

James Evans outlines several key areas the proposed scheme will focus on:



The Welsh Conservatives have announced a public consultation on their proposed Welsh Farming and Countryside Scheme (WFCS).

This initiative, led by Shadow Rural Affairs Minister James Evans MS, is designed to be an alternative to the current Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS). It promises to address the specific challenges faced by Welsh farmers and the environment.

This consultation aims to gather feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including active farmers, rural communities, conservation charities, and the public. The Welsh Conservatives hope to use this comprehensive feedback to refine and optimise the WFCS, ensuring it meets the needs of both the agricultural sector and environmental goals. It will be included in the Welsh Conservative Manifesto ahead of the Senedd Elections in 2026.

SUPPORTING ALL FARM SIZES: The WFCS is designed to be flexible and fit the needs of all farms, regardless of size. The consultation will explore whether a minimum size requirement should be implemented to qualify for support, ensuring even the smallest farms can benefit.

LEVEL OF SUPPORT: The consultation will gather views on the proposed baseline payment of 70% like the scheme designed in Scotland, exploring whether this level is sufficient to provide long-term security and viability for farms.

HELPING YOUNG ENTRANTS: Soaring land prices and securing loans are major barriers for young people looking to enter Welsh agriculture. The consultation will explore ways to make it easier for the next generation to start farming.

BALANCING ACCESS TO LAND: There is concern about unrestricted public access to the countryside. The consultation will explore ways to improve access while ensuring safety and practicality, potentially focusing on improvements to existing paths and bridleways.

TARGETING SUPPORT: The consultation will define what constitutes an “active farmer” and who should qualify for government support, ensuring assistance goes to those genuinely involved in farming.

PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORT: The consultation will explore which areas of farming should be prioritised for support, ranging from tree planting and habitat creation to tackling climate change, animal welfare, and protecting Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

OPTIONAL ACTIONS: The consultation will explore whether farmers would be willing to “buy in” to additional actions required to achieve the government’s environmental goals.

MANAGING SSSIS AND COMMON LAND: The consultation will gather views on how best to manage and support SSSIs and common land, ensuring these vital areas are protected and used sustainably.

Have your say on these proposals

Complete the survey overleaf or online at
www.conservatives.wales/WFCS



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