

Senedd Cymru
Pwyllgor yr Economi, Masnach a
Materion Gwledig
Rheoliadau Llygredd Amaethyddol

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Ymateb gan: Ymateb unigol

Welsh Parliament
Economy, Trade, and Rural
Affairs Committee
Agricultural Pollution
Regulations

Evidence from: Individual
response

I am writing to express my view on the current consultation regarding nitrate vulnerable zones in Wales and the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

I am a consultant ecologist living in the heart of the Wye Valley SAC and SSSI at Monmouth and I work extensively along the River Wye. Over the past 10 years I have witnessed a huge decline in terrestrial wildlife along the river and also a huge decline in fish numbers.

This is partly due to agricultural pollutants but is also due to raw sewage entering the river from overflow sites operated mostly by Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water.

Whilst the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 concerns Agricultural pollutants, there appears to be no mechanism within the regulations to address human sewage entering the rivers as a result of agricultural operations. Intensive farming including poultry units and fruit farms employ many workers who generally live in mobile homes on farms, the waste water and sewage from these units is often deposited on the land and then enters the water course.

Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water have stated their SAGIS water quality modelling tool indicates that water treatment plants account for 25-30% of the phosphorous in rivers. However, as DC/WW do not monitor volumes of sewage being discharged into the rivers, I fear the modelling is flawed

There is also the issue of enforcement. NRW seem to be very reluctant to investigate and prosecute pollution offenders. Unless there is robust enforcement of offences, polluters will just carry on as usual.

Given the disastrous state of the rivers in Wales and the massive decline in biodiversity, we must ensure the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 covers the whole of Wales and includes water and sewage treatment sites.

Welsh biodiversity is declining rapidly, species are disappearing and much of this is due to the intensive growing of cereal, fruit and livestock. I understand the need to grow food but destroying our biodiversity is not an option.

This is not a rehearsal, this is a biodiversity crisis.

Regards

Steve Wadley