woodknowledge WALES

Farm Woodlands and Income Generation

Report









Developed by Woodknowledge Wales in collaboration with Mentera, on behalf of Welsh Government

MENTERA

Ariennir gan **Lywodraeth Cymru**
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Farm Woodlands and Income Generation

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01 Executive Summary

The Farm Woodlands and Income Generation project was commissioned by Welsh Government to explore how woodland and trees can play a more active role within Welsh farm businesses. The project considered opportunities to generate or retain economic value through sustainably harvested timber, non-wood forest products, woodland-based services, agroforestry and associated rural enterprises, while recognising the wider environmental and social benefits delivered by woodland and trees.

The project was undertaken in the context of Making Wood Work for Wales – the Welsh Government's Timber Industrial Strategy – and the introduction of the Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) (Welsh Government, 2025a; Welsh Government, 2025b). Historically, woodland and trees formed a functional part of many Welsh farms, providing timber, fuel, shelter and other products and benefits (Welsh Government, 2018a). The project explored how this relationship might be strengthened within contemporary farming systems, helping existing and new woodland and trees contribute to farm business resilience, rural economies and communities, and sustainable land management.

The project brought together evidence review, case-study development, farmer and stakeholder engagement, knowledge exchange and user testing (see Appendices 1–3). Welsh, UK, European and international evidence was reviewed, alongside previous Welsh Government, Woodknowledge Wales research and project work. Existing case studies were collated and new Welsh examples developed to explore opportunities, barriers, costs and benefits, routes to market and lessons that may be transferable to other farms.

A farmer-facing resource was developed iteratively alongside this work. Draft material was tested through farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events and wider stakeholder engagement, with feedback used to refine its content, structure and approach. The resulting resource combines concise practical guidance and signposting with real-world examples and is designed to be adaptable as policy, markets, evidence and support mechanisms change.

Farm woodland and trees can contribute to diversified and more resilient Welsh farm businesses, but there is no single woodland-enterprise model suitable for every farm. Opportunities depend on farm type and location, woodland type and scale, land capability, infrastructure, available labour and skills, access to markets and services and the farmer's objectives, capacity and appetite for diversification, experimentation and enterprise development.

O1 Executive Summary

The economic value of woodland is also broader than direct product sales. Farm-grown timber may substitute for purchased materials; woodland and trees may support livestock, infrastructure, tourism or other enterprises, and management activity can create opportunities for contractors, processors and other rural businesses. Woodland should therefore be considered as part of the whole farm business, rather than solely as a separate forestry enterprise.

The project identified a wide range of opportunities, including timber harvesting and processing, on-farm timber use, firewood and coppice products, food and drink and other non-wood forest products, recreation and tourism, woodland-based services, contracting and value-added products. However, identifying a potential product is easier than establishing a viable enterprise. Buyers, specifications, scale and continuity of supply, seasonality and fit within the wider farm workload, harvesting and extraction, processing, logistics, contractor availability, price and margin all influence whether an opportunity is commercially realistic.

Two different evidence challenges emerged. First, substantial relevant information and expertise already exist but are dispersed across organisations, technical guidance, policies and support mechanisms. Farmers may therefore struggle to determine where to begin, who to contact and what applies to their circumstances. A farmer-focused resource can help address this information and navigation gap through interpretation and signposting (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

Second, genuine evidence gaps remain. Robust Welsh farm-level financial evidence is limited for many opportunities, particularly newer or specialist enterprises. Costs and returns can be difficult to separate from the wider farm business, and avoided costs and retained value are not always captured. Many woodland and agroforestry systems are also too young to provide long-term evidence. A resource cannot resolve these limitations; continued case-study development, consistent baseline measurement and longer-term monitoring are required (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

Trusted advice, skills and local delivery capacity are critical enabling factors. Farmers may initially need accessible, independent general woodland-management advice, followed where appropriate by more specialist forestry, enterprise, market or business support. Some farmers will want to develop their own woodland management skills, while others will depend on contractors. Greater woodland activity therefore also creates opportunities and requirements for rural entrepreneurs, small-scale contractors, processors, trainers, and other service providers.

O1 Executive Summary

Woodland enterprise also depends on maintaining the resilience of the woodland asset itself. Climate change, drought, wildfire, storms, pests, disease, deer and grey-squirrel damage and changing species suitability can affect future productive value. Woodland resilience, enabling infrastructure and wider farm resilience should therefore be considered together (Forest Research, 2023; Welsh Government, 2018a; Welsh Government, 2018b, updated 2026).

Evidence of farmer interest in and demand for woodland-related enterprise information, support and knowledge exchange should be interpreted cautiously. The project generated useful qualitative evidence through farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events, farmer and stakeholder engagement and wider sector discussions, but this was not designed to provide a statistically representative measure of demand across the wider Welsh farming population. The project timeframe also did not allow longer-term behavioural or economic change to be measured. Seasonal farming workloads and the difficulty of leaving the farm were identified as barriers to participation.

Within these limitations, participants valued real farm examples, practical and locally relevant information, site-based discussion, access to specialists and information on markets and routes to market. Farm-based engagement generated richer discussion than passive written consultation and helped identify practical questions that were not always captured through formal feedback.

The project added value by bringing together farming, forestry, environmental and supply-chain perspectives and evidence; capturing and sharing farmer and rural-business experience; identifying barriers and evidence gaps; and organising dispersed information into a more farmer-focused structure.

The introduction of the SFS provides an important new context. Universal Action 10 requires participating farms to complete a Tree and Hedgerow Planting Opportunity Plan and demonstrate progress towards minimum tree-planting requirements, with qualifying planting to be completed by 31 March 2029 (Welsh Government, 2025c). The longer-term value of this intervention will depend not simply on the number of trees established, but on where and why they are planted and how they are protected, managed and used over time.

Tree establishment should therefore be viewed as the beginning of a management process rather than its endpoint. Connecting planting with whole-farm planning, advice, management, skills, infrastructure and where appropriate, viable products and markets offers an opportunity to create productive and resilient farm assets alongside wider public benefits.

01 Executive Summary

Priority recommendations

The project recommends that future activity should:

- Improve farm-level economic evidence through consistent baseline measures, longer-term monitoring and continued development of Welsh case studies;
- Strengthen access to trusted woodland advice and practical routes into specialist support, markets and services;
- Build farmer woodland-management skills through practical training, demonstration and peer learning;
- Support entrepreneurship, farm-scale contracting, processing and other local delivery capacity;
- Strengthen producer-to-buyer connections, local processing and viable timber and non-wood forest product supply chains;
- Build on emerging support for active woodland management, including appropriate advice skills and enabling infrastructure alongside woodland establishment;
- Continue farm-based knowledge exchange through trusted agricultural and forestry networks, including stronger engagement with younger and future farmers; and
- Maintain the farmer resource as a bilingual, accessible and updateable tool, while embedding woodland and tree decisions within whole-farm business and resilience planning.

Overall conclusion

Farm woodland and trees offer real opportunities to contribute to farm business resilience and rural economic activity in Wales, but opportunity does not automatically translate into viable enterprise. The strongest outcomes are likely where woodland and trees are considered as part of the whole farm and where farmers can combine useful information with trusted advice, practical skills, appropriate infrastructure, contractors, processing capacity and viable routes to market. For some opportunities, collaboration between farmers, land managers, processors and buyers may also help overcome barriers of scale, access to infrastructure and routes to market.

The resource developed through this project provides a practical starting point by bringing together evidence, signposting and real-world examples. Its longer-term value will depend on remaining connected to the people, networks, evidence and markets that enable farmers to turn woodland and trees into productive and resilient components of Welsh farm businesses.

O2 Project Context, Rationale and Objectives

2.1 Background, rationale and objectives

The Farm Woodlands and Income Generation project was commissioned to explore how woodland and trees can play a more active role within Welsh farm businesses, including through sustainable timber harvesting, non-wood forest products (NWFPs), associated services and agroforestry systems. Historically, trees and woodland formed a functional part of many farming systems, providing timber, fuel, shelter and other products. The project considered how stronger integration between farming and woodland management could contribute to diversified income, farm business resilience, rural economies, sustainable land management and stronger local supply chains.

The project aimed to develop a relevant, accessible and farmer-focused resource; collate and develop transferable case studies; identify evidence and case-study gaps; test the emerging resource with farmers and stakeholders; and create knowledge-exchange opportunities between people already deriving value from woodland and those interested in doing so.

Longer-term intended contributions include improved agricultural resilience and resource efficiency, thriving rural communities, stronger links between farm businesses and their communities, and support for Welsh-language use.

The project considers economic opportunity alongside environmental and social value. It does not assume that woodland creation or a particular enterprise is appropriate for every farm; rather, it explores where existing woodland, new woodland or trees within farming systems may add value when considered in the context of the whole farm.



O2 Project Context, Rationale and Objectives

2.2 Strategic and policy context

The project sits within a changing policy and support environment and should be read alongside relevant Welsh Government strategies, legislation and technical guidance.

Woodlands for Wales
Woodlands for Wales provides the overarching policy context for woodland creation and sustainable woodland management in Wales, including the contribution of woodland to environmental, social and economic outcomes (Welsh Government, 2018a).

Making Wood Work for Wales – Timber Industrial Strategy
The Timber Industrial Strategy (TIS) is focused on increasing the sustainable supply and productive use of Welsh timber and increasing added value through the processing and manufacture of wood products. It provides a direct policy link to this project: Section 4.3 of the TIS identifies the development of a resource pack and pilot training for farmers on generating income from sustainable harvesting of timber and non-wood forest products from farm woodland and trees in agroforestry systems (Welsh Government, 2025a).

Sustainable Farming Scheme
The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS), which commenced in January 2026, provides an important new framework for the relationship between farming, woodland management and trees. The Universal Layer and its requirements are established, while support through the Optional and Collaborative Layers continues to develop as the Scheme becomes embedded (Welsh Government, 2025b; Welsh Government, 2026a).

Wider policy and guidance
The project also sits within the wider context of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Sustainable Land Management objectives, Welsh climate commitments, woodland creation and sustainable woodland management policy, and the UK Forestry Standard (Welsh Government, 2015; 2018a; 2023; Forest Research, 2023).





O3 Project Approach and Delivery

3.1 Partnership working and existing expertise

The project was delivered through collaboration between Woodknowledge Wales, Welsh Government, Mentera and specialist advisers. The partnership brought together forestry, farming, farm business, timber-supply-chain and engagement expertise, allowing the project to build on existing relationships and previous work rather than beginning from a blank slate. A summary of the agreed methodology and delivery against the work programme is provided in Appendix 1.

Relevant foundations included existing Woodknowledge Wales projects and research, including Home-Grown Homes, the Small Sawmill Survey, the Local Timber Supply Chain Review, and Farm Woodlands: Insights from Early-Adopter Farmers in Mid-Wales (Woodknowledge Wales, 2025; 2026b; 2026c; 2026d). The project also drew on a wider body of Welsh Government-led and supported work, European-funded research and initiatives, including work related to woodland management and non-wood forest products, alongside existing Farming Connect provision on woodland and agroforestry establishment and management, diversification, timber processing, business advice, skills and knowledge exchange (Farming Connect, 2026a; 2026b). Wider sector knowledge and practitioner experience of farm woodland management and delivery provided an additional foundation. Together this existing evidence, experience and expertise informed the themes explored, potential case studies and emerging recommendations.

3.2 Evidence and literature review

A structured review considered Welsh, UK, European and international literature, policy, research, industry and practitioner evidence, including its relevance and transferability to Welsh farming systems. The review examined timber production, non-wood forest products, woodland-based services, value-added woodland products, farm-scale woodland management and contracting (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a). Key findings included:

- Wood-based opportunities were the most common and wide-ranging, spanning timber harvesting, firewood, coppice, on-farm timber use, processing and value-added products.
- Evidence for non-wood forest products and woodland-based services was more variable and often highly context-specific.
- Across opportunity types, practical viability depended strongly on farm context, scale, skills, infrastructure and access to markets or services.

O3 Project Approach and Delivery

The review also identified a number of important gaps in the available evidence:

- The maturity and strength of evidence for different opportunities.
- Availability of farm-level costs, income and longer-term performance data.
- Transferability between different farm types, locations and business objectives.
- The distinction between areas where practical guidance is well established and those where the evidence base, particularly on farm-level economic performance, remains limited.

3.3 Developing the resource and case studies

Case-study identification and resource development were undertaken as one iterative process. Existing examples were identified alongside development of the literature review, farmer and adviser networks, stakeholder engagement and previous Woodknowledge Wales and partner projects. New Welsh case studies were developed through interviews and site visits where possible. Further detail on the case-study development process and evidence gaps is provided in Appendix 3.

A case-study questionnaire, layout and proforma were developed to capture farm context, motivations, woodland or tree system, income opportunity, costs and investment where available, barriers, enabling factors, routes to market, lessons learned and transferability. Partners and advisers considered whether examples were sufficiently relevant and informative before inclusion, while farmers and advisers subsequently reviewed case studies for factual accuracy and appropriate interpretation.

The resource structure developed in parallel through discussion with partners, advisers and stakeholders reinforced the importance of a broad range of case studies because farm types, woodland resources and owner objectives vary considerably, meaning generic guidance within the resource can only go so far. Evidence from partners, advisers and user feedback pointed towards a combination of concise practical guidance, clear signposting and a larger bank of real-world examples. This approach recognises that substantial woodland guidance already exists; the resource should help farmers navigate it and understand its practical application rather than duplicate extensive technical material.

Case studies are therefore illustrative rather than universal business models. The resource has been developed with bilingual publication in mind and with consideration of accessibility, navigation, graphics and routes to further information. Rather than reproduce detailed scheme rules or payment information that may change, the farmer resource signposts authoritative current guidance and focuses on longer-term principles and opportunities relevant to farm woodland and trees. Future updating and maintenance would require agreed ownership and resourcing beyond the current project.

O3 Project Approach and Delivery

3.4 Knowledge exchange, user testing and refinement

The draft resource was tested through two face-to-face Knowledge Exchange Events at Great Tre-Rhew Farm, Llanvetherine, Monmouthshire and Cwm Farm, Aberhafesp, Powys supported by farm visits, facilitated discussion and structured feedback forms. An online feedback route and wider stakeholder discussions at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and WoodBUILD 2026 provided additional opportunities for a wider stakeholder group to comment.

Face-to-face discussion was particularly useful in testing the shape and usefulness of the case studies, the balance between guidance and examples, and the practical questions farmers wanted the resource to answer. Feedback from farmers, advisers, forestry practitioners, stakeholder organisations and project partners was collated to identify recurring themes and inform substantive refinements to content, structure and framing. Further detail on the Knowledge Exchange Events and stakeholder engagement is provided in Appendix 2.



Monmouthshire farmers Kate & Jim Beavan



Powys farmer Duncan Davies







Stakeholder engagement in the Knowledge Exchange Events

O4 What the Project Found

The findings below bring together the evidence review, case-study development, stakeholder engagement and resource-testing process, with supporting methodological detail provided in Appendices 1–3. They are intended to identify what can be said with reasonable confidence, where evidence remains limited, and what conditions appear important if woodland and trees are to contribute more effectively to farm businesses and rural economies.

4.1 The evidence base: what we know and where gaps remain

There is no shortage of potential woodland and tree-based opportunities, but the strength and usefulness of the evidence varies considerably. The evidence base is more established for some timber and woodland-management activities; many diversification opportunities are more context-specific, and robust quantitative Welsh farm-level evidence is limited (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

Differences between farms and farmers are fundamental. The relevance of an opportunity depends on factors such as farm type, location, land capability, existing infrastructure, woodland type and scale, the owner's objectives, skills, available labour and appetite for enterprise development. An activity that is viable on one holding cannot automatically be transferred to another.

Financial evidence is a particular limitation. Costs and returns are often commercially sensitive, inconsistently recorded or difficult to separate from the wider farm business. Machinery, buildings, labour and energy may serve several enterprises, while avoided costs, informal exchange and value retained on farm may not appear as conventional income. Many woodland and agroforestry systems are also too young to provide long-term performance data (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

Consistent baseline data are not always available before woodland establishment or management interventions. This limits the ability to attribute later changes in profitability, productivity, labour, resilience or environmental performance specifically to woodland or trees. Future demonstration and research projects would benefit from consistent baseline measures and long-term monitoring.

O4 What the Project Found

The project also identified two distinct problems that should not be conflated. First, a considerable body of relevant guidance already exists but is dispersed across organisations, technical publications, policies and support schemes and is not always presented from a farmer's starting point. This creates an information and navigation gap: farmers may struggle to determine what applies to them, where to begin, who to contact and what the next practical step is. Second, while established evidence exists for some woodland and forestry activities, the evidence base is more limited for some farm woodland and diversification opportunities, particularly in relation to comparable farm-level economics, labour requirements, market demand and long-term performance (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

A farmer-facing resource can help with the first problem by organising, interpreting and signposting existing information. It cannot resolve the second; stronger evidence will require continued case-study development, demonstration, monitoring and research.

4.2 Opportunities, markets and routes to enterprise

The project identified a wide spectrum of possible enterprises, but repeatedly found that identifying something that can be produced is easier than establishing a viable route to market. Opportunity should therefore be considered alongside buyers, specification, volume, continuity of supply, harvesting and extraction, processing, logistics, contractor availability, price, margin and the share of value retained by the farm or woodland owner.

For smaller or specialist enterprises, digital marketing and direct-to-customer routes using social media platforms can also influence viability by enabling producers to reach markets beyond their immediate locality, although the relevance of these approaches will vary by product, producer skills and customer base.

In some cases established markets, processors, advisers and supply-chain expertise already exist, but farmers may need clearer routes into them; in others, further market development or local capacity may be required.

Scale emerged as an important constraint on the commercial use of farm woodland. Individual farms may contain relatively small or fragmented areas of woodland, producing volumes of timber or other products that are too limited or intermittent to engage efficiently with existing markets and supply chains. This is particularly significant for timber, where harvesting, extraction and transport costs can be difficult to justify at small scale and the availability of contractors and processors able to work economically with smaller farm woodlands is limited. As a result, potentially productive woodland may remain unmanaged or its products may struggle to reach markets even where an underlying demand exists (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026b; Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

O4 What the Project Found

This has implications both for the management of existing farm woodland and for future woodland creation. Where productive and financial objectives form part of the rationale for new farm woodland, sufficient scale, accessibility, future management and likely routes to market should be considered from the outset. For existing smaller or fragmented woodlands, aggregation and collaboration between farms, local timber hubs, machinery-sharing or contracting models and businesses operating across multiple holdings may help overcome some of the limitations of individual scale and provide opportunities for business development.

Timber and wood products
Established opportunities include woodland management and harvesting, on-farm timber use, firewood, coppice and small-diameter products, sawmilling, processing and higher-value finished products. Case studies show opportunities to retain more value through local processing and local supply chains, but also highlight constraints including woodland size and fragmentation, access, extraction, grading, oversized logs, drying, machinery costs and local processing capacity.

These findings are consistent with the Local Timber Supply Chain Review and the Timber Industrial Strategy, including the potential role of hubs, aggregation, infrastructure and stronger producer-to-buyer connections (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026b; Welsh Government, 2025a).



Buckwood's Martin Buck

O4 What the Project Found



Carter Reed of Route 47



Paul Faulkner's charcuterie



An Ysbryd y Mwynglawdd event

Non-wood forest products
Food, drink and other non-wood products can provide diversification opportunities, but market maturity and evidence vary significantly. Some opportunities already have established routes to market, while others remain specialist or emerging. The resource should distinguish clearly between proven examples and ideas that warrant further exploration rather than presenting all opportunities as equivalent. Examples explored through the project include food and drink, berries, foliage, mushrooms and other specialist woodland products, although the strength of evidence and maturity of routes to market differ considerably between them (Welsh Government, 2025d; STAR-TREE, 2012–2016; Wong and Dickinson, 2003).

Wild venison provides an example of how woodland-management challenges could intersect with enterprise opportunities. Where deer populations require management to protect woodland establishment and regeneration, appropriate routes to market for wild venison could help retain value from necessary management activity and contribute to local food supply. Stakeholder discussions highlighted practical and regulatory barriers, processing capacity and routes to market as areas requiring further consideration and development. These constraints may also favour collaboration across holdings or specialist services operating across multiple farms.

Recreation, tourism and woodland-based services
Woodland can also support recreation, tourism, education, events and other service-based enterprises. Examples considered through the project included woodland supporting farm accommodation and visitor experiences, educational and training activity, and farm-based recreation, and trees and woodland adding value to existing enterprises by enhancing the setting or experience they provide. Squirrel's Nest illustrates the potential for woodland to form a distinctive accommodation and visitor offer, while Carreg y Fuddau provides a different example, where a wooded setting contributes to the value and character of an established equestrian training business even though the trees themselves are not the products being sold. Viability is especially dependent on location, the nature of access, existing farm accommodation or visitor infrastructure, planning and the farmer's objectives. These examples reinforce the importance of assessing woodland as part of the whole farm rather than considering woodland income in isolation.

O4 What the Project Found

Management, contracting and entrepreneurial opportunities
The economic opportunity associated with farm woodland is not confined to the owner of the trees. Increased woodland creation and active management could increase demand for people and businesses able to establish, maintain, harvest, extract and process timber. Case-study evidence illustrates opportunities for farmers and rural entrepreneurs to build businesses around forestry skills, contracting, machinery, firewood, sawmilling, training and value-added products. Where viable demand can be sustained, these activities can support rural employment, retain value within local communities and contribute to viable, rural businesses and services, helping to maintain resilient rural communities.

The continuity of work matters. Small businesses may be reluctant to invest in machinery, skills or staff without a sufficiently predictable pipeline. Potential enabling measures include practical training, equipment and infrastructure support, longer-term management opportunities, stronger local networks and better connections between woodland owners and service providers.

The scale and fragmentation of farm woodland also create a potential entrepreneurial opportunity. Rather than expecting every farm to own specialist machinery or independently access conventional timber markets, contractors, mobile processing services, timber hubs or other collaborative models could operate across multiple holdings, aggregating woodland-management work and material to achieve a more viable scale. This could simultaneously improve access to management for farmers and create more predictable work for smaller rural forestry and processing businesses.



A Squirrel's Nest treehouse

O4 What the Project Found

4.3 Advice, people, skills and networks

Access to trusted advice emerged as one of the strongest enabling factors. Existing provision includes Farming Connect's advisory, training, mentoring, knowledge-exchange and Our Farms support, with woodland maintenance and tree and hedgerow planting specifically represented within its SFS offer (Farming Connect, 2026a; Farming Connect, 2026b). Project engagement nevertheless highlighted the value of an accessible and trusted first point of contact for farmers seeking general woodland-management advice before commissioning more bespoke forestry or business support. Stakeholder discussion highlighted the value of trusted advisers who can help farmers understand the woodland resource, identify realistic options and navigate regulation, grants, specialist services and routes to market. Knowledge-transfer events and practical demonstrations can provide a complementary first step and help farmers see woodland management and enterprise opportunities in practice.

A second level of support may then be needed for farm-specific objectives and projects. This may involve forestry advice, business planning, market development, permissions, design, technical specifications or financial appraisal. The distinction between general independent advice and specialist project advice should be recognised in future support.

Skills and confidence are equally important. Some farmers may want to undertake more woodland management themselves; others will prefer to employ contractors. Practical short courses and farm-level training could increase confidence in woodland management, while a parallel need exists to strengthen entrepreneurial and smaller-scale contracting capacity within the rural economy.

Resources and information alone are therefore insufficient. Farmers also need clear routes to the people and businesses that can help them act. The project has sought to support this through farmer-facing signposting alongside practical case studies, while the engagement process highlighted the wider value of connections between farmers, advisers, contractors, processors, buyers, specialist businesses, trainers and peer networks.

The case studies and engagement process also demonstrate the value of informal rural relationships. Family, neighbours, local businesses and peer networks can provide knowledge, machinery access, labour, encouragement and practical capacity that are difficult to capture in formal business models but can materially affect whether an enterprise succeeds.

O4 What the Project Found

4.4 Reintegrating woodland and trees into the whole farm

A central finding is the value of treating woodland and trees as part of the farm system rather than as a separate forestry intervention. Historically, woodland and trees supplied practical farm needs as well as products for sale. The opportunity now is to strengthen the productive and functional relationship between farming, woodland and trees while retaining wider environmental and social benefits (Welsh Government, 2018a; Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

This requires distinguishing between two forms of value. Public support may appropriately pay for benefits delivered to Wales as a whole, including biodiversity, carbon, water, landscape and other public goods. At the same time, woodland and trees need to make sense within the individual farm business through income, avoided costs, infrastructure, resilience, products or other operational value (Welsh Government, 2025b; Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

The starting question should therefore move beyond 'Where could I plant trees?' towards 'Where could (existing or new) woodland or trees add value to this farm?' That assessment should consider agricultural production, existing land use, land capability, livestock systems, shelter and shade, water, biodiversity, carbon, access, infrastructure, diversification, climate adaptation, landscape context and long-term farm business resilience.

Woodland and individual trees or agroforestry systems should not be treated as interchangeable. Woodland can provide greater scale for some ecological, timber and enterprise benefits, but woodland creation also carries different regulatory and permanence implications. Trees integrated within agricultural systems may offer different forms of flexibility. Decisions therefore need to consider both the benefits and constraints of each approach.

Land-use comparisons should use a realistic counterfactual. The relevant question is not simply 'trees versus no trees', but what woodland or trees would replace, complement, protect or enhance. This is particularly important where existing agricultural land already has significant productive, ecological or carbon value.

Stakeholders also raised concerns about how land classification and regulatory interpretation can influence opportunities to expand or create woodland. Some participants felt that current interpretations can exclude poorer land from tree planting without necessarily directing planting towards the most appropriate locations. This was an engagement finding rather than a conclusion tested through the project and should therefore be explored further against current regulatory guidance.

O4 What the Project Found

4.5 Farm resilience, woodland resilience and enabling infrastructure

Trees and woodland can provide direct benefits to the existing farm business, particularly within livestock systems. Farmers engaged through the project described livestock making significant use of shade and shelter provided by trees, hedgerows and woodland edges during periods of hot weather, while also providing protection from wind and driving rain during more exposed conditions. Current SFS guidance also recognises shade, shelter, soil, water and farm-resilience functions of appropriately integrated trees (Welsh Government, 2025c). As extreme weather becomes a more significant consideration for farm businesses, appropriately located trees and woodland can therefore form part of whole-farm resilience. These benefits may have real economic value to the farm even where they do not generate a separate woodland income stream.

Project case studies also illustrated wider productive functions of trees and woodland within the farm system, including the protection of soils and crops, water management and support for existing agricultural production. Alongside diversified production and additional enterprise opportunities, these functions demonstrate that the value of farm trees and woodland does not depend solely on generating a separate income stream. Further detail on the development and use of project case studies is provided in Appendix 3.

Taken together, these opportunities illustrate how farm woodland and trees can contribute to resilience at several interconnected levels. Financially, they may diversify income, retain value on farm, reduce purchased inputs or support existing enterprises and infrastructure. Socially, active woodland management and associated supply chains can support rural skills, employment, contracting, processing and collaboration. Environmentally, appropriately planned and managed trees and woodland can contribute to biodiversity, soil and crop protection, water management, carbon storage, climate adaptation and resilience. These benefits vary considerably according to farm context, woodland type, management and location (Welsh Government, 2018a; Welsh Government, 2025c; Forest Research, 2023; Woodknowledge Wales, 2026a).

O4 What the Project Found



Figure 1. Whole-farm resilience: interconnected financial, social and environmental dimensions of woodland and trees within the farm system.

Financial and productive benefits: timber, woodfuel, tree crops, non-wood forest products, reduced costs and on-farm use.

Environmental resilience: soil protection, water management, biodiversity, habitat connectivity, climate adaptation and carbon storage.

Wider farm and rural benefits: livestock shelter and welfare, diversification, rural employment and long-term farm-business resilience.

O4 What the Project Found

Relevant risks include drought, wildfire, storms and windthrow, flooding, pests, disease and changing species suitability. Climate resilience should therefore be considered as a farm business and financial issue as well as an environmental one. Appropriate responses may include species choice, structural and species diversity, woodland design, access, active management, vegetation and fuel management, water provision and contingency planning (Forest Research, 2023).

Within this wider picture of woodland resilience, browsing and bark damage from deer and grey squirrels are significant considerations for both existing and newly established woodland, particularly where vulnerable broadleaf species are being established or managed for productive objectives. Effective management may require sustained intervention and coordination beyond individual farm boundaries. Specialist engagement undertaken through the project highlighted the value of monitoring impacts and collaborative, landscape-scale approaches to grey-squirrel management, consistent with the partnership approach set out in the Grey Squirrel Management Action Plan for Wales (Welsh Government, 2018b, updated 2026). These challenges have implications for the success of woodland creation and productive woodland management, as well as for the advice, skills, infrastructure and contractor capacity available to farmers.

Infrastructure connects these two levels of resilience. Access routes can support routine woodland management, harvesting and emergency access; water capture and storage can contribute to wider farm resilience and emergency preparedness; machinery and handling areas can support both agricultural and woodland operations. Future support should therefore consider woodland management, farm-scale resilience and enabling infrastructure together rather than as unrelated interventions.

The exceptional wildfire activity experienced during summer 2026 provides a timely illustration of the importance of preparedness and adaptability, while it remains important not to attribute individual events to particular land-management practices without evidence (Welsh Government, 2026b).

4.6 Working within a changing policy and support environment

The project took place during an important transition in agricultural and woodland support in Wales. The Sustainable Farming Scheme (SFS) establishes a new framework for integrating sustainable food production, environmental outcomes and farm business resilience. The Universal Layer became operational in January 2026, with support through the Optional and Collaborative Layers continuing to develop as the Scheme becomes established (Welsh Government, 2025b; Welsh Government, 2026a). The SFS was a consistent topic during project discussions. Stakeholders also raised the limited visibility of trees and woodland management as part of farm systems within mainstream agricultural education and training, reinforcing the importance of accessible advice, knowledge exchange and practical learning as farmers respond to tree-related requirements and opportunities.

O4 What the Project Found

The SFS creates a particularly relevant opportunity to encourage more purposeful integration of trees within farm businesses. Under Universal Action 10 (UA10), participating farms are required to complete a Tree and Hedgerow Planting Opportunity Plan and demonstrate progress towards implementing it. Qualifying planting must comprise at least 0.1 hectares of new trees or woodland, or 250 individual trees, with planting completed by 31 March 2029 where the requirement is met through new planting (Welsh Government, 2025c).

The value of this opportunity-planning process will depend not simply on meeting a numerical planting requirement, but on where and why trees are established and how they are protected, used and managed over time. Depending on the farm, planting could provide livestock shelter or shade, strengthen hedgerow networks, form part of an agroforestry system, create a future timber resource or potentially provide managed coppice material for activities such as hedge laying. Considering these functions at the planning stage provides an opportunity to turn a planting requirement into a productive and resilient farm asset while also delivering wider environmental and social benefits (Welsh Government, 2025c).

The Optional and Collaborative Layers provide a potential mechanism for taking this further. The published offer includes support relevant to enhanced woodland management, woodland and agroforestry creation, hedgerow creation and restoration, professional development, water and flood mitigation, collaborative market and supply-chain activity and landscape-scale collaboration (Welsh Government, 2026a). As these mechanisms develop, there is an opportunity to connect tree establishment more explicitly with subsequent management, skills, infrastructure, enterprise development and local supply chains. From the perspective of this project, tree establishment should therefore be understood as the beginning of a management process rather than its endpoint.



A mixed species woodland

O5 Demand, Additionality and Knowledge Exchange

Evidence of farmer interest in woodland-related enterprise should be interpreted cautiously. The project generated clear interest in practical examples, face-to-face discussion and participation in case studies through the two farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events, farmer and stakeholder conversations, and wider engagement including the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and WoodBUILD 2026 (see Appendix 2).

This provided valuable qualitative evidence, but the engagement was not designed to provide a statistically representative measure of demand across the wider Welsh farming population. Farming workloads and the difficulty of leaving the farm were also identified as barriers to participation. The project timeframe did not allow the project to determine whether the interest identified would lead to changes in woodland management, investment or the development of new farm enterprises.

Engagement took place during the first year of the SFS, as farmers and advisers were beginning to understand how the new framework would operate in practice and how the developing Optional and Collaborative offer might influence future farm business decisions (Welsh Government, 2025b; Welsh Government, 2026a). Demand for particular woodland-enterprise opportunities may therefore change as farmers gain experience of the Scheme and the wider support offer becomes established.

Within those limitations, participants appeared to value real farm examples, seeing woodland management in practice, practical and locally relevant information, discussion with other farmers, access to specialists, information on markets and routes to market, and opportunities to build relationships. Face-to-face, farm-based engagement produced richer discussion than passive written consultation and helped reveal questions and concerns that were not always captured through forms alone.

The project created additionality by bringing together farming, forestry and supply-chain perspectives; capturing and sharing farmer and rural-business experience that had not previously been documented for this purpose; identifying barriers and evidence gaps through the combined evidence and engagement process; and bringing dispersed information into a more farmer-focused structure. However, longer-term follow-up would be needed to determine whether this activity results in management, behavioural or economic change.

O5 Demand, Additionality and Knowledge Exchange

The findings therefore support future knowledge exchange that is linked to real farms, products, machinery and practical demonstrations, with access to relevant specialists and market actors and sufficient lead-in time. Where appropriate, future knowledge-transfer activity arising from this work should build on and be integrated within existing delivery routes, including Farming Connect, alongside relevant partner and sector networks. This could include integrating woodland management and enterprise opportunities into wider farm business, diversification and knowledge-exchange events, rather than developing parallel provision where suitable delivery routes already exist (Farming Connect, 2026b).



Cornfield Farm's heritage breed pigs



Matthew Plumb wood splitting



Carreg y Fuddau horse training

O6 Lessons, Limitations and Implications

6.1 What a farmer resource needs to do

User testing reinforced the value of a resource that inspires without overselling, uses real examples, helps farmers navigate information dispersed across different sources, provides practical starting points and signposts appropriate expertise and current official guidance. Case studies are most useful when they include context, motivations, challenges and lessons rather than presenting headline income figures in isolation.

The resource should be concise enough to navigate easily while allowing access to fuller case studies or specialist information where users want greater detail. An adaptable format with links or QR codes can support navigation to current information. The project also identified potential value in future updating and the addition of new examples, but ongoing maintenance would require agreed ownership, scope and resourcing beyond the current project.

6.2 What the resource cannot do

The resource cannot provide a universal business case, guarantee financial returns, replace farm-specific forestry or business advice, create markets where none exist, or resolve genuine gaps in the evidence base. Nor should it reproduce detailed policy and funding rules that are likely to change.

The project indicates that information alone is unlikely to translate into practical action. It needs to be accompanied by access to appropriate advice, skills, markets, contractors, infrastructure and relationships (see Appendix 2).

6.3 Lessons from engagement and case-study development

Face-to-face and site-based engagement provided valuable opportunities for farmers and stakeholders to share their experience and views (see Appendix 2). Farmer experiences, site visits and informal discussion provided context that standard questionnaires and written feedback did not always capture.

Case-study development also highlighted the difficulty of obtaining directly comparable financial information (see Appendix 3). Farm-based enterprises frequently share labour, machinery, buildings, energy and other costs with the wider farm business, while their economic contribution may include income, avoided costs, retained value or support to other farm enterprises. The project therefore adopted a proportionate approach to claims, distinguishing documented evidence from individual experience and providing farm context alongside reported figures wherever possible.

O6 Lessons, Limitations and Implications

6.4 Accessibility, language and future generations

The project sought to make information relevant to a range of farm types and circumstances, with bilingual Welsh and English provision and attention to rural communities, long-term farm and woodland resilience, and environmental, social and economic outcomes. The engagement process also reinforced the importance of accessibility for farmers with different levels of woodland knowledge and confidence, seasonal time constraints, language requirements and levels of digital access. Future knowledge exchange should also consider how younger and future farmers can be engaged through existing farming, education and peer networks, recognising that decisions about woodland establishment and management may extend across generations. These considerations should inform future knowledge-exchange events and any future maintenance or updating of the resource.

O7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

- Farm woodland and trees can contribute to diversified and more resilient Welsh farm businesses, while also supporting wider landscape resilience and rural economic activity. However, opportunities are highly context-specific and there is no single enterprise model suitable for every farm.
- Some existing farm woodland may represent an under-utilised productive asset. Looking first at what is already present on the farm can reveal opportunities for productive management, avoided costs or enterprise development.
- New woodland and trees should be considered through whole-farm planning, with clear attention to the value to the individual farm business as well as to the public, where relevant.
- Woodland at an appropriate scale can deliver significant environmental and policy benefits while also supporting productive management and enterprise development; individual trees, smaller woodlands and agroforestry can provide complementary but different opportunities and constraints.
- Identifying a potential product or service is easier than establishing a viable enterprise. Markets, buyers, specifications, processing, logistics, skills, contractors and margins are central to the business case.
- The project identified both an information/navigation gap and genuine evidence gaps. A farmer resource can address the former but not substitute for stronger long-term economic evidence.
- Trusted general woodland advice, followed where needed by farm-specific specialist support, is a key enabling condition.
- Farmer skills and confidence in understanding and managing their trees and woodland matter, but so does the capacity of rural entrepreneurs, contractors, processors and other businesses to provide services to farms that do not wish to manage woodland themselves.
- Farm-based knowledge exchange and peer learning add value beyond passive information provision, particularly when linked to practical examples, products, markets and specialists.
- Woodland-related enterprises can develop incrementally. Starting at an appropriate scale, making use of existing farm assets and skills, testing opportunities and adapting in response to experience can provide a practical route into enterprise development.
- The resilience of woodland enterprise depends both on the resilience of the whole farm and on adaptive management of the woodland asset itself.
- Policy, regulation and support structures materially influence farmer decisions. The introduction of the SFS creates a changing context for farm woodland and tree management (Welsh Government, 2025b; Welsh Government, 2025c; Welsh Government, 2026a). Demand and enterprise opportunities should continue to be reviewed as farmers gain experience of the Scheme and its Optional and Collaborative support develops.
- The findings support a flexible resource that sits alongside people, advice and networks rather than operating as a static publication in isolation. Future maintenance and updating should be treated as a separately scoped and resourced activity.

O7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.2 Recommendations and way forward

1. Improve the farm-level evidence base

- Ensure future woodland and agroforestry demonstration and research projects use consistent baseline measures that enable meaningful comparison and longer-term evaluation.
- Monitor economic, labour, farm business and woodland-enterprise outcomes over longer periods, including from existing farm woodland and as newer systems evolve.
- Capture shared costs, avoided costs and interactions with the wider farm business more consistently.
- Continue to develop and revisit Welsh case studies as enterprises mature, enabling longer-term outcomes to be captured.

2. Strengthen access to woodland advice and practical navigation

- Build on existing provision, including Farming Connect and relevant forestry-sector support, to ensure farmers can access a clear and trusted first point of contact for general woodland-management advice and navigation, with onward routes to specialist support where required (Farming Connect, 2026a; Farming Connect, 2026b).
- Recognising that woodland management may be a relatively new area of activity for some farm businesses, strengthen routes into more bespoke woodland, forestry and enterprise support where needs go beyond the scope of general advice. This should include access, where relevant, to specialist advice on non-wood forest products, markets and routes to market, value-added processing, farm business planning, regulation and funding.
- Build on the signposting developed through this project and existing sector networks to strengthen farmers' routes to relevant advisers, contractors, processors, buyers, trainers and other specialist support.
- Review and update the resource with SFS-related content as Scheme guidance and support mechanisms develop, subject to agreed future ownership and resourcing.

3. Strengthen farmer woodland-management skills and practical learning

- Build on existing provision, including Farming Connect and relevant forestry-sector training and knowledge-exchange providers, to strengthen access to practical short courses, farm-based training, demonstration and farmer-to-farmer learning. This should help farmers understand and assess their existing woodland and tree resource, as well as develop practical woodland-management skills. Where appropriate, use whole-farm examples to demonstrate how woodland and trees can interact with livestock systems, farm outputs, infrastructure, diversification and wider farm resilience (Farming Connect, 2026b).
- Review how woodland management is represented within agricultural education and training and identify opportunities to strengthen provision.
- Strengthen engagement with younger and future farmers through existing networks, including Young Farmers' Clubs, agricultural colleges and agricultural shows.

O7 Conclusions and Recommendations

4. Support entrepreneurship, contracting and local delivery capacity

- Encourage practical, proportionate approaches to enterprise development that enable farmers and rural businesses to test opportunities at an appropriate scale, build on existing assets and skills, and adapt as markets and experience develop.
- Support forestry contracting, woodland services, processing and training as part of the wider rural economy needed to enable farm woodland management and enterprise development.
- Support small businesses to access or obtain appropriate equipment, and to develop skills and capacity where there is demonstrable demand.
- Improve connections between farmers, woodland owners, contractors, processors and rural entrepreneurs.
- Explore how greater continuity and visibility of woodland-management work could give small businesses greater confidence to invest in skills, equipment and staff.

5. Strengthen markets, processing and local supply chains

- Build on the Local Timber Supply Chain Review and the Timber Industrial Strategy to strengthen links between farm woodland management, local processing and markets (Woodknowledge Wales, 2026b; Woodknowledge Wales, 2026c; Welsh Government, 2025a).
- Improve producer-to-buyer connections and access to practical market information, including specifications, grading, volumes, pricing and other requirements. Strengthen market-development and marketing capability among farmers and rural enterprises, particularly for niche and emerging products where developing customer awareness and demand may be as important as developing the product itself.
- Explore barriers and opportunities for viable routes to market for non-wood forest products and for products arising from necessary woodland management, such as wild venison.
- Strengthen collaborative deer-management and wild-venison supply chains. Build on existing deer-management training and best practice in Wales through increased access to skills development in deer management, carcass handling and processing, alongside support for local and collaborative approaches to collection, processing, marketing and market development. Stakeholder experience from the wild-meat sector highlighted the need not only for shorter and better-connected supply chains, but also for stronger marketing to build awareness and demand for wild venison among consumers and potential buyers. International approaches to coordinating deer management across multiple holdings may provide useful models for further exploration, but should be assessed carefully for their relevance and transferability to Wales. Shorter, better-connected supply chains could help retain more value locally while supporting deer management required for woodland establishment, natural regeneration and resilience.
- Support appropriate local processing and collaborative supply-chain models where evidence demonstrates demand, so that more woodland-derived value can be retained within Welsh rural economies.

O7 Conclusions and Recommendations

- Recognise scale and fragmentation as constraints on the productive management of farm woodland. Where financial and productive objectives are intended for new farm woodland, consider how woodland scale, accessibility, management requirements and future routes to market can be addressed at the planning stage. For existing smaller woodlands, explore aggregation, local timber hubs, collaborative contracting, machinery-sharing and other models that can bring management and products together at a commercially workable scale.

6. Support active management of existing woodland

- Build on existing and emerging support for woodland maintenance and active management, ensuring that it is accessible and proportionate to the scale and needs of farm woodland.
- Support the practical transition from woodland maintenance to active management where appropriate, including access to advice, skills and routes to specialist support.
- Consider proportionate support for equipment and enabling infrastructure where these unlock viable woodland management, enterprise activity or wider farm resilience.
- Integrate woodland management with whole-farm business, climate and environmental resilience planning.

7. Continue farm-based knowledge exchange and build networks

- Where appropriate, incorporate future knowledge-transfer activity arising from this work within the existing Farming Connect programme, alongside site-based farmer-to-farmer events and practical demonstrations delivered through relevant partner and sector networks (Farming Connect, 2026b).
- Link knowledge-exchange events where relevant to real products, machinery, contractors, processors, buyers and markets.
- Explore a longer-term farm woodland learning network or community of practice.
- Increase the visibility and integration of forestry, woodland management and woodland enterprise within mainstream agricultural shows, events and farming networks, using practical demonstrations and enterprise examples to connect woodland management directly with farm business opportunities.

O7 Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Maintain the resource and support whole-farm planning

- Consider resourcing the ongoing maintenance and periodic review of the resource, ensuring that information on policy, the SFS, funding and external guidance links to authoritative current sources. An online format could enable light-touch updates as provision changes, supported by a more structured periodic review; ownership, scope and resourcing would need to be agreed beyond the current project.
- Add, update or remove case studies as evidence, enterprises and markets develop, including consideration of a mechanism through which farmers and businesses can nominate future examples, subject to future ownership and resourcing.
- Continue improving concise signposting and navigation, with access to fuller case studies and specialist information where required.
- Maintain bilingual Welsh and English provision and consider different formats and levels of accessibility so that the resource remains usable by farmers with differing language preferences, levels of woodland knowledge, digital access and confidence.
- Integrate woodland and tree planning into whole-farm business and resilience planning, considering agricultural production, livestock, water, access, biodiversity and infrastructure alongside woodland objectives.
- Ensure advice distinguishes appropriately between woodland creation, existing woodland management, individual trees and agroforestry, recognising their different benefits, management requirements, permanence and regulatory implications.
- Build long-term woodland resilience into planning and management, including species suitability and diversity, pests and disease, deer and grey-squirrel impacts, drought, wildfire, storms and other extreme events.

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Appendix 1 – Project Methodology and Delivery

A1.1 Methodology

The Farm Woodlands and Income Generation project was delivered through five interlinked work packages, progressing from project inception and evidence review through case-study development, farmer-resource development, stakeholder engagement and user testing, to final reporting and project outputs.

The methodology combined:

- desk-based literature, policy and evidence review;
- identification and development of Welsh and wider case studies;
- farmer interviews and site visits; input from forestry, farming, farm business and timber-supply-chain specialists;
- iterative development and review of the farmer-facing resource;
- stakeholder engagement and user testing;
- farm-based knowledge exchange; and
- synthesis of evidence and project learning into the final resource and report.

Case-study identification and resource development were undertaken iteratively rather than as separate stages. Evidence gaps identified through the literature review informed the search for practical examples, while farmer interviews, stakeholder input and testing of draft material helped refine both the case studies and the wider structure and content of the resource.

The project was delivered by Woodknowledge Wales in collaboration with Welsh Government, Mentera and specialist advisers. Regular project discussion and review enabled emerging findings, case-study opportunities, stakeholder feedback and resource development to inform subsequent stages of work.

Appendix 1 – Project Methodology and Delivery

A1.2 Delivery against the agreed work programme

Work package	Agreed activity/output	Delivery
WP1 – Project Inception and Evidence Review	Inception; structured literature and evidence review; identification of evidence and case-study gaps and opportunities for further Welsh examples.	Project scope, methodology and programme were established with Welsh Government. A structured Literature and Evidence Review was completed, drawing on Welsh, UK, European and international evidence. The review identified gaps in the accessibility and navigation of existing information, limitations in farm-level economic evidence, and areas where stronger practical examples were needed. These findings informed subsequent case-study identification and development and the structure and content of the farmer resource.
WP2 – Case Study Identification and Development	Identify existing relevant examples; develop Welsh case studies through farmer interviews and site visits; synthesise evidence into accessible case studies.	Potential examples were identified through the evidence review, existing Woodknowledge Wales work, farmer and adviser networks and stakeholder engagement. New Welsh evidence was gathered through interviews and site visits where possible. Case studies were developed using a common framework covering farm context, motivations, woodland/tree resource, enterprise opportunity, costs and investment where available, challenges, enabling factors, routes to market, lessons and transferability.
WP3 – Development of Farmer Resource Pack	Develop the resource framework, practical guidance and case-study material; undertake stakeholder review; produce a farmer-focused resource.	The resource was developed iteratively alongside the evidence and case-study work. Its structure evolved through partner, adviser and stakeholder input towards concise practical guidance, clear signposting and a substantial bank of real-world examples. Draft material was reviewed and refined for relevance, accessibility and practical application.
WP4 – Stakeholder Engagement, User Testing and Knowledge Exchange	Deliver at least one Knowledge Exchange Event; gather stakeholder feedback; refine the resource in response.	Two farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events were delivered, at Great Tre-Rhew Farm, Llanvetherine, and Cwm Farm, Aberhafesp. These combined farm visits, discussion, review of draft resource material and structured feedback. Additional feedback was gathered through an online route, wider stakeholder engagement and discussions at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show and WoodBUILD. Feedback was used to refine the structure, content and framing of the resource.
WP5 – Reporting and Final Outputs	Final farmer resource; final project report addressing demand, additionality, lessons and recommendations; presentation of findings to Welsh Government.	The final farmer resource and this project report bring together the evidence, case-study development and stakeholder-engagement process. The report considers demand and additionality, lessons from delivery, limitations and recommendations for future activity. Final project outputs will be delivered bilingually in accordance with the project requirements.

Appendix 1 – Project Methodology and Delivery

A1.3 Iterative approach

Although the work packages provided the formal delivery structure, the work was deliberately iterative. Literature and evidence review informed case-study selection; case-study development identified further evidence and practical questions; stakeholder and farmer feedback influenced the balance between guidance and examples; and Knowledge Exchange Events tested how the emerging material worked in a real farm setting.

This iterative approach resulted in the resource developing as a practical tool for exploring ideas, navigating existing information and identifying potential next steps, rather than an exhaustive technical manual. Existing specialist guidance is signposted where appropriate, while practical examples are used to demonstrate the diversity of ways in which woodland and trees may contribute to farm businesses.

Further detail on stakeholder engagement and Knowledge Exchange Events is provided in Appendix 2, with case-study development and identified evidence gaps summarised in Appendix 3.

Appendix 2 – Knowledge Exchange Events and Stakeholder Engagement

A2.1 Approach to stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement and user testing were embedded throughout the project rather than undertaken as a single consultation exercise. Engagement included farmer interviews and site visits undertaken during case-study development, discussions with advisers and sector stakeholders, two farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events (KEEs), circulation of the draft resource for review, an online feedback form, and wider discussions undertaken through project and sector events.

The purpose of this engagement was to test whether the emerging resource was relevant and usable for farmers and advisers, identify gaps or areas requiring clarification, and inform the balance between practical guidance, case studies, signposting and wider contextual information.

A2.2 Farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events

Two farm-based Knowledge Exchange Events were held during July 2026:

Event	Location	Date	Attendance	Apologies
KEE 1	Great Tre-Rhew Farm, Llanvetherine	14 July 2026	14	4
KEE 2	Cwm Farm, Aberhafesp, Newtown	16 July 2026	18	8

Holding the events on working farms enabled discussion of the draft resource alongside practical examples of woodland and tree management and farm diversification. Each event combined introductions and project context, a farm visit / woodland tour, facilitated discussion of the draft resource, structured feedback and opportunities for wider discussion between participants.

Participants across the two events represented a diverse range of interests and experience, including farmers and host farming families; forestry and arboricultural practitioners and contractors; farm woodland advisers and specialists; environmental and wildlife organisations; training providers, including Focus on Forestry First; Farming Connect; Mentera; public-sector representatives; and members of the Woodknowledge Wales project team. Participants brought experience spanning farm woodland management and creation, timber and local supply chains, farm diversification, environmental management, training and skills, and farmer advice and support.

Appendix 2 – Knowledge Exchange Events and Stakeholder Engagement

A2.3 Feedback and wider engagement

Participants were invited to comment on the structure, content and usability of the draft resource. Particular areas explored included:

- the balance between short practical guidance and real-world case studies;
- whether the overall structure and enterprise pathways were clear;
- the amount and type of information included within individual case studies;
- whether additional or expanded case studies would be useful;
- routes to market and sources of advice or support that should be included; and
- gaps or areas requiring further explanation.

The draft resource and an online feedback form were also circulated to the wider stakeholder group, providing an opportunity for those unable to attend the events to contribute. No responses were received through the online form; however, additional feedback and insight were gathered directly through stakeholder conversations and networking at wider sector events, including WoodBUILD 2026 and the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show (RWAS). While these interactions were less structured than the written feedback gathered through the KEEs, they provided useful opportunities to test ideas, identify areas of interest and discuss the practical context in which farmers and advisers were considering woodland-related opportunities.

A2.4 How feedback informed resource development

Stakeholder feedback was considered alongside learning from case-study development and the wider evidence-gathering process, and subsequently alongside the completed Literature and Evidence Review. Together, these strands informed refinement of the resource and the project's wider findings and recommendations.

Key areas of learning and refinement included:

- **Practical examples and accessible information**. Feedback reinforced the value of concise, real-world examples alongside practical guidance. Case-study content and presentation were refined to improve consistency and make key information, motivations, challenges and lessons easier to identify.
- **Whole-farm framing.** Discussion helped test the enterprise pathways from a farmer perspective and reinforced the need to consider woodland and trees within the wider farm business and landscape, rather than presenting woodland creation simply as a standalone enterprise opportunity.

Appendix 2 – Knowledge Exchange Events and Stakeholder Engagement

- **Navigation, advice and existing support.** Feedback reinforced the importance of helping farmers navigate towards relevant advice, training, funding and business support rather than attempting to reproduce detailed technical guidance within the resource. Discussion at the KEEs also highlighted the breadth of support already available through Farming Connect and the value of its established network of advisers and services across Wales. Farmer discussion nevertheless identified digital literacy as a potential barrier as agricultural support, information and administrative processes become increasingly digital, particularly for some older farmers.
- **The importance of people, networks and collaboration.** A particularly useful observation was that a resource of this kind "needs to come with people". Experience shared through Stump Up For Trees highlighted the value of an on-the-ground network, trusted relationships, skills development and continued support. Discussion also highlighted the potential value of collaboration between farmers, both for peer learning and for strengthening routes to market where the scale or intermittency of production from individual farm woodlands can present challenges. This informed the project's wider conclusions about farmer-to-farmer learning, practical knowledge exchange and the potential role of a continuing learning network alongside the written resource.
- **Routes to market and small-scale timber production.** Discussion highlighted the difficulty of finding viable markets for relatively small or intermittent parcels of timber from farm woodlands. This reinforced the need to consider woodland income generation in the context of the wider timber supply chain, including access to markets, contractors, processing capacity and appropriate routes to sale.
- **Recognising value beyond direct income.** Farmer discussion highlighted that woodland can generate economic value without timber necessarily being sold. One farmer described using home-grown timber for fencing, joinery and other on-farm purposes, reducing the need to purchase equivalent materials. This directly informed the inclusion of an additional case-study example and reinforced the resource's broader treatment of value, including avoided costs and productive benefits alongside direct sales.

Appendix 2 – Knowledge Exchange Events and Stakeholder Engagement

A2.5 Limitations and learning

The engagement undertaken provided valuable qualitative feedback from farmers, advisers and other stakeholders, but was not intended to constitute a statistically representative survey of Welsh farmers. Participation in the farm-based events was also influenced by the practical constraints of engaging a farming audience during a busy period of the agricultural calendar. Several invited participants sent apologies, with attendance in some cases explicitly dependent on farming commitments.

The farm-based events nevertheless provided an effective setting for detailed discussion, practical knowledge exchange and testing of the draft resource. The experience highlighted the importance of flexibility in the timing and format of farmer engagement, alongside alternative opportunities to contribute where farming priorities prevent attendance. Stakeholders were therefore also given opportunities to review the draft resource and provide feedback outside the events.

The detailed feedback generated through face-to-face engagement, contrasted with the lack of response to the online feedback form, suggests that active and facilitated engagement may be particularly valuable when developing this type of farmer-facing resource. This also reinforces the wider project finding that practical knowledge exchange, discussion and trusted relationships are important alongside the provision of written information.

Appendix 3 – Case-study Development and Evidence Gaps

A3.1 Approach to case-study development

Case-study development was undertaken alongside the wider evidence review and development of the farmer resource. Examples were identified through existing published evidence, Woodknowledge Wales' previous work, project partners and professional networks, stakeholder recommendations, and direct engagement with farmers and land managers.

Specialist input also informed the development of the evidence base and identification of potential examples. This included a discussion with Dr Jenny Wong on non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and their potential within Wales. Dr Wong shared earlier Welsh research undertaken with Bryan Dickinson for Wild Resources Limited (Wong and Dickinson, 2003), together with resources developed through the European STAR-TREE project, including its Marketing Insights work. These materials were reviewed during development of the resource and helped to identify potential NTFP opportunities and examples for inclusion as shorter spotlights.

The intention was to develop a sufficiently broad range of practical examples to demonstrate different ways in which woodland and trees can contribute to farm income, reduce costs, support existing enterprises or enable diversification.

Where appropriate, Welsh examples were developed through farmer interviews, telephone conversations and site visits. A common case-study structure was developed during the project to improve consistency and capture information including farm and woodland context, the opportunity or enterprise, motivations, practical requirements, routes to market or use, costs and income where available, challenges, lessons and sources of further information.

Case-study identification and resource development were iterative. Gaps became clearer as examples were gathered and compared, while conversations with farmers and stakeholders generated additional examples and highlighted opportunities that were not strongly represented within the initial evidence base.

A3.2 Identification and selection of examples

Potential examples were considered according to their relevance to Welsh farming, the practical learning they could offer, the availability and reliability of information, and their contribution to the overall range of opportunities represented within the resource.
The resulting case-study bank deliberately includes different forms of value and different scales of activity. These range from timber production and the use of home-grown timber on farm, through woodland management and value-added processing, to non-wood forest products, recreation, tourism and other woodland-related diversification opportunities.

Appendix 3 – Case-study Development and Evidence Gaps

The project also sought to represent different starting points. Some examples relate to farmers making greater use of existing woodland or trees, while others involve woodland creation, integration of trees into the wider farm business, or development of new enterprises based on woodland products, services or settings.

Not every opportunity identified through the evidence-gathering process required the same level of treatment within the resource. The availability and depth of evidence varied, and some businesses or opportunities were at an early stage of development or highly context-specific. The resource therefore uses different levels of coverage, including full and expanded case studies, shorter examples and emerging opportunities.

A3.3 Evidence gaps identified through the project

The Literature and Evidence Review, case-study development and stakeholder engagement collectively highlighted a number of recurring evidence gaps.

A substantial body of high-quality information and guidance already exists across woodland management, grants, tree planting, timber and diversification, provided by a range of organisations and programmes. The opportunity identified through the project was therefore not simply to provide more information, but to help farmers navigate this extensive evidence and support landscape and connect relevant guidance more readily to practical farm-level decisions.

A second limitation was the availability of comparable farm-level economic evidence. Costs, returns and timescales vary considerably according to woodland type, scale, location, management history, markets, labour and machinery availability, and the objectives of the farm business. Woodland-related costs and inputs can also be closely integrated with the wider farm business: existing buildings, machinery and farmer labour may be used across both agricultural and woodland activities, making it difficult to isolate the true costs and returns of an individual woodland enterprise. Farmers and businesses were also not always able or willing to provide detailed commercial information. Together, these factors limited the extent to which robust comparisons of financial performance could be made across opportunities.

Case-study development also highlighted the importance of recognising forms of economic value that may not appear as direct enterprise income. These included avoided costs through the use of home-grown materials, productive benefits to the wider farm business and longer-term resilience. This broader interpretation of value became an important part of the resource.

Appendix 3 – Case-study Development and Evidence Gaps

Practical gaps were also identified around routes to market. In particular, discussions highlighted the challenges associated with marketing relatively small or intermittent volumes of timber from individual farm woodlands. This connected case-study development with wider questions around local processing capacity, contractors, aggregation, collaboration and the structure of timber supply chains.

Evidence was uneven across the wider range of non-timber and woodland-related opportunities. Some activities have established markets and practical guidance, while others remain niche, highly location-dependent or relatively early in their development. This variation in the maturity and availability of evidence informed the level of detail and the way in which different opportunities were presented within the resource.

A3.4 Development of the case-study bank

The case-study bank evolved throughout the project as evidence was gathered and stakeholder feedback was received. Additional examples were introduced where they filled an identifiable gap, demonstrated a different form of value or provided a useful Welsh illustration of an opportunity.

For example, farmer discussion about the use of home-grown timber for fencing, joinery and other farm purposes led to the inclusion of an example demonstrating avoided expenditure and productive value rather than direct timber sales. Other additions broadened the representation of woodland-related diversification and emerging opportunities.

The process also reinforced the value of presenting a relatively large number of concise examples rather than relying on a small number of lengthy case studies. This allows farmers to encounter a wider range of ideas while using expanded case studies selectively where greater detail and practical learning are particularly valuable.

The resulting bank should therefore be understood as a starting point rather than a definitive catalogue. Further examples could be added over time, particularly where farmers are interested in sharing practical experience and financial information and where new markets or enterprise models emerge.

Appendix 3 – Case-study Development and Evidence Gaps

A3.5 Financial information and costings

The original project methodology anticipated consideration of gaps in available case studies and the opportunities and cost implications associated with developing additional Welsh examples. In practice, gap identification and case-study development became closely integrated with the iterative development of the resource rather than being undertaken as a separate standalone exercise.

Financial information was sought during case-study development where it was relevant and available. However, the project found considerable variation in the type and quality of financial information that could reasonably be obtained. Some farmers and businesses were able to provide indicative establishment costs, investment requirements, prices or income information, while in other cases commercial sensitivity, incomplete records or the integration of woodland activity within the wider farm business made meaningful figures difficult to isolate.

For this reason, the resource does not attempt to present standardised profitability figures for opportunities where the evidence would not support them. Instead, financial information is included where sufficiently robust and useful, while the resource directs readers towards relevant sources of advice and support for exploring opportunities in more detail.

The project experience suggests that any future programme seeking detailed comparative financial analysis of farm woodland enterprises would benefit from a specifically designed economic data-collection methodology, agreed definitions of costs and returns, and sufficient time and resource to work with participating businesses.

Appendix 3 – Case-study Development and Evidence Gaps

A3.6 Learning for future case-study development

The project demonstrated value in using real farm and business examples to make woodland-related opportunities more tangible. It also highlighted the difficulty of creating fixed case studies in a changing environment of markets, grants, policy and business development.

Future development could therefore focus on maintaining and expanding the case-study bank over time rather than treating it as a completed collection. Farmers and businesses could be encouraged to identify themselves or others as potential examples, with new case studies added where they provide genuinely different learning.

A continuing farmer and adviser network could also provide a mechanism for identifying examples, sharing experience and strengthening connections between farmers, advisers, contractors, processors and potential markets. This would complement the written resource and help address the wider project finding that information is most useful when accompanied by trusted relationships, practical knowledge exchange and routes to appropriate support.