

Inter-Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (IMG EFRA)
Communiqué
29 April 2019

The Inter Ministerial Group for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs met on Monday at 29 April at the Welsh Government offices in Cathays Park, Cardiff. The meeting was chaired by Lesley Griffiths AM, Minister for Energy, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The attending Ministers were:

From the Welsh Government: The Minister for Energy, Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths AM;

From the UK Government: Robert Goodwill MP, Minister of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

From the Scottish Government: The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Roseanna Cunningham MSP; and the Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment, Mairi Gougeon MSP;

The Permanent Secretary at the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Denis McMahon attended the meeting in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive.

The Chair opened the meeting summarising recent political developments and emphasising the need to make best use of the extension to the Article 50 period. The group noted that no-deal at the end of October remained the default outcome in law.

The group agreed its work programme for the rest of 2019, reviewed contingency plans already in place for a no-deal Brexit, looked ahead to the next phase of negotiations with the EU and discussed how the four administrations would work together constructively. It considered progress on the agriculture, fisheries and environment bills and received an update on the programme of secondary legislation. Finally, the group discussed funding, particularly in light of the 2019 spending review and the Bew Review.

In the week that the Intergovernmental Panel for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services is meeting to issue the first report since 2005, and the Committee on Climate Change is providing advice on long term climate change targets to the UK, Scottish, Welsh and NI governments, Ministers recognised the serious implications of the science and the need to accelerate action to address climate change and biodiversity loss. They noted that the UK has a strong record of action, having reduced its emissions by over 40% between 1990 and 2017, but agreed more needs to be done.