



A NATURE-POSITIVE PATHWAY TO DECARBONISE UK AGRICULTURE AND LAND USE

COUNTRY FOCUS – WALES

UK landscapes, and the way that our food is produced and consumed, need to transform urgently in order to help meet net zero, restore nature and reduce our global environmental footprint. Simply put, there is no way to meet our climate and nature commitments as one, without coming together to radically reshape our food system.

WWF has set out an overarching vision for what the agriculture and land use sectors in the UK can achieve this decade to put us on a low emission, high nature journey towards net zero food production and consumption.¹ In taking the actions we recommend, based on independent analysis, we see a credible and positive pathway for the UK as a whole to:

- **Reduce UK direct agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 35% by 2030 and 51% by 2050 on 2018 levels**
- **Switch UK land from a net source of emissions to a net sink by 2040 at the very latest**
- **Halt and reverse the loss of UK nature by 2030.**
- **Cut UK farming's overseas carbon footprint relating to soy feed and fertiliser inputs by at least 31% by 2030 and 57% by 2050 on 2018 levels**

In Wales, farming is the dominant land use with around 80 per cent of Welsh land managed for agriculture. Agriculture accounted for 14% of Welsh emissions in 2019² and emissions have not fallen in the last decade, instead rising from just under 5 MtCO₂e in 2010 to 5.3 MtCO₂e in 2019. Farmers and land managers are stewards of our land, and they have a huge role to play in reducing emissions, as well as storing carbon and restoring nature. As agriculture is at the heart of the economic, cultural and social fabric of rural Wales, the transition to align Welsh agriculture and land use with net zero needs to be a just one, supported by wider system level changes. As such, a transition to agroecology in Wales is even more important.

The Welsh Government can enable this transition by urgently implementing the following actions:

1. Build on the Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 by engaging with the agriculture sector and wider stakeholders to set domestic emission reduction targets and pathways for agriculture and land use in Wales, that contribute to reducing GHG emissions across the UK by at least 35% by 2030 and 51% by 2050 on 2018 levels (whilst restoring nature and without offshoring our environmental footprint).
2. Update the Net Zero Carbon Budget 2 so that it accounts for and reports on the significant greenhouse gas emissions caused by Wales overseas as a result of the deforestation and habitat loss associated with Welsh imports of commodities, including livestock feed.
3. Include nitrogen and methane reduction targets, pathways and measures as part of the Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 which will contribute to UK targets of halving nitrogen waste by 2030 and reducing methane emissions by 30% by 2030, compared with 2020 levels.
4. Welsh Government must deliver at pace its commitments to nature restoration in Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 and The Nature Recovery Plan, including enhancements of blue carbon sinks. Welsh Government needs to also review its commitments on nature restoration in Net Zero Wales Budget 2 and ensure these commitments ladder up to addressing the nature crisis and nature targets that are to be set in legislation.
5. Deliver on commitments in Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 to promote a dietary shift in line with climate-friendly sustainable and healthy diets. To support this, public sector procurement must shift to the purchase of high-quality low impact Welsh food, and Welsh Government must support localised market development. A just transition will require fair farmgate prices. This can be supported by the Community Food Strategy which should be co-designed by mid-2022.
6. Ensure that the Food (Wales) Bill exemplifies a systems approach to food-related policies by creating synergies across government departments to achieve policy targets relating to health and well-being, climate and nature, social justice and community resilience.
7. Design a Sustainable Farming Scheme by mid-2023 that shifts agricultural subsidies towards rewarding farmers appropriately for the production of environmental and social outcomes. As this would not open until 2025, followed by a multi-year transition period to enable farmers to transfer into the Scheme, significant government intervention and additional programmes will also be needed between 2022 and 2030 if we are to ensure that agriculture and land use play the crucial role required to keep Wales on track to meet net zero and restore nature in this decade of action.
8. Support farmers and growers to transition to more sustainable practices, strongly incentivising nature and climate friendly regenerative farming practices. This includes the need to provide significant resource between 2022 and the start of the Sustainable Farming Scheme to support the transition towards agroecology.
9. Ensure the objectives and targets set out in the Sustainable Farming Scheme clearly set out the scheme's contribution to net zero climate change pathways for land use and agriculture.
10. Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales should use data sources such as the Environment and Rural Affairs Monitoring & Modelling Programme to build on the Area Statements model and develop spatial land use action plans at the catchment level. These spatial land use action plans should then identify grounded nature restoration and climate mitigation opportunities that are aligned to Sustainable Farming Scheme funds that support on farm decisions.

¹ <https://www.wwf.org.uk/landofplenty>

² <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/net-zero-wales-carbon-budget-2-2021-25.pdf> (accessed December 2021)



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