



Mohammad Asghar AM

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9 April 2019

Dear Mohammad

Thank you for raising the question regarding opportunities for agricultural apprentices, in response to the Statement that was delivered by Lee Waters at the Plenary Session on 12th March.

Work has recently been agreed with Lantra to update the content of Apprenticeship Frameworks across the agricultural sector in line with technology changes. In light of Brexit, this work has now become a priority for Welsh Government.

Lantra will shortly commence a range of consultations with employers and providers in Wales. We should not forget that there is provision available via Further Education (FE) establishments offering a range of specialist support in the Agriculture area. Any developments on apprenticeships would need to work in conjunction with the expertise and facilities within the college environment.

Agricultural apprenticeship starts saw an increase 2017/18. As well as the more 'traditional' agricultural skills, the Agriculture Apprenticeship programme encompasses a range of options including equine and horticulture. The overall numbers in learning programmes were 275 females and 260 males with 7.3% of females and 5.7% of males studying for Higher Apprenticeships. However, these figures must be balanced against the range of support that is available more generally within the sector such as the Skills Support Programmes.

The Welsh Government supports the agriculture industry to increase the skills within the sector in a number of ways. Included within this is E-learning interactive learning covering a wide variety of topics including reducing agricultural pollution, livestock health and welfare, forages and feed, forestry and horticulture and business planning. There are also programmes that focus on Skills and Mentoring (covering areas such as business improvement and machinery & equipment use), the 'Agri Academy' (including rural leadership), the Farming Connect Personal Development Plan (PDP) which is a fully funded service for all farmers and foresters as well as the Agrisgôp Management Development Programme.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Welsh Government officials have recently been scoping opportunities within the forestry sector to take advantage of the green growth opportunities (as set out in our recently updated Woodland & Trees Employability Strategy for Wales) and to tackle the future skills and recruitment needs for a revitalised forestry industry over the next decade. The project will focus on supporting a sector that has clearly identified its skills needs and which would benefit from this targeted intervention, supported by a collaborative approach and focused stakeholder engagement. The objective is to use forestry management skills to develop and adapt farming and forestry practices in order to help reduce the impact of climate change by encouraging farm business diversification. The 2 year pilot was launched in November 2018 and will support up to 30 new forestry jobs, increase skills that drive sustainable timber resources and promote a network of employer links

Regards

Lesley

Lesley Griffiths AC/AM

Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig
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