

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Angela Burns AM
National Assembly for Wales
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1NA

5th January 2016

Dear Angela Burns AM

I am writing in response to your follow up question to OAQ (0388) that was answered at plenary on the 9th December.

At plenary I said that I would give further consideration to the matters you raised about the incremental growth and impacts of large farms on surrounding communities.

In my letter to you of 19th October I explained the role of the planning system regarding this issue and indicated how the matters you raised were the responsibility of the local planning authority or were a civil issue. In particular, I said that the planning system provides flexibility to allow the issues raised by the growth of large farms to be determined on their planning merits, and if necessary for enforcement action to be taken where planning breaches occur.

Whilst the planning system grants permitted development rights to a range of agricultural buildings and operations, planning permission is required for the construction of larger barns and structures that would have the most significant environmental impact. On a farm larger than 5 hectares a farmer may erect as permitted development (subject to certain conditions) a new building designed for an agricultural purpose up to 465 square metres in footprint and therefore does not need to submit a planning application. This is subject to a prior notification process where the local planning authority can decide whether it needs to approve certain details such as external appearance or access arrangements, and can request a planning application if they consider it necessary.

Early next year mandatory pre-application consultation will be introduced for major development. This will capture agricultural planning applications where the size of the proposed building, or the application site area exceeds certain thresholds.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

From an environmental perspective I would also add that regulations set minimum standards for new or enlarged silage, slurry or fuel oil facilities. Natural Resources Wales is empowered to serve a notice requiring action to improve existing installations when it is considers that there is a significant risk of pollution.

I remain of the opinion that the information I included in my response to you on the 19th and in this letter address the points you raised at plenary, and that no changes to planning policy or advice are required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Sargeant', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
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