



# WALES REAL FOOD AND FARMING CONFERENCE 2023

1-3 November

Coleg Cambria Llysfasi, Ruthin

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**CYNIDR CONSULTING**

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Lecture theatre</b>	<b>Y Waun / Yr Accre, Community Hub</b>	<b>AG03 / AG04, Agri block</b>	<b>AG01, Agri block</b>
<b>10.00-11.00</b>	1. Welcome by Elin Roberts, Coleg Cambria Guest speaker: Sarah Dickins			
<b>Break</b>				
<b>11.30-12.30</b>	2. The way forward for farming and nature in Wales*	3. What do we need to do to secure plentiful and varied locally produced food?	4. Is it possible to run a financially as well as ecologically viable horticulture business in Wales?	
<b>12.30-13.45</b>		5. Growing in hydroponics: science or fiction? <b>(12.35-13.05)</b>		
<b>13.45-14.45</b>	6. School meals, action for future generations. How can we scale up progress?	7. Apiculture and the Welsh dark honeybee	8. Land use and nature recovery in the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB	9. Seed processing demonstration
<b>Break</b>				
<b>15.00-16.00</b>	10. Progressive pathways for county farms	11. Why we need Welsh heritage fruit	12. Local food traders: why we need more and how we can get there	13. Soil analysis
<b>Break</b>				
<b>16.30-17.30</b>	14. Language and the land*	15. Watery actions you can take on-farm to weather a changing climate	16. Fertiliser solutions: perennial green manures systems for agriculture, nature and people	
<b>17.45-18.45</b>	17. Wildlife: from gardens to landscapes* With Iwan Edwards			
<b>19.00</b>	Refectory: Dinner and entertainment by Amazing Cloud			

\* Session partly or wholly in Welsh: translation available

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> November

Time	Lecture theatre	Y Waun / Yr Accre, Community Hub	AG03 / AG04, Agri block	AG01, Agri block
10.00- 11.00	18. Defining sustainability under the Sustainable Farming Scheme	19. Future skills in food and farming*	20. Can we increase access to agroecological food and support good livelihoods?	
Break				
11.30- 12.30	21. Learning from local food partnerships	22. What technology is suitable for agroecology?	23. Can we make wool a sustainable and commercially viable resource?	24. Is community composting a waste of time?
12.30- 13.45 Lunch		25. Thirty-five years of small-scale upland organic farming <b>(12.35-13.05)</b>		
13.45- 14.45	26. Welsh dairy emissions and nature solutions	27. Using medicinal plants and farm homeopathy to reduce antibiotics and synthetic wormers	28. Magic ingredients for successful community growing	
Break				
15.15- 16.30	29. What could a civil resilience framework look like?  30. Keynote listeners*			

\* Session partly or wholly in Welsh: translation available

## It's our fifth Conference!

Thank you for joining us for this special Wales Real Food and Farming Conference. We are particularly pleased to be visiting north east Wales for the first time and are grateful to Coleg Cambria, Llysfasi Campus for kindly hosting us.

In the five years since we first felt that a conference concentrating on genuinely sustainable food and farming was needed in Wales, much has happened to test our food system – who could have imagined a pandemic and war in Europe, as well as the increasing effects of climate change and changes in agricultural, environmental and food policy? However, local, agroecological and organic food production systems continue to provide hope. Thus, we offer you a warm welcome to WRFFC 2023, and hope you enjoy the challenges and opportunities that our speakers present.

The Wales Real Food and Farming Team

## Wednesday

### 1. Plenary session: Sarah Dickins

Welcome by Elin Roberts, Head of Llysfasi campus.

Followed by former award-winning BBC correspondent Sarah Dickins, who is now a sustainable economics adviser and organic farmer with her husband. Their purely pasture-fed lamb won top marks in the 2023 Guild of Fine Foods' Great Taste Awards. Sarah is a member of the independent Wales Net Zero 2035 group, where she co-chairs the food Challenge Group. She will share a personal view of the challenges and opportunities for food and farming in Wales.

### 2. The way forward for farming and nature in Wales

Chair: Carwyn Graves, Tir Glas

Speakers: Rhys Evans, Nature Friendly Farming Network Cymru; Menna Williams, Farming Connect; Delyth Phillipps, North Wales Wildlife Trust.

A number of reports published during the course of 2023 have sought to demonstrate that it is possible to farm in Wales in a way that enables the natural world to flourish and provides farmers with a livelihood. But there

are still questions. During this panel discussion, there will be a chance to hear from farming organisations and wildlife NGOs about the opportunities and challenges in this area, and we will try to identify some ways forward.

### 3. What do we need to do to secure plentiful and varied locally produced food?

Facilitators: Ros Stockdale, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); Nikki Giles, Flintshare CSA; Grace Mulhearn, North Wales Local Food Group; Sue Lewis, Denbigh Community Food.

We know that there are many good reasons for consuming more locally produced food and many groups and individuals are actively involved. We would like to use this session to find pathways to achieving more.

Our questions are: how do we create the breadth of the local food systems that we envisage? What are the opportunities and challenges of scaling up? How do we access the land, resources and people required to create resilient local food systems?

#### **4. Is it possible to run a financially as well as ecologically viable horticulture business in Wales?**

Chair: Kate McEvoy, Real Seeds

Speakers: Lauren Simpson, Parc y Dderwen; Katherine Langton, Langtons Farm; Sarah Gould, Lantra.

The session will open with contributions from our panel members, before undertaking a facilitated discussion about ways to make our farms more economically as well as environmentally sustainable.

#### **5. Growing in hydroponics: science or fiction? (Demonstration)**

With Jozsef Vass, independent horticultural consultant.

Hydroponic home gardening is going to be crucial as it extends the UK's agricultural capabilities, enhancing food security, particularly for fresh vegetables. It can empower individuals to contribute to food sustainability. Additionally, innovative technologies such as vertical agriculture could be effective in reducing emissions in food systems, aligning with climate goals.

A demonstration of a small-scale system suitable for home use, and discussion.

#### **6. School Meals, action for future generations. How can we scale-up progress?**

Chair: Sarah Dickins, Wales Net Zero 2035

Speakers: Edward Morgan, Castell Howell; Holly Tomlinson, Land Workers Alliance Cymru and Blas Gwent Farm; Alex Cook, Bwyd Sir Gâr.

A brief presentation about projects happening right now across Wales that are breaking down barriers and overcoming the challenges to regenerate the Welsh school food system. These include Welsh Veg in Schools, and projects with and by Menter Môn,

Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire County Councils. To be followed by a discussion about scaling up opportunities, and the role that farming communities play.

#### **7. Apiculture and the Welsh dark honeybee**

Chair: Rosie Evans, beekeeper and MSc / PhD student

Speakers: Kirsty Williams, British Bee Company; Huw Evans, South Clwyd Beekeepers Association; Wally Shaw, Welsh Beekeepers Association.

*Apis mellifera mellifera* (AMM), the European dark honeybee, is a subspecies native to the British Isles and Northern Europe. Following severe decline in the early 1900s, our native bee was thought to be extinct - yet wild and managed colonies endured in remote areas of Wales, Cornwall, Devon and Scotland. Since then, dedicated beekeepers, prizing its unique characteristics, have worked to bring this locally adapted honeybee back from the brink.

This panel discussion explores the keeping and breeding of AMM at the commercial and hobbyist scale, its role in farm and smallholder diversification, and the part it might play in the future of rural economies and local, resilient food systems.

#### **8. Land-use and nature recovery in the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

With members of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB team.

The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty of international distinction shaped by natural processes and the hands of generations of farmers and landowners over millennia. However, the special features of the AONB are under extreme pressure from climate change and land management practices. Join us for an interactive workshop to learn about four

projects taking place in the AONB, working with land managers to help address nature's decline. The topics include farming for curlew; protecting our dark skies; conservation grazing; and land management for water quality.

### **9. Seed processing demonstration**

Workshop with the Wales Seed Hub.

A food revolution starts with seed! The Wales Seed hub is a cooperative of growers working together to produce and market vegetable and flower seeds - all open-pollinated and agroecologically grown in Wales. This demonstration will look at some of the problems and advantages of growing seed locally on a small but commercial scale and show low-cost solutions to threshing and cleaning it.

### **10. Progressive pathways for county farms**

Chair: Lucie Taylor, Community Land Advisory Service

Speakers: Cllr. Jake Merriman, Powys Council; Augusta Lewis, Social Farms and Gardens.

Join Lucie Taylor as she discusses two refreshing new approaches that Local Authorities are taking on their farm estate. Augusta Lewis will share Carmarthenshire County Council's plans to turn an ex-dairy farm into a horticultural enterprise growing for the public plate, while Cllr. Jake Berriman will talk about how Powys' farm estate and planning frameworks are changing to accommodate and support small horticultural enterprises. Both projects share a vision to use existing public assets to help Local Authorities meet net zero targets, increase local enterprise and secure food supply chains.

### **11. Why we need Welsh heritage fruit**

Chair: Joey Hughes, Merched y Berllan

Speakers: Carwyn Graves, Tir Glas; Ian Sturrock, Ian Sturrock & Sons; Tom Adams, Tom the Apple Man.

In Wales, 48% of apples are currently imported. This interactive session will explore how we could move towards the sustainable production of great tasting fruit and making Wales more self-sufficient. Directors and members of Wales Heritage Orchards Ltd discuss Welsh varieties, latest trends and general husbandry, as well as what's happening in heritage orchards across Wales.

### **12. Local food traders: why we need more and how we can get there**

Chair: Julia Kirby-Smith, Better Food Traders

Speakers: Abi Marriott, Pembrokeshire Fresh Food Vending / PLANED; Chris Kameen, The Vale Grocer; Jo da Silva, Community Food Hubs / Open Food Network; Seb Mayfield, Ooooby.

Independent retailers and wholesalers play an important role in the shift towards a fairer and more sustainable food system, as they can operate in a way that generates fewer food miles and environmental impacts, and sends more money back to farmers and local communities.

This session will look at the benefits of local, independent food traders and the challenges and opportunities they face. We'll unpick the ethics and practicalities of selling locally grown, planet-friendly food – from growing and sourcing, to supply chains and business models, to reaching and retaining customers. We'll also discuss how we can support more local food retailers to flourish.

### **13. Soil Analysis**

With Tony Little, Sustainable Farming Consultancy and Alma Joensen, Caeriad.

Talk and practical demonstration of the range of soil tests available (biological as well as chemical analysis) and their suitability and purposes. Frequency of testing, interpretation and limitations will also be discussed.

### **14. Language and the land**

With: Dei Tomos, author and broadcaster; and Elinor Gwynn, environmentalist, researcher and poet.

There is a close relationship between Welsh-language culture and the land, that often comes to the fore in discussions of rural Wales. In this session we'll explore the connections between language and land in Wales, and why these matter to people.

### **15. Watery actions you can take on-farm to weather a changing climate**

Chair: Tom Johnstone, Landscapes Wales

Speakers: Bev Dyer, Natural Resources Wales; Rhys Evans, NFFN Cymru; Sam Kenyon, Glanllyn Farm and NFFN Cymru.

With milder, wetter winters and more frequent hot summer droughts, the need to manage water on both a landscape- and farm-scale has never been greater.

In this session we will hear from experts in water management design, farmers and policy makers about natural flood management and other nature-based approaches to managing water quantity, quality and wet habitats. We'll look at practical steps people can take and the many benefits such practices bring.

### **16. Fertiliser solutions: perennial green manures systems for agriculture, nature and people**

Chair: Tilly Gomersall, Ecodyfi

Speakers: Clo Ward, Ecodyfi; Emma Maxwell, Ash & Elm Horticulture.

The Perennial Green Manures (PGM) project aims to offer a way to reduce farm input costs, lower greenhouse gas emissions and increase tree cover and biodiversity. PGMs are fertilisers made from the leaves of perennial plants including nitrogen-fixing trees, shrubs and perennials. PGMs can be grown in diverse "bio-service areas" from where foliage is harvested and added to cropland.

We'll explain the technique, give initial results from growers' trials and gather ideas for the future.

### **17. Wildlife: from gardens to landscapes**

With Iwan Edwards, North Wales Wildlife Trust, but probably more famous to viewers of S4C as one of the presenters of *Garddio a Mwy*.

## Thursday

### **18. Defining sustainability under the new Sustainable Farming Scheme**

Chair: Adele Jones, Sustainable Food Trust

Speakers: Andrew Tuddenham, Soil Association Wales; Holly Tomlinson, LWA Cymru; Steven Jacobs, Welsh Organic Forum and Organic Farmers & Growers CIC.

With details of the Sustainable Farming Scheme still to be released, we will explore the degree to which the Welsh Government is supporting “public goods”, relating to climate, nature and social impacts. We will also assess its likely impact on different sectors, including organic farming.

### **19. Future skills in food and farming**

Chair: Robyn Lovelock, Ambition North Wales

Speakers: Einir Williams, Farming Connect; Rhodri Owen, Coleg Glynllifon; Joe Mault, Coleg Cambria Llysfasi; Carwyn Graves, Tir Glas; Ian Rappel, Black Mountains College.

Panellists from leading education and training providers across Wales will share their perspectives on how they are building the food and farming workforce of the future. They will explore how each provider is engaging with and supporting learners to manage the opportunities and challenges facing the sectors from changing political, social, technological and environmental dynamics.

### **20. Can we increase access to agroecological food and support good livelihoods?**

Chair: Lydia Dibben, Primrose Market Garden

Speakers: Natalie Rouse, bic-innovation; Amber Wheeler (for Food Sense Wales); Abel Pearson, Glasbren; Prof. Angelina Sanderson Bellamy, University of the West of England.

A facilitated discussion on if and how we can expand the accessibility of agroecologically produced food at the same time as supporting livelihoods. The session will start with setting the scene of rising micronutrient deficiency in Wales and the need for good food for all. It will look at what is being done by market gardeners and CSAs, and what is being trialled in getting agroecological vegetables into primary schools as well as working to provide climate- and nature-friendly food for all.

### **21. Learning from local food partnerships**

Chair: Katie Palmer, Food Sense Wales

Speakers: Alex Cook, Bwyd Sir Gâr; Emily Woodward-Esseen, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board; Dafydd Jones, Menter Môn.

Food Partnerships are an opportunity to rebalance local food systems to make it easier for communities to access nutritious, tasty, local food in a way that promotes better health and wellbeing, supports the local economy, and is good for the planet.

In this session, there will be a discussion on how to create successful partnerships, and how these partnerships can support action for a place-based approach for resilient local food systems.

### **22. What technology is suitable for agroecology?**

Facilitators: Pat Thomas and Lawrence Woodward, A Bigger Conversation.

New technologies are being developed for agriculture at an ever-increasing rate, with governments and businesses telling farmers that they are necessary for a sustainable future. But are they? Join us in this workshop all about which technologies are appropriate for agroecology and which are not. Expect lively discussions, bringing us closer to developing a set of criteria which will help



farmers and growers make decisions on the adoption of individual technologies on their farms.

### **23. Can we make wool a sustainable and commercially viable resource?**

Chair: Gill Britten, Gwlangollen

Speakers: Roger Payne, Baavet; Ros Stockdale, Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB.

Welsh upland farming relies heavily on hardy Welsh sheep, but prices for wool have plummeted in recent years and no longer even cover the price of shearing, which is necessary for animal health. Once used extensively in carpet making, Welsh wool is tough and versatile, and a number of organisations are developing alternative ways to use this valuable resource.

Join us to hear from some such projects - Gwlangollen, Baavet, and others. We'll discuss some of the opportunities and barriers to making wool a sustainable resource that provides a much-needed income again.

### **24. Is community composting a waste of time?**

Workshop with: Fin Jordão, Criw Compostio.

Criw Compostio share their story and vision, then ask you to explore the transformative potential of composting and what practices and processes it can offer to your food and farming projects.

There will be a collection of compost samples produced using different composting methods, bags of our compost offered on a donation basis, a reference library to browse and a printout of links for further resources. We are keen to move conversations about composting on from consumer choices about

what bins to buy and what to do about rats towards partnership building and engaging with soil care in its widest sense.

### **25. Thirty-five years of small-scale upland organic farming**

With Martin Peck, Tŷ'n Fedw Farm.

Martin has farmed near Lake Vyrnwy since 1988, producing lamb - and formerly beef - sold direct to customers. A slide presentation of the farm, animals, trees, garden and house-build form the background to questioning the unnecessary frustrations of growing food, whilst a flawed financial framework favours climate failure. Is global money at odds with climate science and common sense?

### **26. Welsh dairy emissions and nature solutions**

Chair: Steven Jacobs, Organic Farmers & Growers CIC

Speakers: Stephen Johnson, farmer; Lee Truelove, First Milk; Neil Nicholas, Gelli Aur Campus; Adele Jones, Sustainable Food Trust.

In this session we will be looking at Welsh dairy farms and the challenges of running an economically viable and environmentally sustainable farming business. We will be in conversation with experienced practitioners including dairy farmers, a scientist-engineer and educator, and a senior executive working on how food system metrics can work for food producers.

Come along and help us navigate the murky waters of nutrient cycles, data collection and benchmarking.

## **27. How Welsh farmers are using medicinal plants and farm homeopathy to reduce antibiotics and synthetic wormers**

Chair: Chris Aukland MRCVS, Whole Health Agriculture

Speakers: Sarah Hammond, Glyn Arthur Farms; Jane Dobson, Broadstone Rare Breeds; Liz Morgan, Ffynnon Dderw.

Now more than ever we need conscious, holistic systems which foster vitality and resilience in livestock and crops, and which protect environmental and food health. Natural and traditional livestock health methods have long been overlooked, and we are now witnessing the catastrophic effects imposed on our soil and water by conventional chemical treatments and the overuse of antibiotics.

This session will feature veterinary advice and share practical experiences of Welsh farmers who rely on these natural methods to build robust health and resilience in their livestock, reducing the need for antibiotics and synthetic wormers.

## **28. Magic ingredients for successful community growing**

Chair: Fiona Taylor, Garden Organic

Speakers: Nikki Giles, Flintshare CSA; Katherine Saxby, Incredible Edible Wreccsam; Sarah Collick, Social Farms and Gardens.

## **Friday: field trips**

The conference closes with field visits to some fascinating local businesses and projects. Llaethdy Pentrefelin, Woodlands Skills Centre, Aunt Rosa's Community Orchard and Garden, and From the Earth / O'r Ddaear Community Café are all looking forward to showing us around.

NB. Remember to dress appropriately – ready for mud, rain, cold, and possibly sun!

All the details are on our website: <https://wrffc.wales/cynhadledd-2023-conference/teithiau-maes-field-visits-2023/>.

We know that when the ingredients are right, a growing project can give communities and individuals a sense of purpose and belonging. It brings fun and fresh food to the people involved and benefits the wider environment. Our panel will explore the key factors that provide communities with tools, skills and agency.

## **29. What could a civil resilience framework look like?**

With Tim Lang, Centre for Food Policy, City, University of London.

The word 'resilience' – bouncing back from shock - has crept into food systems from physics / mechanics via ecology. This talk outlines broad options for food resilience, asking about the role of state, civil society and business. Is food resilience a matter of continuing food supplies whatever the cost or by whom or how? Much depends on what the shocks are, whether return to normality is the goal, and whether Wales' (or UK's) food systems are judged resilient. The role of civil society could be particularly important.

## **30. Keynote listeners**

A review of the event with David Ashford, Welsh Government; Amber Wheeler and Jane Powell, WRFFC.