

Sustainable Uplands Workshop Discussion Notes: Pateley Bridge, Nidderdale Tuesday 8 June 2010

The lack of new farmers and its knock-on effects for future adaptation: causes and solutions

Causes:

- Money:
Labour is expensive
Costs are higher
- Alternatives more attractive for farming families and for others
Leads to a loss of knowledge – but also pass on bad habits?
- Farming is not promoted as a possibility in schools and education
- There is a need to encourage more to realise the potential of agriculture
- There is a demand for farming but reality is that it is hard
- SFP promoted inefficiency in some small farms
- Danger of traditionalism

Solutions:

- Need ways for older farmers to retire out of farming
- Need young farmers groups to inspire and promote farming
- Target those outside industry
- Need to promote and attract best students, overcome curriculum barriers, gain practical experience
- Should not subsidise non-viable farms but support viable ones – and support new opportunities
Got to be profitable and then this knowledge can be passed on
- Balance dangers on farms to encourage children – target age groups? 16+
- Combining best knowledge across generations
- Attract more women/young women, who can be more innovative
- Long-term tenancies

Profitability of hill farming: Restructuring financial support so majority of payments are linked to provision of ecosystem services (as per Policy and Practice Note)

- Goal posts constantly moving
- Major uncertainty over future regime means can't plan
- Need to put a stop to "slipper farms" who play the system. I.e. "The less I do, the more I earn". No public benefits or food
- Most SFP going to lowlands
 - Uplands deliver more for less money
 - Need to move away from paying on basis of 'income forgone'
 - Uplands need bigger share of SFP
 - People get benefits downstream
- Agents and owners siphoning off money that doesn't reach tenants/land
- Schemes shouldn't be micromanaged
 - More flexibility/simplicity
- What do upland communities want/how do they think the hills should be managed?
 - CRC have done this in their report

Main points:

- Keep it simple
- Who produces the goods gets the money
- Prevent *over-* and *under-grazing*. Keep stock numbers relatively stable
- Reduce monitoring burden/agency staff
 - But how do you monitor benefits
- Reduce complexity
 - People don't know they can go into HLS??? With Associations, e.g. landowners go in with graziers
- Bid into payments
 - People decide who does what with money
- Associations:
 - People find it hard to work together
 - Don't like knowing what each other are getting

Key Points: simplicity and go to the right people

Renewable Energy

- Fuel for Drax etc
 - Government tariffs – heat
 - Infrastructure problems for power production lines
- Reservoirs etc not being used for power
Outside of infrastructure problem there is ~5 year payback
“planning” issues
Managed woodland - very small amounts in region
Off-gas network large in region
- River flow – WFD
- Barrier to abstraction for hydropower
- Incentives – heat/feed in tariffs
 - National policy
 - Practicalities of access
- NIMBY
Small vs. large scale
- Target spatially
 - Water/wind/biofuels
 - Technological advances in design

**The role of land management in influencing water quality
and
Managing the land through activities (such as grip-blocking/revegetating bare peat) for carbon
as well as other multiple benefits.**

- Complex issue
- Local knowledge is key
Transfer of results essential
- Multiple management influences water quality
- Management (gripping) also on dry heath – not only b. Bog
- Individual recipe for each area/unit
Grip blocking
- A good idea for quality
- Mn levels
- Reduces flashy runoff
- Erosion
- S. Seds clog up
- River bed gravels
- Spawning
- Treat each grip on its own merits
Burning
- Conflict in data
- Scale issue
- Sharing knowledge – communication
- Timing for monitoring
- -knowledge of water transfer rates
- Microbial communities – research area – doc output and burning
- ‘hot spots’ – targeted action
- Maintenance of water company assets
Grazing
- Mixed grazing systems
Holistic approach with other managements e.g. burning
Has to be economic
- Cattle numbers declining – herd numbers bigger but fewer
- More research into the impacts of grazing
- Different approach to scenario development
- Start with a blank canvas and build up
Bracken
Fertiliser on the in-by – what is the pH – survey limiting
- Crypad and cattle
Different investment decisions from different companies
Policy for water quality
- Make sure we don’t overlook quality as well as quantity when paying land managers for ecosystem services
- What is the baseline? Is the current baseline the best? Was it 50 years ago?

Options for the effective management of increased recreation (with specific reference to reducing risk of damage from wildfire)

- New visitors to National parks
- Lack of understanding of upland heritage (does this matter?)
- Education:
With messages specific to country code
In MLTE qualifications
- If climate change increases risk in future, what should we do on education?
- Not going to happen on 'what if?' scenarios
- Trend spotting
Next recreation growth? E.g. disposable BBQs
Predicting what happens next is difficult
Not a prescriptive approach – adaptive
- Target efforts into fire-risk areas
- Need to work with the user groups (local access forums) – before authoritarian approach
- Voluntary arrangements – often as useful as statutory
- An increase in wild camping