

IBERS RWS/03

AU129/09

17/07/09

PRESS RELEASE - Better soil, better farms

Minister appeals to farmers to back new project

Rural Affairs Minister Elin Jones AM will urge livestock farmers to take part in a project to improve the quality of Welsh soil to improve the quality of their animals and improve their businesses.

Scientists at the Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences at Aberystwyth University are looking for development farms where they can try out different methods of improving the soil.

Elin Jones will be visiting IBERS stand at the Royal Welsh Show on Wednesday July 22nd to show her support and encourage farmers to volunteer – for their own sakes and for the sake of Welsh farming in general.

Called PROSOIL, the project will involve a partnership between scientists, farmers and representatives from the agri-food industry to show how good soil management could be the key to financial efficiency.

The work has received funding through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 - 2013 which is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Improving soil will improve the quality of grazing for livestock and the productivity of the animals themselves. PROSOIL will experiment with different methods, including aeration, using organic fertilisers, using soil conditioners and other approaches to promote soil health on farms across Wales.

“Good soil management can make land more productive and farm businesses more efficient,” said Christina Marley, PROSOIL project manager. “At the same time, using these environmentally friendly methods of soil improvement will cut back on the use and cost of artificial fertilisers.”

Farmers taking part will benefit right from the start. They will be given technical support and information and advice about the way they are managing their soil at present and how they might do more to encourage healthy soils on their farms and to see for themselves how important healthy soils are for a healthy farm business. On-farm development work and farmer events are central to the success of this project and there is a strong emphasis on farmer participation.

Event details

Welsh Assembly Government Rural Affairs Minister Elin Jones AM will promote ProSoil in the IBERS Pavilion – Countryside Care area, at the Royal Welsh Show on Wednesday July 22nd at 2.30 p.m.

For anyone interested in learning more about the project, please visit the IBERS pavilion at any time during the show, where there will be a member of the PROSOIL project team to welcome you.

More information:

Jan Newman 01970 823085 or visit [**www. aber.ac.uk/prosoil**](http://www.aber.ac.uk/prosoil)