# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE** | **Delivery of the Young People into Agriculture Scheme and Forum** |
| **DATE** | **23 January 2018** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs** |

I am always impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of young people in Welsh agriculture. It is vital we ensure future generations enter the industry bringing new ideas and innovation to the sector. It has been one of my key priorities to support our next generation of farmers and I have spoken to many young people to gain a better understanding of what support they need to enter the industry and develop sustainable, profitable and resilient businesses.

We need to be fully prepared for the challenges as we transition from the EU. The impact on our farmers is likely to be greater than for many other sectors. We must do all we can to build resilience within our industry and to ensure we create an environment where business can prosper and individuals within the industry are supported to become the future leaders of the industry. To enable this, I am launching two initiatives which will give opportunities to young people to develop themselves and their businesses in preparation for a world outside the EU.

The Young People into Agriculture scheme will offer financial support to high achieving individuals looking to establish a new business or to develop an existing business. Successful applicants will need to demonstrate they have the attributes to lead dynamic businesses and drive the change required for the future success of our industry. £6m has been made available for this scheme as part of the Budget agreement the Government reached with Plaid Cymru with whom we have worked closely in developing the new scheme.

To complement this scheme, I am launching a Young People in Agriculture Forum. The aim of the Forum is to develop a strategic long term relationship between the Welsh Government and young people through a senior industry leadership programme, with a particular focus on agriculture and rural affairs. The Forum will give young people an opportunity to engage directly and confidently with Government as well as industry bodies seeking to ensure strategies and policies support the next generation into agriculture. The Forum will complement a number of existing programmes for young leaders our key industry stakeholders already have in place.

My officials are working with industry stakeholders to identify the individuals who will become members of the new Forum and once established, I will be asking them to organise and host an all-Wales Farming Conference. This will be an opportunity to give a focus on young people and especially the young potential future leaders of the agriculture industry in Wales. Members of the forum will work with Welsh Government to develop appropriate and realistic policies along with deliverable actions for the benefit of agricultural families, businesses and wider rural Wales.

These new initiatives will sit alongside the existing wider offer Welsh Government has to support the industry with programmes such as Farming Connect and the Farm Business Grant. Brexit presents many challenges to the agriculture industry in Wales but will also generate opportunities. Farming is similar to any other industry in that success requires a constant flow of new blood, new ideas and new leaders. This new initiative will help develop the industry’s future leaders and ensure that challenges are met and opportunities are grasped.