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NFU Cymru Dairy Board discusses licensing consultation

Welsh Government's licensing scheme consultation was the key talking point for the NFU Cymru Dairy Board at its recent meeting focussing on water quality and nutrient management.

The NFU Cymru Dairy Board visited the Agriculture Research Centre at Gelli Aur Coleg Sir Gâr Farm on Tuesday 13th December for a tour of the college's work around water quality and nutrient management, including projects on slurry separation, weather monitoring and the use of reed beds. The meeting also featured updates from AHDB and NFU Cymru staff.

NFU Cymru Dairy Board Chairman Jonathan Wilkinson said: "We're very grateful to John Owen and the team at ARC for hosting today's visit. It was fascinating to have a tour of the site and to see the innovations they are taking forward. It's brilliant to see the sector taking the lead to find the solutions that will lead to further improvements in water quality.

"The NFU Cymru Dairy Board also discussed Welsh Government's 12-week consultation on a licensing scheme for farming businesses to apply for a licence for a higher annual holding organic nitrogen limit of up to 250kg/ha, subject to crop need and other legal considerations, which is part of the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations. Members were very clear that the 170kg/ha limit acts as a de-facto stocking limit on Welsh farms and will hinder the sector's productive capacity. AHDB Dairy has calculated that to meet the new limit of 170kg of N per ha from livestock manures, the stocking density on Welsh dairy farms would need to reduce by 17%, which would lead to an equivalent reduction in milk production of 336m litres.

"The NFU Cymru Dairy Board is very keen, therefore, that our members and the wider dairy industry respond to this consultation to detail how a proposed licensing system might support their business operations and ensure that the industry's voice is heard."

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A detailed summary of the consultation is available on the NFU Cymru website.

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