

BVA Welsh Branch

15th July 2026

Welsh Branch Policy, lobbying and campaigning priorities

May Senedd Election

- For the 2026 Senedd elections a [manifesto](#) was created and shared with all the parties. This is available online and at **Annex A**
- During the election we noted the stance of each party that aligned to our goals. Below is a grid of the comparisons.

WELSH SENEDD ELECTION 2026

Party Manifesto Comparison: Farming & Animal Welfare

Key commitments from the BVA Welsh Branch manifesto	 Plaid Cymru Party of Wales	 REFORM UK	 Welsh Conservatives	 Llafur	 Welsh Liberal Democrats Democratïdd Rhyddfrydol Cymru
Develop a Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) that supports good animal health and welfare outcomes					
Support a collaborative approach to tackling bovine TB					
Commit to evidence informed disease control					
Champion the responsible use of antibiotics and parasiticides					
Support increased oversight of licensing of animal activities					
Develop an independent vet school in Aberystwyth					

- The parties have now announced their representatives for rural affairs and animal welfare:
 - Llyr Gruffydd MS - Plaid Cymru - Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability
 - Laura Anne Jones MS - Reform UK - Shadow Minister for Food, Farming and Rural Affairs
 - Andrew RT Davies MS - Conservatives - Shadow Minister for Farming and the Environment
 - Vikki Howells MS - Welsh Labour - Chief Whip and Shadow Minister for environment, farming, energy and transport.
 - With their numbers low Jane Dodds MS from the Welsh Liberal Democrats, Paul Rock MS and Anthony Slaughter MS from the Welsh Green Party will speak on these issues.
- After the election we have met with all party spokespeople responsible for animal welfare since the Senedd elections, discussing our Welsh Manifesto priorities and building constructive relationships

across the political spectrum, to ensure animal health and welfare remain central to the new government's agenda. We also met with Welsh MPs (Ben Lake MP, David Chadwick MP, Liz Saville Roberts MP) to discuss priorities.

Bluetongue

5. Both England and Wales have implemented countrywide restricted zones in response to bluetongue. A full all Wales Restricted Zone was formally declared on 10 November 2025, replacing earlier temporary control measures and lifting previous individual holding level restriction notices. Since then, surveillance has continued and additional cases have been confirmed. By March 2026, Wales had recorded 22 cases of BTV3, reflecting a gradual rise as ongoing monitoring detects further infections.

Bovine TB

6. Defra is progressing its Bovine TB strategy refresh for England, and we will continue engaging with the UK Government as it develops further proposals to tackle the disease. In both England and Wales, field trials for the bovine TB cattle vaccine and its companion DIVA skin test have now advanced into Phase 3. These trials, conducted on commercial livestock farms across the LowRisk Area in England and the LowTB Area in Wales, are scheduled to run until 2026 and involve at least 10 farms and 750 vaccinated animals. All participating cattle will receive the CattleBCG vaccine alongside the DIVA skin test.
7. The Welsh government announced it will refresh the TB eradication programme with a goal of achieving a TB-free Wales by 2041. Our current stance is to keep all options on the table regarding movements, testing regimes, and wildlife. We continue to be involved in Wales TB Policy development through our membership of the TB Programme Board.

Avian influenza

8. The avian influenza prevention zone (AIPZ) for poultry and captive birds in England, Wales and Scotland was lifted on 4 June 2026, and on 15 May in Northern Ireland.

BVD

9. BVD eradication legislation came into force on 1 July 2026 meaning that herds must have a negative BVD status in order to move cattle without a premovement test. Work on the new database continues and we expect an update from OCVO at our July meeting.

Gwaredu Scab

10. Following the end of Government funding and closure of the Gwaredu Scab sheep scab project, we're calling for future approaches to prioritise proactive, collaborative, and regionally tailored measures rather than reactive mass dipping, including through SFS.

Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS)

11. Training for vets completing the AHIC continues at Aberystwyth, with 170 vets from 50 practices enrolled; an online module is under development for provisional approval.
12. The Sustainable Farming Scheme opened for 2026 applications on 2 March, closing 15 May with up to 50% of farms registered for the scheme.
13. We urge the Government to consider aligning the Animal Health Improvement Cycle with Farm Assurance providers to streamline data collection, ensuring AHIC delivers genuine value with and exclusive focus on animal health and welfare, without imposing unnecessary additional paperwork.
14. We would also welcome a clear commitment that the AHIC will be properly resourced, effectively communicated to farmers and veterinary professionals, and given the policy prominence it deserves

Greyhound Racing Ban

15. The Prohibition of Greyhound Racing (Wales) Act received Royal Assent on 27 April 2026, officially making greyhound racing illegal in Wales.

Aberystwyth Vet School 1st Graduation.

16. On June 26th, 2026, Aberystwyth University celebrated a landmark moment as its first cohort of BVSc Veterinary Science students graduated from Wales' first School of Veterinary Science, a programme delivered in partnership with the Royal Veterinary College. The milestone marked the culmination of five years of pioneering veterinary education in Wales, with graduates poised to enter the profession following RCVS accreditation of the degree. BVA were represented by JVP Gwen Rees who gave a speech at the ceremony welcoming these new vets to the profession, and BVA Welsh Branch was represented by JVP James Taylor.

Vets Cymru

17. We attended Vets Cymru in Aberystwyth on 2nd-3rd July, where we engaged with veterinary professionals from across Wales. Discussions focused on key issues affecting small animal practice, including workforce challenges, clinical standards, and animal welfare concerns. The event provided a valuable opportunity to hear directly from practitioners about the pressures facing small animal vets and to share BVA's ongoing work to support the profession and improve animal health outcomes in Wales.

UK Policy, lobbying and campaigning priorities

Veterinary Surgeons Act reform

18. Following years of campaigning by the British Veterinary Association (BVA), the UK Government has taken a major step towards reforming the outdated Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 (VSA).
19. On the 24th June we held a parliamentary reception alongside Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) and British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA) with RCVS President Tim Parkin, BVNA President Sarah Holliday, Animal Welfare Minister Baroness Hayman and BVA President Rob Williams all calling for long-overdue reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act.
20. Together, we can build a legislative framework that supports veterinary teams, strengthens public confidence and helps ensure the best possible outcomes for animals and their owners. Learn more here: <https://www.bva.co.uk/take-action/our-policies/veterinary-surgeons-act/>
21. On 9 July UK Government published the White Paper 'Our vision for a thriving veterinary sector', including the government response to the consultation on reform of the Veterinary Surgeons Act, and the Competition and Markets Authority market investigation into veterinary services for household pets. Read the [Government announcement](#) and our [press release](#).

CMA

22. Following more than two years of investigation, on 24 March 2026 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) concluded its investigation into UK veterinary services for household pets with the publication of its final decision report. The CMA is now consulting on the detail of its measures, and we expect these to come into force from September 2026.
23. Throughout the investigation, we've worked tirelessly to ensure the CMA understands the complexity and nuances of the veterinary landscape, challenged the CMA when we felt it was getting it wrong and succeeded in ensuring its final measures are proportionate.
24. You can find the latest information on the investigation, FAQs to keep you up to date and a range of handy resources to support you to adapt to the CMA's upcoming orders on our [CMA webpage](#).

Biosecurity

- 25. Recent reports by EFRA Committee, Public Accounts Committee and National Audit Office highlighted significant concerns around biosecurity and the UK's ability to deal with a disease incursion. These reports highlighted the existence of systemic faults in the nation's biosecurity framework and strategy, including: weak border enforcement capacity, fragmented traceability systems, under-resourced veterinary services, and unclear governance structures.
- 26. We are meeting with MPs highlighting our concerns. We are currently working to identify the main threats across different species and the lessons to be learned from previous disease outbreaks such as FMD in 2001. We plan to produce resources aimed at increasing confidence in dealing with an outbreak, and to consider how we can help mobilise members of the profession working in non-Government roles to assist in the case of a significant outbreak.

SPS agreement

- 27. EU-UK SPS agreement negotiations are moving at pace. Alongside VPHA, we have written to Defra highlighting concerns around capacity to complete health certificates for export as the vets who are responsible for signing them seek other employment ahead of the agreement coming into place. We have called for a phased transition to allow the UK to continue meeting its certification requirements up until the deadline.

Veterinary Workforce

- 28. As a priority for 2025/26, BVA committed to reviewing the evidence base, including current and future supply and demand, with the aim of developing a policy position on veterinary workforce issues. However, we recognise that the workforce landscape is evolving, driven by factors such as the anticipated EU–UK SPS agreement and redundancies in some parts of the sector. The evidence base is also expected to develop significantly, with new research from Defra and the RCVS anticipated in the coming months. In the meantime, we have undertaken an initial desktop review of the existing evidence and will produce a summary of the current position. We intend to return to the development of a full policy position once the new research is available.