



FARMING
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08456 000 813

Farming Connect

...helping you drive your business forward



www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

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Introducing Farming Connect

...transforming agri-businesses across Wales

Farming Connect provides farm and forestry businesses in Wales with support, advice, guidance and training on both a one-to-one and group basis.

Many services are fully funded, others are subsidised by up to 80% for eligible businesses.

...with you every step of the way - on the phone, in person, online

This information booklet provides a brief summary of the wide range of services now available through Farming Connect. It explains how we can support you and your business to find new or more efficient and profitable ways of working.

We hope you will be inspired to find out more and if you need additional information, guidance or support, help is available.

- Call the **Service Centre** on **08456 000 813**
- Contact your local development officer
- Contact one of the approved Farming Connect advisers or training providers
- Visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect where you will find contacts for the above and more detailed information about all our services and events.

The enhanced programme – the benefits to you

...with our support you could

- benefit from subsidised business support and/or technical guidance, tailored to your business needs
- reduce costs and increase efficiency across all areas of your business
- benchmark your performance
- identify areas for improvement and find solutions to problems
- develop your skills as part of our continuing professional development / lifelong learning programme
- keep up to date with the latest innovations in technology through industry developments and the latest research projects
- share best practice and benefit from the knowledge of other farmers, industry experts and academic research
- be inspired by new ideas and find more efficient, innovative ways of working

Eligibility criteria

...reaching more individuals, supporting more businesses

CATEGORY	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	SERVICES AVAILABLE
Farming business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3ha of eligible registered agricultural land within Wales • Customer Reference Number (CRN) • Welsh County Parish Holding (CPH) number • Undertaking agricultural activities 'active farmer' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Transfer (1) - Demonstration Network, Benchmarking, Information Hub, Strategic Awareness events, Welsh Language events, Diversification Awareness seminars • Knowledge Transfer (2) - Discussion groups, short term visits, one-to-one surgeries • Management Development and Mentoring - Action Learning (Agrigôp), Young Leaders and Business Innovators (Agri-Academy), Farm / Forestry Exchange, One to One Farm / Forestry Mentoring • Venture • E-learning • Subsidised Support (Advice) – Four instances of subsidised advisory support over the duration of the Wales Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 • Subsidised Support (Training) – Business partners, immediate family members (spouses, sons and daughters) and employees on PAYE are eligible for subsidised training support to a maximum of three courses per annum • European Innovation Partnership
Forestry business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 ha of eligible registered Woodland within Wales • Customer Reference Number (CRN) • Undertaking forestry activities 'active forester' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per farming businesses
Farming/forestry business contractor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors working for Forestry/Farming businesses with full eligibility status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Transfer (1) - Demonstration Network, Benchmarking, Information Hub, Strategic Awareness, Welsh Language Events, Diversification Awareness Seminar • E-learning • Subsidised Support (Training) – subsidised training support to a maximum of three courses per business over the duration of the Wales Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 • European Innovation Partnership
New Entrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the 3ha requirement of eligible registered agricultural land within Wales within three years • Customer Reference Number (CRN) • Welsh County Parish Holding (CPH) number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per farming businesses
Niche farming/forestry systems over 550 standard labour hours per annum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Niche farming activities below the 3ha threshold • Niche forestry activities below the 0.5ha threshold • Customer Reference Number (CRN) • Welsh County Parish Holding (CPH) number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per farming businesses
Niche farming/forestry systems under 550 standard labour hours per annum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wales domiciled (living in Wales) beneficiary having attained a relevant college/further education qualification looking to establish a new farming or forestry system will be considered on a case by case basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Transfer (1) - Demonstration Network, Benchmarking, Information Hub, Strategic Awareness events, Welsh Language events, Diversification Awareness seminars • Venture • E-learning • Subsidised support (Advice) – One instance of subsidised advisory support (Business planning) over the duration of the Wales Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 • Subsidised Support (Training) – subsidised training support to a maximum of three courses over the duration of the Wales Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wales domiciled (living in Wales) beneficiary 16 years or over studying agriculture, forestry or a relevant land management subject at further education level <p>Eligible courses: Land-based/Agricultural Studies Level 1, 2 and 3 Horticulture and Forestry 1, 2 and 3 Countryside & Environment Level 1, 2 and 3 Land-based Engineering Level 2 and 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Transfer (1) - Demonstration Network, Benchmarking, Information Hub, Strategic Awareness events, Welsh Language events, Diversification Awareness seminars • E-learning • Subsidised Support (Training) –subsidised training support to a maximum of three courses over the duration of the Wales Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
Food business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All food manufacturing small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) undertaking primary processing of EU Annex 1 products to a minimum of 90% by value or weight of raw material throughput 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised Support (Advice) is limited to two instances of business planning advice and one instance of technical advice over the duration of the Wales Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

How to register

Registration for eligible individuals is a quick and simple process.

- ➔ Online – visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect
- ➔ Over the phone – call our **Service Centre** on **08456 000 813**

You will need to provide:

- Your Customer Reference Number (CRN) and your County Parish Holding (CPH) if applicable.
- An individual email contact for each person involved in the business wanting to access services.

If you need any additional support or advice, contact your local development officer – their contact details are on our website.

All those registered under the previous Farming Connect programme i.e. before October 2015, will need to re-register.



Develop your business

...work towards a viable and successful future

BUSINESS PLANNING

If your aim is to run a profitable, professional and sustainable business that makes best use of the latest research, developments and new technologies, you should start by producing an up to date business plan.

As any progressive business person will tell you 'do what you've always done and you'll get what you've always got' which is why it's essential you plan ahead to ensure your business is resilient and fit for the future.

Farming Connect provides a package of support, tailored to your requirements, which will help you make well informed decisions on...

- short and longer term business aims
- financial planning
- operational planning
- innovative or more efficient ways of working
- your sales and marketing strategy

You could consider downloading our business plan template to get started or you may want to attend one of our business planning workshops. For further information, visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

You can also access subsidised, independent advice through our Advisory Service – more information on Page 10.



Advisory Service

...supporting sustainable business development - improving economic and environmental performance

The Advisory Service provides independent, subsidised sector-specific advice tailored to the requirements of eligible farm and forestry businesses and small or medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food sector.

The service, which could help you grow and develop your business, is available on a one-to-one basis as well as to groups of individuals with common objectives.

Visit www.gov.wales/farmingconnect to access...

- a detailed list of all the categories of business and technical support/ advice available – to help you make an informed choice
- information on eligibility and funding - for both individual and group applications
- a list of approved advisory companies and advice on selecting the most appropriate adviser(s) to help you meet your objectives
- simple step-by-step guidance on applying for the service via the most appropriate route for your business requirements

If you need more advice on this service or support with the application process, contact your local development officer.

Additional support services include:

DISCUSSION GROUPS – your opportunity to join like-minded business people, who meet regularly to discuss challenges, consider opportunities and find new or improved ways of working. Members will also participate in Measure to Manage.

MEASURE TO MANAGE – Farming Connect's new approach to benchmarking which will help you identify where improvements can be made within your business.

ONE-TO-ONE SURGERIES AND CLINICS – providing you with confidential advice and guidance on a range of topics specific to your business needs.

STRATEGIC AWARENESS EVENTS – providing you with a competitive edge by increasing your knowledge of various topics relevant to current industry and market requirements.

DIVERSIFICATION EVENTS – helping you identify and develop additional or new streams of income.



Invest in skills and mentoring

...develop your skills, develop your confidence - you'll soon find new ways to develop your business

Our new lifelong learning programme will provide eligible individuals with an opportunity to focus on continuing professional development.

Our aim is to help you improve both your personal and business performance. We can provide a range of services that will help you...

- consider the current set of skills available in your business
- identify any omissions or areas which could be strengthened or developed to improve business and/or on-farm efficiency
- have a clear sense of direction and focus i.e. who needs to do what and when

Your starting point should be to encourage every individual involved with your business to complete an online **Personal Development Plan (PDP)**. This will help...

- identify long term objectives and short term goals
- record current qualifications and skills
- develop key skills or competencies
- provide a focus for the future

Each eligible individual will need to be registered with Farming Connect and have their own email address before they can be allocated a password and log on to this online service. Alternatively, contact your local development officer for guidance.

Additional support services include:

E-LEARNING – improve working practices within your business through short online training modules on a wide range of topics. Access this new e-learning method from the convenience of your office or home at a time to suit you.

ACCREDITED TRAINING – subsidised training which could help you meet both personal and business needs. Categories available include courses on business management and financial topics as well as technical training.

MENTORING SCHEME – matching experienced farm and forestry mentors with mentees, providing up to 22.5 hours of one-to-one support to help you meet business, technical and/or personal objectives. This will be of particular benefit to new entrants and those businesses considering a strategic change of direction.

AGRISGÔP – the management development programme which changes attitudes, mindsets and capabilities to ensure your business reaches its potential.

AGRI-ACADEMY – our flagship personal development programme which continues to inspire and support our future rural leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators through three short but intensive periods of training, mentoring and study visits.

MANAGEMENT EXCHANGE – learn from best practice by visiting other successful businesses in the EU and/or hosting a visiting delegate.

VENTURE – information and guidance on joint venture options - a new initiative which matches up those hoping to enter the industry with those wanting to scale down or step back.



Discover innovation

...improve your business through innovation – your goals are our goals

Farming Connect works in collaboration with other leading industry organisations. This strategic partnership approach ensures that they work alongside our teams of technical officers, development officers, approved advisers, mentors and our new demonstration network, to offer you an unrivalled wealth of expertise and guidance.

With our support, we hope that eligible businesses will be inspired and encouraged to consider and implement innovative, new and improved ways of remaining competitive, profitable and resilient, through...

- the integration of innovation and up to date technology
- new approaches to business and financial management

Our aim is to help you...

- raise standards of on-farm efficiency
- decrease inputs, increase outputs
- safeguard the environment
- find new ways of increasing profitability

You can access a range of services, tailored to your business needs, all designed to improve the performance of your business across all areas of working.

Benefit from training, mentoring and the opportunity to meet other innovative farmers and foresters and learn from sector-specialists from Wales, the UK and beyond.

Additional support services include:

DEMONSTRATION NETWORK – demonstrating and promoting best practice by implementing new ideas and techniques through our network of eight Innovation Sites based at Wales' leading academic institutions; 12 Demonstration Sites and a number of Focus Sites which will run sector-specific trials and projects.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE HUB – our new interface between academics, advisory professionals, farmers and foresters, sharing best practice for the wider good of the industry.

AGRI-LAB – bringing together forward-thinking individuals who have embraced innovation in order to develop and progress their agri-businesses. Sharing best practice by communicating results.

European Innovation Partnership (EIP) for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability – providing support to projects which show innovation in linking research with farming or forestry practices.

How to contact us

Our team of local development officers are available to provide you with advice and guidance on how Farming Connect can benefit you and your business.

They will also provide support on how to access and benefit from the enhanced range of services. The contact details for all development officers are available on our website.

→ **Web:** www.gov.wales/farmingconnect

→ **Phone:** Service Centre - **08456 000 813**

→ **E-mail:** farmingconnect@menterabusnes.co.uk

You can also follow us on Twitter/Facebook

The Farming Connect Service Centre is open between the hours of 9am and 5pm from Monday to Friday, excluding all public holidays.

Information hub

You will find more detailed information about the complete range of Farming Connect services and can keep up to date with the wide range of events and knowledge transfer opportunities taking place throughout the year at www.gov.wales/farmingconnect