

“We will work with our farmers to help them meet the challenges of Brexit,” says Lesley Griffiths

In a keynote speech at the Hybu Cig Cymru breakfast, the Cabinet Secretary will talk about a number of important initiatives the Welsh Government has in place to provide valuable support to farmers, many of which are particularly relevant as the UK leaves the EU and farm businesses prepare for the major change that lies ahead.

A new land capability mapping system for Wales will be launched by the Cabinet Secretary at this year's Winter Fair – the first major update since the original maps were produced in the early 1970's. The Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Map allows land users, planners and Government to make informed choices about how agricultural land is used in Wales.

The Cabinet Secretary will also announce that over 91% of farmers' Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) 2017 claims will be paid on Friday (1st December). Over £201m will be paid into the bank accounts of 14,111 Welsh farm businesses on the first day on which payments may be made under European rules.

Speaking ahead of the Winter Fair Lesley Griffiths said:

“Brexit will bring significant and lasting change, of that there is absolutely no doubt. A ‘no deal’ scenario presents particularly acute risks for those sectors particularly reliant on exports to the EU including lamb.

“Leaving the Common Agricultural Policy and new, yet to be established, trading arrangements mean that maintaining the status quo is simply not an option. Turning challenges into opportunities is where the industry and individual farm businesses need to be focusing their attention.

“For our part, we are already heavily involved working alongside our key partners in seeking to address our agriculture sectors' readiness for Brexit.

“Brexit will provide a once in a generation opportunity to redesign our policy framework in a way that is uniquely Welsh, that reflects Welsh needs and strengths.

“We all have a role to play shaping how the industry will look after Brexit and we need farmers to be bold, imaginative; open to new ideas and practices.

“With this new approach in mind, I'm pleased to today launch a new

Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for Wales. It identifies the potential versatility of land to support a range of cropping choices and allows land users, planners and Government to make informed choices on how land is used.

“My priority is to ensure our agricultural industry is in the best possible position to deal with the change ahead. As a government we are committed to providing solutions which work for Wales and we will continue to work with the industry, our partners and others to make the most of every opportunity.”

On the record payment of Basic Payment Scheme claims, the Cabinet Secretary added:

“I am delighted to announce that over 91% of farmers receiving their BPS payments on the first day. This is yet another example of the success of our uniquely Welsh approach and our exemplary record on payments. It is a tribute to the way Welsh farmers have embraced new technology, RPW Online and made the new system such a success.”