# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Agricultural Pollution Regulations** |
| **DATE**  | **11 December 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

Agricultural pollution continues to affect waterbodies across the whole of Wales, which is detrimental to public health, the rural economy and biodiversity. Point source and diffuse pollution events from agriculture continue to occur far too often.

On 14 November 2018, I issued a Written Statement outlining my intention to take a whole-Wales approach to tackle agricultural pollution. More than a year on, I am even more convinced of the need to take action.

During this period, I have funded National Resources Wales dairy officers to provide advice to farmers on meeting regulations. I have also listened to the views of stakeholders on the benefits of regulation and the potential opportunity of using alternative measures to the regulatory baseline. A project exploring voluntary options, jointly funded by Natural Resources Wales and NFU Cymru, has been working to develop a draft water framework. This work has highlighted it may be possible to offer a more flexible approach based on earned autonomy to deliver the same outcomes compared to regulation. I want to explore further if there is a way we can provide farmers with the flexibility to achieve environmental outcomes in a way which is best suited to individual businesses.

I will be considering advice from officials in January on the introduction of the agriculture regulations following further engagement with the Wales Land Management Forum sub-group on how this earned autonomy might be achieved.

Representatives of the agricultural industry have advocated an alternative approach. It is vital they urgently recognise the scale of the problem in Wales and use this opportunity to engage in developing this solution.

I will ensure the National Assembly has the opportunity to fully scrutinise any regulations which may be brought forward.