

Women in Agriculture Taskforce

CONFOR RESPONSE TO RECC CALL FOR EVIDENCE

About Confor

Confor (www.confor.org.uk) is the not-for-profit organisation for the UK's sustainable forestry and wood-using businesses. It has 1,500 member companies, representing the whole forestry and wood supply chain

About this consultation

The Women in Agriculture Taskforce was set up by the Scottish Government to make recommendations to strengthen opportunities for women in the agriculture sector in Scotland, publishing its [final report](#) in November 2019. The Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee are contacting key sectoral stakeholders to request information on how they are responding to any of the Taskforce report recommendations.

Our response

This Taskforce's work is specific to agriculture and therefore we feel we cannot specifically comment on the questions. However, Confor commends the RECC for focussing on such an important issue and would recommend that this initiative should be expanded to engage with all rural industries.

The structure and range of forestry industry businesses is diverse, with large multinational and family-owned companies, SME's, micro businesses, large landowners and investment funds as well as sole traders working as investors, managers and contractors. Forestry has a different relationship with the public sector to agriculture in that a significant proportion of forestry in Scotland is owned and managed by the public sector and private forests, once established, are not subsidised. Forestry is just one of a range of rural industries which are not agriculture, that could benefit from support and direction such as this to increase inclusion and diversity. A narrow focus on agriculture risks putting these other rural industries at a disadvantage, for example in recruiting and retaining a workforce to deliver "green recovery".