

Lesley Griffiths writes open letter to all Welsh farmers on why reform of the Basic Payment Scheme is vital

In July, the Cabinet Secretary launched a consultation, [Brexit and our Land](#), which proposes a new Land Management Programme to replace the BPS in Wales once the UK leaves the European Union. The consultation is open until 30 October.

Loss of tariff-free access to the EU's market and potential competition from other parts of the world once the UK begins to sign Free Trade Agreements will mean Welsh farmers having to compete in the global marketplace.

The current BPS is insufficiently targeted to respond to these challenges as it is solely an income support scheme. The sustainable way to compete is to improve productivity, reduce costs through greater efficiency and reduced waste and diversify to meet market needs. These are all areas in which the Welsh Government wants to focus support through the new schemes proposed in the consultation.

The proposed Land Management Programme will consist of two large and flexible schemes – the Economic Resilience Scheme and the Public Goods Scheme.

The Cabinet Secretary is writing to all farmers to explain the need for change following a recent FUW campaign to reject the proposals in the consultation and retain BPS.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“The Basic Payment Scheme has provided vital support to Welsh farmers. But it will not protect farmers and communities in the future.

“Brexit means we have to do things differently. Simply maintaining current payments cannot offset the negative impacts from leaving the European Union. Keeping the system would leave Welsh farmers worse off.

“There is no debate on whether we should support farmers: we will and we will continue to protect the funding. But we need to provide support in a different way to keep farmers on the land.

“I am open to new ideas and this is a genuine consultation. But I am clear that ‘business as usual’ is not an option.

“Our new Land Management Programme will consist of two new large flexible schemes to support Welsh farmers post-Brexit – the Economic Resilience Scheme and the Public Goods Scheme.

“Over the summer, I have taken the opportunity to meet with farmers in agricultural shows and during other visits to discuss the consultation. We

need farmers to engage properly with us to help make this work, so the recent misleading FUW campaign is not helpful. That is why I am today writing to all farmers to reiterate the case for change. I have also shared with them a [myth-busting factsheet](#). I urge all farmers to get involved and share their views with us.”