

British Horse Council

Winter Meeting – Friday 12 December 2025

Welsh Government Update

Welfare during transport

The Animal Welfare (Livestock Exports) Act 2024 banned the export of livestock, including horses for slaughter or fattening from Great Britain, stopping animals enduring stress, exhaustion, and injury on long and unnecessary export journeys. We share the view animals should only be transported when necessary and journey durations should be minimised. The export of animals for slaughter or fattening is unnecessary because they could be slaughtered or fattened domestically.

We are currently working with the UK and Scottish Governments to consider how the protection of equines during transport can be strengthened. We'd like to thank the equine industry co-design group, chaired by David Mountford for presenting a report containing their recommendations on the implementation of the live export ban for equines. The report considered how the equine industry operates, identifying loopholes and determining where effective controls and pragmatic solutions can be applied to prevent circumvention of the ban, while minimising the impact on legitimate movements.

Animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits

In June 2025 the Deputy First Minister issued a [written statement](#) on our response and next steps to the [consultation on licensing of animal welfare establishments, activities and exhibits](#). This marked a significant milestone in our commitment to improving animal welfare standards across Wales.

We will take a phased approach to introducing a national model for the regulation of animal welfare, working closely with stakeholders, operational agencies, industry and the third sector. Our focus will be on areas where regulation can deliver the greatest benefit, informed by the evidence and views submitted during the consultation.

We will begin by developing proposals for the regulation of animal welfare establishments, including rescues, sanctuaries, rehabilitation and rehoming centres, following clear feedback from the consultation. We recognise the need for consistent, proportionate, and enforceable standards to protect animal health and welfare, and support the positive work undertaken to prevent wrongdoing and mistreatment.

Equine ID

Whilst Welsh Government has no current plans to amend equine identification policy in Wales, it is a long-term future policy ambition to develop multispecies EIDCymru further to include equine identification records. In advance of the introduction of equines onto multispecies EIDCymru, we plan to review equine identification policy, and as part of that process we will engage with stakeholders.

Sustainable Farming Scheme

We published the [Sustainable Farming Scheme 2026: scheme description](#) in July 2025. The SFS will begin in January 2026. This follows extensive partnership

working with stakeholders. The SFS is designed to deliver against the Sustainable Land Management objectives established in the Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023 around sustainable food production and environmental stewardship.

The SFS will replace the Basic Payment Scheme and become the primary support mechanism for farmers in Wales. Twelve Universal Actions must be completed each year by participants and further support is available through Optional and Collaborative Layers.