis during the autumn and winter periods.

“This cannot continue. I have given careful and measured consideration to this matter and concluded a voluntary approach alone is not the answer. To ignore the images and incidents reported would be irresponsible of me as Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs.

“I am clear all organisations with a leadership role in agriculture have a role to play and must do so.

“The FUW’s questioning of the Welsh Government’s commitment to partnership working merely, and perhaps knowingly, diverts attention from the real issue. Agricultural pollution is an industry problem and ultimately a problem only the agriculture industry, with the support from Government and others, can fix.

“My decision has been informed by the analysis of a number of consultations, the Wales Land Management Forum sub-group report and work from other key stakeholders.

“The sub-group’s report, as well as the continued work of the group since the report, has been fully considered as part of my decision to introduce regulations. I will continue to work in partnership with all who wish to work with me to help address the problem of agricultural pollution.

“Without exception, everyone involved in Welsh agriculture must robustly hold to account the minority who, through their unacceptable behaviour, have such a destructive impact on our environment, the reputation of the agriculture sector and, potentially, as we head towards Brexit, on our brand values.”