

24 February 2025

Dear

ATISN 23304

Thank you for your request and further to my email to you on 30 January.

Information requested

What percentage and/or total area of Welsh farmland is managed in a nature friendly way? ie to include

- i) farms registered under the Sustainable Farming Scheme (or similar) and/or
- ii) farms with SSSI agreements and/or
- iii) any other practices where positive nature/biodiversity measures are known to undertaken.

Our response

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the records you require are not held by the Welsh Government.

Please note that, whilst your request references the Sustainable Farming Scheme, this scheme is due to go live in 2026 and is not yet in place so is outside the request.

I can, however, confirm the following in respect of your request for the “What ... total area of Welsh farmland is managed in a nature friendly way”.

A total of 1.37 million hectares of land is subject to a Basic Payment Scheme claim. Claimants must adhere to Cross Compliance regulations. These standards aim to limit soil erosion, avoid the deterioration of habitats and landscape features and protect water courses from agricultural pollution.

The Habitat Wales Scheme 2024 supported the management of 341,794 hectares of habitat land on both enclosed farmland and common land.

The Organic Conversion Scheme 2024 supported an area of 2,307 hectares undergoing Organic Conversion, whilst to date, Welsh Government has made Organic Support 2024 payments on an additional 44,672 hectares of land fully certified as organic.

In regard to Sites of Special Scientific Interest we do not hold information on areas relating specifically to farmland. However, I can confirm that 76,140 hectares of land designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest was managed in the Habitat Wales Scheme 2024.

In addition, you may wish to note that details of the National Peatland Action Programme (NPAP) Funded Restoration Activities is publicly available through the NRW Peatland Data Portal (link: <https://smnr-nrw.hub.arcgis.com/apps/d18ef8c74ecc4dc4a0cbf71ab6935ba0/explore>).

Displayed on a map, the data shows the total area, measured in hectares, of peatland restoration that has been carried out across Wales up to the present date.

Restoration activities have been divided into five broad groups:

- Hydrological Management aims to reverse the impact of harmful activities that have resulted in adverse changes to hydrological regimes.
- Erosion Control aims to reduce the effect of erosional features such as hags and gullies. These features expose areas of bare peat which are prone to further degradation if left uncontrolled.
- Tree Management aims to reduce the impact of trees on peatland. Most Tree Management techniques for peatland restoration involve conifer plantation, there are also activities addressing the presence of broadleaf trees.
- Vegetation Management aims to control the dominance of small numbers of abundant species (e.g. *Molinia*, *Calluna*) to ensure the recovery and persistence of mire vegetation.
- Grazing activities aim to restore and manage peatlands through modifying grazing regimes.

The data is broken down into polygons with columns detailing the broad activity types, sites, delivery organisation, start and end dates of restoration activity, and the financial year it occurred in.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at: Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or Email: Freedom.of.information@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely