

Cabinet Secretary announces £6m initiative to help develop next generation of farmers

The Young People into Agriculture Scheme will offer financial support to high achieving individuals looking to establish a new business or to develop an existing business. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate they have the attributes to lead dynamic businesses and drive change in the wider industry.

The £6m scheme, made available as part of the Budget agreement with Plaid Cymru, will develop participants' leadership skills. They will be encouraged to deploy these skills and impart their experience and knowledge within the industry.

To complement this scheme, a Young People in Agriculture Forum is being proposed. Forum members will work with Welsh Government to develop policies that benefit agricultural families, businesses and rural Wales.

The Forum will provide young people with an opportunity to express their views confidently and directly to Ministers, senior officials and industry bodies with a view to supporting the next generation into agriculture.

An important element of this initiative is around the development of future leaders. Members of the Forum will be expected to work with a mentor to develop a Personal Development Plan to support their training and development needs.

Launching the initiative during the FUW Farmhouse Breakfast and speaking subsequently to Farming Connect's Agri-Academy Rural Leadership students for 2017 the Cabinet Secretary said:

"I am consistently impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of young people in Welsh agriculture. It has been one of my key priorities to support our next generation of farmers and I have spoken to many young people to gain a better understanding of what support they need to enter the industry and develop sustainable and resilient businesses.

"We need to be prepared for the challenges as we transition from the EU. The impact on our farmers is likely to be greater than for many other sectors. We must do all we can to build resilience and ensure we create an environment where business can prosper and individuals develop to become leaders of the industry. The two initiatives I am announcing today will give opportunities to young people to develop themselves and their businesses in preparation for a world outside the EU.

“Both initiatives will sit alongside wider Welsh Government support for both young and other new entrants such as Farming Connect and the Farm Business Grant. Whilst there are many challenges for agriculture in Wales, I remain confident there are opportunities to develop a profitable and resilient industry that will benefit Wales’ future generations.”