

Evolving food systems in Rural Wales

The challenges and opportunities for
developing a wellbeing economy



Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is a UKRI-funded project that brings together academics, community representatives and policy makers to support the development of a wellbeing economy in Rural Wales.

Our in-depth research and engagement activities are responding to one of the most pressing issues in rural Wales: how to change our food systems. The manner in which food is produced, distributed, marketed and enjoyed significantly impacts our health, our economy and our environment.

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales is addressing the contemporary challenges and opportunities around food through multiple projects; each exploring a different priority or challenge identified in the Welsh countryside.

Once completed, copies of the full reports, including the data, analysis and innovations can be found on our website. Additionally, recommendations are presented to policymakers, with the aim of developing sustainable positive changes for our rural communities, with regards to food and wellbeing.



Chickens
Our lucky hens
are fed on organic
grains and have
free range outdoors

Caiff yr ieir maes
sydd gennym eu
bwydo â grawn
organig



Responsive Research: Food, Communities and Wellbeing in Rural Wales

Prof Paul Milbourne and Dr Ellen Hjort

The *Food, Communities and Wellbeing in Rural Wales* project is investigating how food initiatives are working to enhance individual and community wellbeing in rural Wales.

It examines how food is being utilised holistically, progressively and creatively to address the related problems of food poverty, dietary aspects of ill health and social isolation in rural places. In doing this, the project also explores the opportunities and challenges presented by working on food, community and wellbeing in rural settings.

The project consists of four phases of research: GIS analysis of food access across rural communities in Wales; interviews with local food partnership coordinators and local authority policy officers; interviews with local food organisations and projects in rural areas; and, in-depth research on local food environments.

The project aims to fill gaps in knowledge about how community groups and regional policy can manage food-related problems in rural settings in Wales.

Wellbeing and food innovation lab

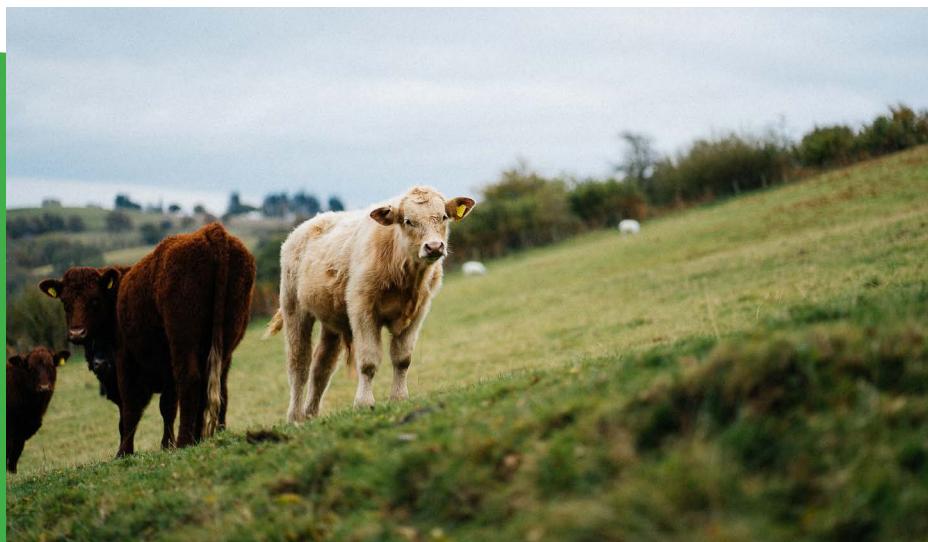
Professor James Lewis and Amie Andrews

Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales' Innovation Lab on Enhancing Wellbeing in Place developed a strong focus on food and community. It brought together representatives from schools, farms, health services, the third sector, local councils, food partnerships, and policy makers to co-design solutions for a rural Wales where everyone has the opportunity to grow, cook, and eat together in inclusive settings.

Through a series of workshops, participants explored the realities of food poverty and access to healthy, affordable food, identified key barriers and mindsets, and worked collaboratively to create a shared vision for the future – along with practical innovations to help achieve it.

The innovation that was chosen to implement and test is a Community Led Kitchen Network. The aim is to unite people in rural communities by preparing and sharing nourishing, sustainably produced seasonal food, creating inclusive social opportunities to reduce loneliness, isolation, and health challenges while celebrating local food culture.

The unique focus is to see how mentors and chefs can support specifically rural areas across the Hywel Dda healthboard region to bring the whole community together; building cohesion, utilising community assets and celebrating local food culture. Participants will be invited to pilot this approach and help evaluate its impact. The insights and outcomes from the pilot will then be shared with councils, policymakers, and other change makers to inform future community-led food initiatives.



CYMRU WLEDIG LPIP RURALWALES

ENHANCING WELLBEING IN PLACE
GWELLA LLES YN ELLW

VISION:
GROW, COOK
AND EAT
TOGETHER



• PRIMARY
PUBLIC SECTOR
SECTOR GYHOEDDUS

• ACCESS TO COMMUNAL
SPACES/ KITCHENS
MYNEDIAD AT
UPODAU CYMUNEDOL/REGINAU



• COMMUNAL
GROWING SPACES
GOFODAU TYFU CYMUNEDOL

• REGIONAL
ARTISANS
CREFFTWR,
RHANBARTHOL



• COMMUNAL
TRANSPORT
TRAFNIDIAETH GYMUEDOL



• PREPARING A MEAL
AS AN ACT OF LOVE
PARATOI PRYD FEL
GWEITHRED GARIADUS

• ENTREPRENEURIAL
APPROACHES -
RAPID SYSTEM CHANGE
DULLIAU ENTREPRENEURAID -
NEWID SYSTEMAU CYFLYM

• CURIOSITY
CHWILFRYDDEDD

• NEW MINDSETS
AGWEDDAU NEWYDD

• RESPECT FOR
EARTH
PARCH AR GYFER
YDDAEAR

• MAKING TIME
FOR GOOD FOOD
GWNEUD AMSER AR
GYFER BWYD DA

• CONNECTION
CYSYLLTIAD

• ENTHUSIASM
BRWD FRYDDEDD

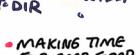
• SUSTAINABILITY
CYNALIADWYEDD

• COOPERATION
GOVERNMENT
LLYNWODRAETH
GYDWEITHREDOL

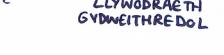


• ACCESS TO
LAND
MYNEDIAD
AT DIR

• JOBS
SWYDDI



• POLICIES
& PROCUREMENT
POLISIAU A CHAFAEL



• COOPERATION
GOVERNMENT
LLYNWODRAETH
GYDWEITHREDOL



• SUSTAINABLE
FUNDING MODELS
MODELAU FRIANNA
CYNALIADWY

• SUSTAINABILITY
CYNALIADWYEDD



• VALUES
GWERTHOEDD

• CONNECTION
CYSYLLTIAD



• RESPECT FOR
EARTH
PARCH AR GYFER
YDDAEAR

• RESPECT FOR
EARTH
PARCH AR GYFER
YDDAEAR



Transition to Net Zero: supporting the horticulture sector in rural Wales

Dr Siobhan Maderson, Rachel Tuckett, and Dr Ruth Stevenson

Increasing horticultural production is central to the expansion of Wales's foundational economy, as well as having multiple benefits for public and environmental health. The Innovation Lab on Net Zero brought together growers, wholesalers, educators, rural business advisors, chefs and others to co-design an innovation to support Wales's horticultural sector.

Throughout the workshops, participants voiced recurrent concerns around access to land, housing and training, as well as challenges around rural Wales's transport, infrastructure and processing facilities.

Workshop participants were excited about horticulture's increased prominence in Wales's policy agenda in the past 10 years.

The workshops generated six proposals, exploring diverse issues, including: public/private land sharing initiatives; support for early career growers and the promotion of horticulture as an attractive career; development of healthy, affordable and desirable convenience food utilising Wales' horticulture produce; and the creation of regional hubs to support growers scale up and guarantee a fair price for produce.

Following a thorough review, the intervention selected to be tested further will involve the development and expansion of regional networks linking buyers and growers.

Women in farm diversification

**Prof Sara MacBride-Stewart, Dr Lucy Baker,
Dr Elen Bonner, and Dr Alison Parken**

Women play an important role in contemporary agriculture and especially in the diversification of farm activities for financial sustainability.

The research interviewed 29 women active in the diversification of a farm in Wales, some of whom also represented farming organisations. Self-defined diversification activities were broad, and included types of on-farm (e.g. tourism, food-related, and recreation), and off-farm (e.g skilled roles) economic activities. The predominant goal of diversification was to ensure economic survival of the farm, which included its agricultural and business components, but also the people, animals and nature that lived there.

The participants talked about the impacts of policies, and the role of women in supporting diversification through their unpaid labour, time, diverse skills, and multiple responsibilities.

Participants emphasised the need for strong and supportive networks, with calls for leadership and support groups to help promote the perspective of women's farming diversification as 'shared-work' not 'side work'.

Support is also required to provide business advice targeted better to women's experiences and contributions, and recognising the need to acknowledge gender differences in business types or growth plans.

Our research team have verified with the research participants, policy makers and 3rd sector organisations the specific policy recommendations for how women's involvement in farm diversification – including sustainable forms of farming – can be used to improve pathways, support, and outcomes for farm diversification in Wales:

1. provide better access to business advice tailored to women in farming
2. recognise the contribution of women and address their specific challenges (e.g. time, childcare, training needs)
3. support rural development policies that assist women to build and grow their farm diversification activities.

The research team have been asked by the research participants to keep questioning policy makers: 'as women are holding up farming communities, are we doing enough to hold up these women?'

For further information and a copy of the research brief please visit ipip.cymru/our-work/targeted-studies/women-and-farm-diversification



Contact us

For more information on the research of Cymru Wledig LPIP Rural Wales, or to share your own thoughts on topics related to food and wellbeing, please contact us: lpip@aber.ac.uk

This document is available in Welsh/
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn
Gymraeg.



www.lpip.cymru



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CARDIFF
UNIVERSITY

PRIFYSGOL
CAERDYDD



Datblygiadau Egni Gwledig



COUNTRYSIDE
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IECHYD A GOFAL GWLEDIG CYMRU
RURAL HEALTH AND CARE WALES