

**Welsh Government Response to the  
Independent Review of Learning Delivered by  
Further Education Colleges and the Relevance  
of that Delivery in Supporting Farm Businesses  
in Wales**

## Response and Action Plan

	Recommendation	Response	Responsibility	Action	Timescale
1	That a small group is convened by Lantra consisting of key individuals from the colleges, the sector levy funded bodies and farmer employers to move the agenda forward on the issue of apprenticeships. The FE colleges may be able to identify and disseminate the good practice in other sectors in this regard.	Accept	Welsh Government and Lantra	The Further Education (FE) Apprenticeships Department within the Department for Education & Skills (DfES) will facilitate the creation of a small group to consider good practices and how employer engagement can be improved in this area. It is anticipated that the group will hold its first meeting during the Summer of 2015.	Summer 2015
2	That the three primary providers of Level 3 Agriculture courses, namely Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Coleg Cambria and Coleg Sir Gâr should be encouraged and supported to develop a coherent, cooperative and complementary approach to support the vision for agriculture and work up their plans for co-operating as a priority. In this they should work to include other colleges.	Accept (in principle)	Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Coleg Cambria and Coleg Sir Gâr	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and all FE providers who offer Level 3 Agriculture courses in Wales, to set out his vision and encourage cooperation between them.	Spring 2015
3	That the Welsh Government puts measures in place to ensure greater integration between service providers when allocating funding. It is important to develop the success of current initiatives such as Farming Connect and build greater capacity in Wales, utilising where appropriate the public resources available. Alignment with other UK platforms and access to funding	Accept	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government will develop the success of current initiatives such as Farming Connect, through the next RDP, and build greater capacity in Wales, as recommended in the Gareth Williams review of Farming Connect.  Through its Planning and Funding Framework, DfES will encourage	Autumn 2015

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	opportunities from elsewhere should be encouraged wherever possible.			integration of provision and ensure that there is no nugatory competition.	
4	<p>As an element of the emerging strategy for Welsh agriculture a group should be established to develop an Agricultural Education and Development Strategy for Wales.</p> <p>The group, initially, should be established on a Task and Finish basis to produce a strategy and action plan. Thereafter, it could be reconvened periodically (every 2 years) to monitor and evaluate progress and uptake of the strategy.</p>	Accept (in part)	Welsh Government, FE and HE representatives	<p>An Agricultural Strategy is being developed to set out the vision for agriculture in Wales. This Strategy will consider agricultural education, learning and support for farm businesses in Wales so a separate strategy for education is not considered necessary.</p> <p>The three primary providers of Level 3 Agricultural courses will be encouraged to feed into the development of the Agricultural Strategy as part of the approach agreed in recommendation 2.</p> <p>The Gareth Williams review of Farming Connect recommended the continuation and broadening of the Strategic Advisory Board which will also provide advice on skills development and Continuous Professional Development.</p>	Autumn 2015
5	That the Strategy Group should pay particular attention to structure, content and delivery challenges of Level 3 provision in agriculture. It is essential that the qualification decided upon meets the requirement of industry and National Occupational Standards in addition to the	Accept (in part)	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government recognises the desirability of further professionalisation of the agricultural industry in Wales. There is ongoing monitoring of the appropriateness of qualifications through the Database of Approved Qualifications in Wales (DAQW). This process verifies the importance of	Ongoing

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	usual educational objectives. In the medium term, it would be desirable to establish this level of qualification as a minimum entry requirement for those wishing to run a farm business in future. Furthermore, the strategy group should also ensure that the Level 4 provision fulfils the technological demands of various agricultural sectors thus enabling continued learning opportunities in those technologies allied to managerial training.			<p>each of the educational courses to the industry.</p> <p>Through the ongoing review of Qualifications, Sector, Qualification Advisory Panels will be set up. Sector Qualification Priority (SQP) activity aims to reduce the number of qualifications entering the system. Sector representative bodies review pending qualifications and provide a sector view on their relevance (in terms of progression to next-stage education or to employment) and value (in terms of broader educational benefit for the learner).</p>	
6	Once the main providers noted in recommendation 2 have formulated a collective approach and close collaboration as learning, development and technology exchange hubs, they need to establish a coherent working relationship with key universities in Wales with strong agricultural education and research specialisms to exploit their joint resources to the full and maximise opportunities. The colleges need to establish within their hubs close links with the Farming Connect service in Wales, the key levy funded bodies supporting Wales and other relevant organisations, including	Accept (in principle)	FE and HE representatives	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and all FE providers who offer agriculture Level 3 Agricultural courses to set out his vision. This meeting should encourage cooperation between all of the providers in Wales and the development of exchange hubs should be discussed and moved forward by the group.	Spring 2015

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	Natural Resources Wales. It is relevant to consider forming hubs to cover north west, north east, south west and south east Wales.				
7	In order to embrace the activities related to the proposed broader remit of the FE colleges sector, there is a need for staff development in innovative agricultural technologies to complement their pedagogic expertise. The relevant colleges should engage in discussions with IBERS to adopt the Advanced Training Partnership (ATP) in order to provide for the technical and professional development of its staff in grassland and ruminant agriculture. The ATP for staff could also tap into similar arable and food initiatives operating out of Nottingham and Reading universities respectively.	Accept (in principle)	FE and HE representatives, IBERS	It is expected that the group proposed by recommendation 2 will include within its remit an action to engage with IBERS to develop the Advanced Training Partnership for their staff and to promote best practice.	Spring 2015
8	That a database is created to collate and record all students from Wales engaged with FE and Higher Education (HE) agricultural provision. It is difficult to gain any estimate of demand for people in the industry, and hence makes any reasonable assumptions on supply meeting the demand difficult. This data would enable better estimates of demand for new entrants, progression opportunities as well as training and education needs.	Accept (in principle)	Welsh colleges and universities, Welsh Government	The FE and HE institutions in Wales currently record and collate their own statistics on students. The Welsh Government can see benefit and will encourage the FE and HE sector in Wales to share data.	Ongoing

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9	That a serious commitment to professional development is required for those already in the industry to keep up with the evolving technological developments and business competitiveness.	Accept	Industry and Welsh Government	<p>The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and industry stakeholders in Wales to set out the vision for professional development.</p> <p>The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development and supports the need to keep up with evolving technologies.</p> <p>The Welsh Government aims, through the next Rural Development Programme, to develop the managerial, business and entrepreneurial skills of individuals while continually promoting the use of ICT.</p>	Autumn 2015
10	The Welsh Government should invite tenders to develop and operate an accreditation framework for all Continuous Professional Development activity in Wales. The framework will build on and be compatible with the developments on skills passports as well as those existing sectorial CPD programmes e.g. Pig Pro and Dairy Pro. The framework should recognise the considerable comparability between the dairy and red meat sectors in Wales and should have support of these sectors and of	Accept	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development and supports the need to record and evaluate the information. In order to achieve this, the Welsh Government will develop and operate an accreditation framework for all Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity in Wales to support and enhance the growing professionalism of Agriculture.	Autumn 2015

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	the farming unions and other relevant organisations in Wales. At this stage, it is my considered view that we should adopt a voluntary rather than compulsory approach to CPD.			The accreditation framework will be integrated and complement existing accreditation and Continuing Professional Development Programmes.	
11	In future, an increasing amount of learning, professional development and technical and business information gathering will take place on the new media platforms. This will require good rural penetration of high speed broadband, easily accessible online learning and coherent signposting to technical data held online by various organisations. I recommended that the colleges and university sector conduct an audit of sources of information on online learning material in the area of farm business and financial management and marketing. Should there be insufficient online material available in this regard, I recommend that the Welsh Government should tender for the development and delivery of such material.	Accept (in part)	Colleges & University sector, Welsh Government	An audit by the colleges and university sector of information on online learning material in the area of farm business and financial management and marketing to avoid unnecessary duplication and complementarity is welcomed and will be suggested to the three primary providers of Level 3 Agriculture courses group proposed as part of recommendation 2.  The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development. There will be an opportunity through Farming Connect to tender for the provision of services under the Rural Development Programme 2014 - 2020.	Autumn 2015
12	That personal development plans should be encouraged as prerequisite to having courses funded by Farming Connect. We need to promulgate the importance of personal development plans as being as relevant as business plans. This is something that the Welsh Government	Accept	Welsh Government	The Welsh Government recognises the need for individuals within the industry to commit to professional development and supports the need to record and evaluate the information.  Individual students who follow FE and HE	Autumn 2015

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	should do working side-by side with other key stakeholders including the farming unions, CLA, YFC, Lantra, Levy Bodies, RWAS.			courses will have individual learning plans and the next Farming Connect programme will consider the introduction of compulsory Personal Development Plans to identify individual knowledge and skills gaps.	
13	That the strategy group engages in an informal discussion to establish momentum within the school curriculum for a more widespread adoption of a GCSE in Agricultural Science. Moreover, it is recommended that teachers in Wales should be given the opportunity to embrace examples from agriculture, food and natural resources more broadly in school curriculums. The profile of staff development in agricultural education should be reviewed within the school and FE sectors.	Accept (in principle)	Welsh Government	DfES officials will encourage collaboration between Schools and Further Education Institutions to share provision.  The development of a new GCSE needs to be taken up by Qualifications Wales. Qualifications Wales will be reviewing the whole of the GCSE science suite in 2016. This will ensure that there is a relevant and coherent suite of science GCSEs available to learners in Wales. The strategy group should engage in this activity to establish the need for an Agricultural Science GCSE.	Ongoing
14	That a service provider takes the leading role working with NFU Cymru, FUW, YFC, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society (RWAS), Lantra, Careers Wales and FE colleges in Wales to work with FACE to improve impact and the dissemination of materials to schools, thus enabling them to make a case for the industry and present it as a career of first choice. An ambassador programme could be developed to	Accept (in principle)	All service providers and Welsh Government	The Welsh Government will facilitate an initial meeting between Professor Wynne Jones and service providers to discuss the availability of the materials which can be disseminated to schools in Wales to promote the industry as a career option for the students.	Autumn 2015

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	<p>showcase people who have developed a successful career, to encourage and inspire young people into the agricultural sector.</p> <p>The RWAS maybe in a position to influence other agricultural shows societies within Wales to ensure a network of coverage for all schools in Wales.</p>				
15	<p>The RWAS should build on the current co-location of Lantra, Wales YFC with other land based colleges and universities exhibiting at their annual show to develop the concept of a “learning village” to initiate, develop and reinforce the importance and relevance of our sector as an aspirational career.</p>	<p>Accept (in principle)</p>	<p>RWAS</p>	<p>The Welsh Government supports the recommendation in principle that the RWAS should meet with Welsh colleges and universities to establish a working relationship. This should include a discussion on the proposal to create a ‘learning village’ on the showground which can be accessed by all visitors to encourage the learning and development of the industry.</p>	<p>Summer 2015</p>