

High Nature Value Farming
Dartmoor Locally Led Agri- environment
schemes Workshop March 2017

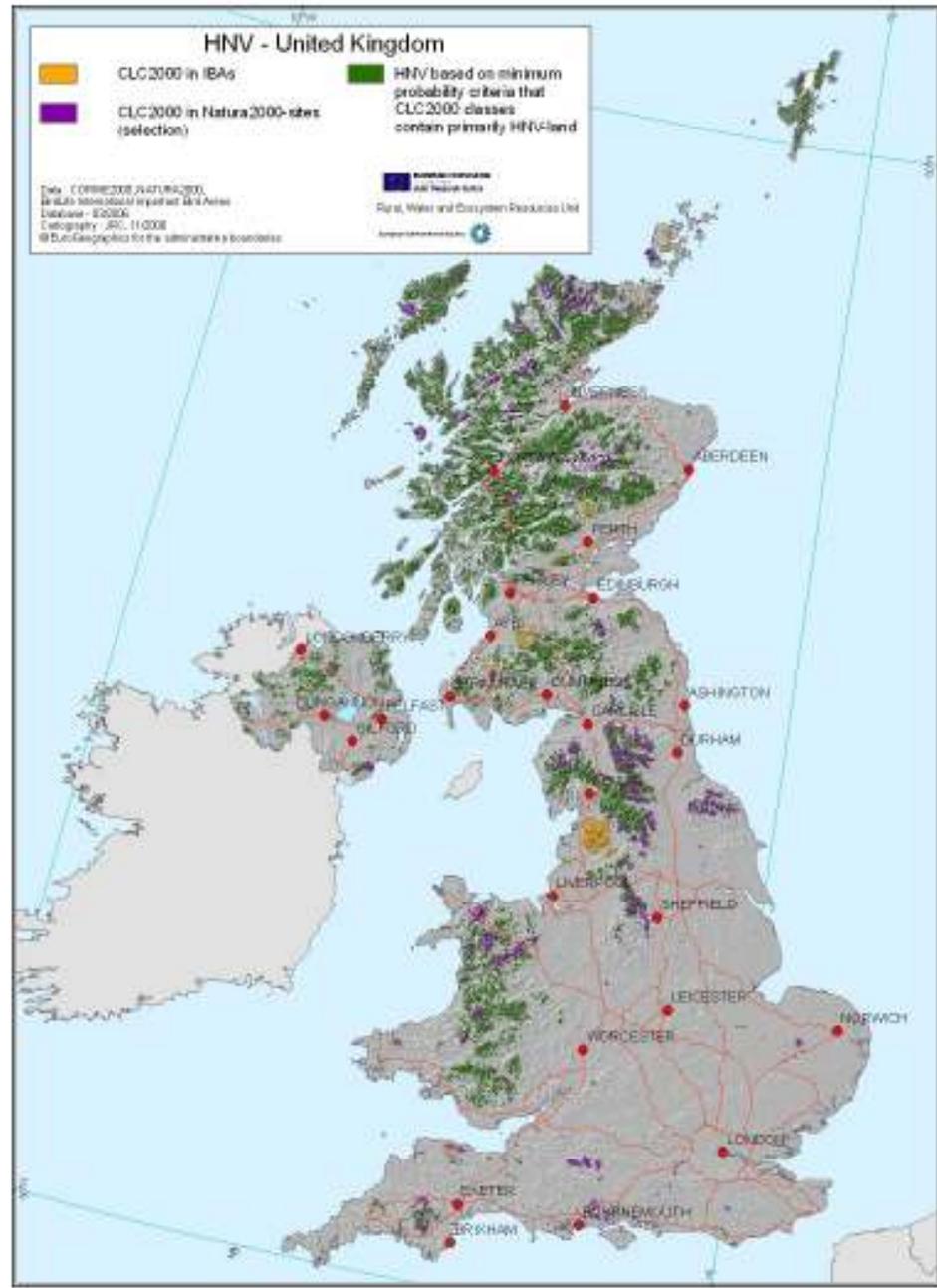
NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN
Local Nature Partnership



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A national treasure



- The High Nature Value is a product of the farming system and the farmers
- Characterised by strong sense of place
- Often includes common land
- In English uplands suckler cattle are a key component
- Products:
 - Food
 - Wildlife rich pastures and meadows
 - Landscape

A shared goal – the manifesto

- Farming central to keeping these places special
- Work with communities of interest – a voice for HNV farming
- Targeted support to secure long-term viability of these precious systems
- Innovate – modern ways that work with tradition
- Secure multiple benefits of HNV
- Time to act!

The 'Northern Upland Chain' LNP

- Set up 2012
- Partnership of public, private and voluntary sectors
- Focused on securing practical benefits for nature and for the natural economy of the uplands.



High Nature value farming working group priorities achieved to date

- Undertake 4 pilot case studies through the NUCLNP
- Publish the final report and case studies;
- Provide input into the NELMS targeting consultation
- Produce publicity material (summary report, stands for shows etc) to promote HNV farming within the LNP to a range of audiences;
- Identify an opportunity to get farmers together to celebrate and promote the value of HNV farming;
- Set up some informal events to build relationships between farmers across the LNP as a first step towards a more formal 'Farmer Forum';

High Nature Value farming in the Northern Upland Chain
A European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism
report for
the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership



The Northern Upland Chain is almost all High Nature Value farmland



Dominated by semi-natural rough grazings



Usually complemented by more improved in-bye



But still some magnificent hay meadows



Extensive livestock grazing



Significant species populations



Provisioning services: food, water supply..



Regulating services: climate, water flows..



‘Cultural’ services – landscape and sense of place, access, biodiversity, shooting, archaeology, peace and quiet....



Low productivity, very seasonal, low profit, low return to labour





Driven to look for profit
by other means

A photograph of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, leaning over a red wooden wall. He is holding a small white bottle with a blue label and feeding a small lamb with a black and white face. The lamb is looking up at the bottle. The background is a red wooden wall with vertical planks.

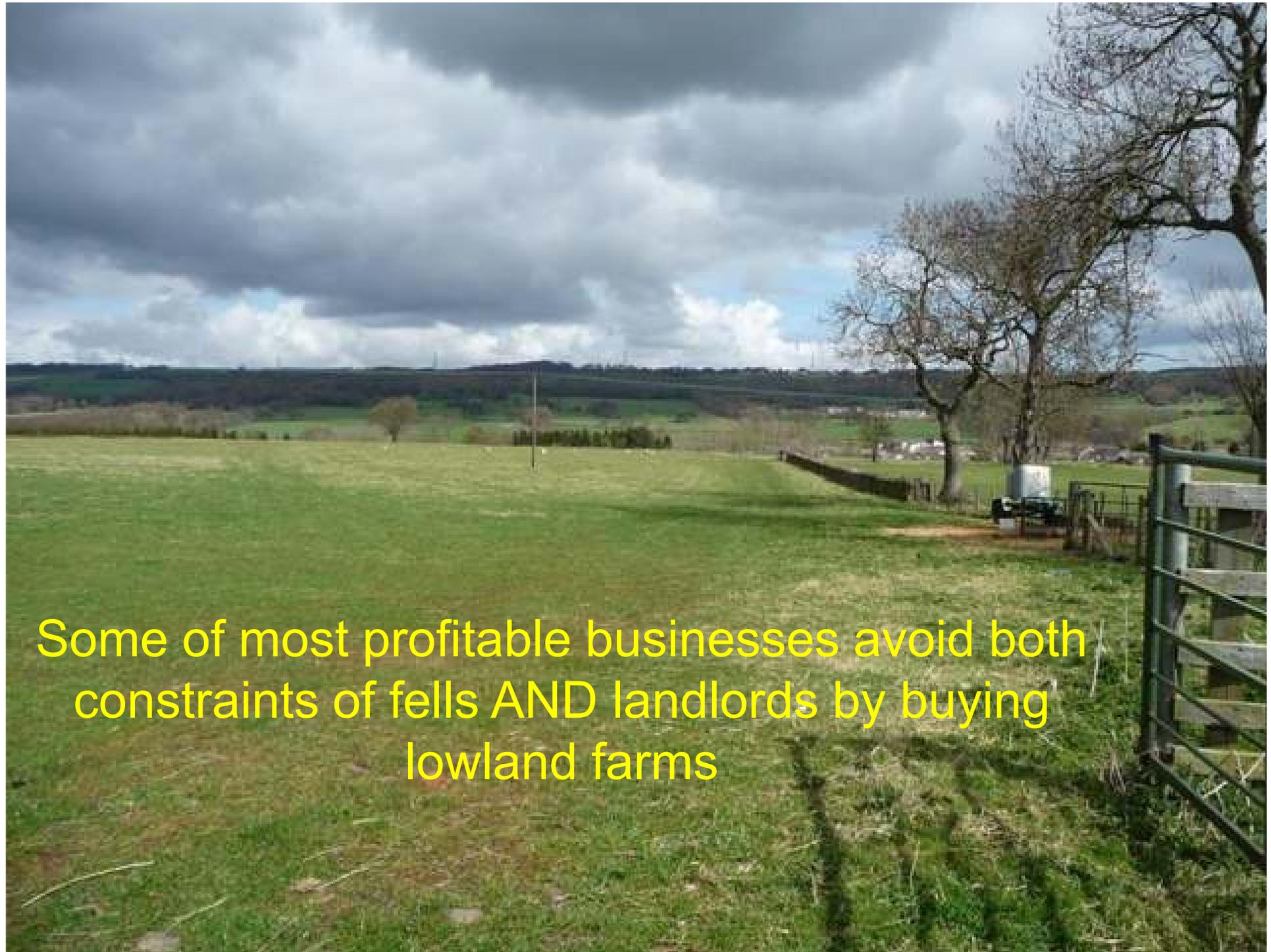
It's being ACTIVE that costs money in the uplands!



Encouragement for producing less, but are the farms viable and farmers getting reasonable return for their work?



Decoupled payments distort power balance where renting involved



Some of most profitable businesses avoid both constraints of fells AND landlords by buying lowland farms

Impediments to new entrants to HNV farming

- Economics of the system and of renting land
- Economics of retiring from farming
- Patchy training opportunities
- Lack of infrastructure, e.g. broadband, for young families living in the uplands



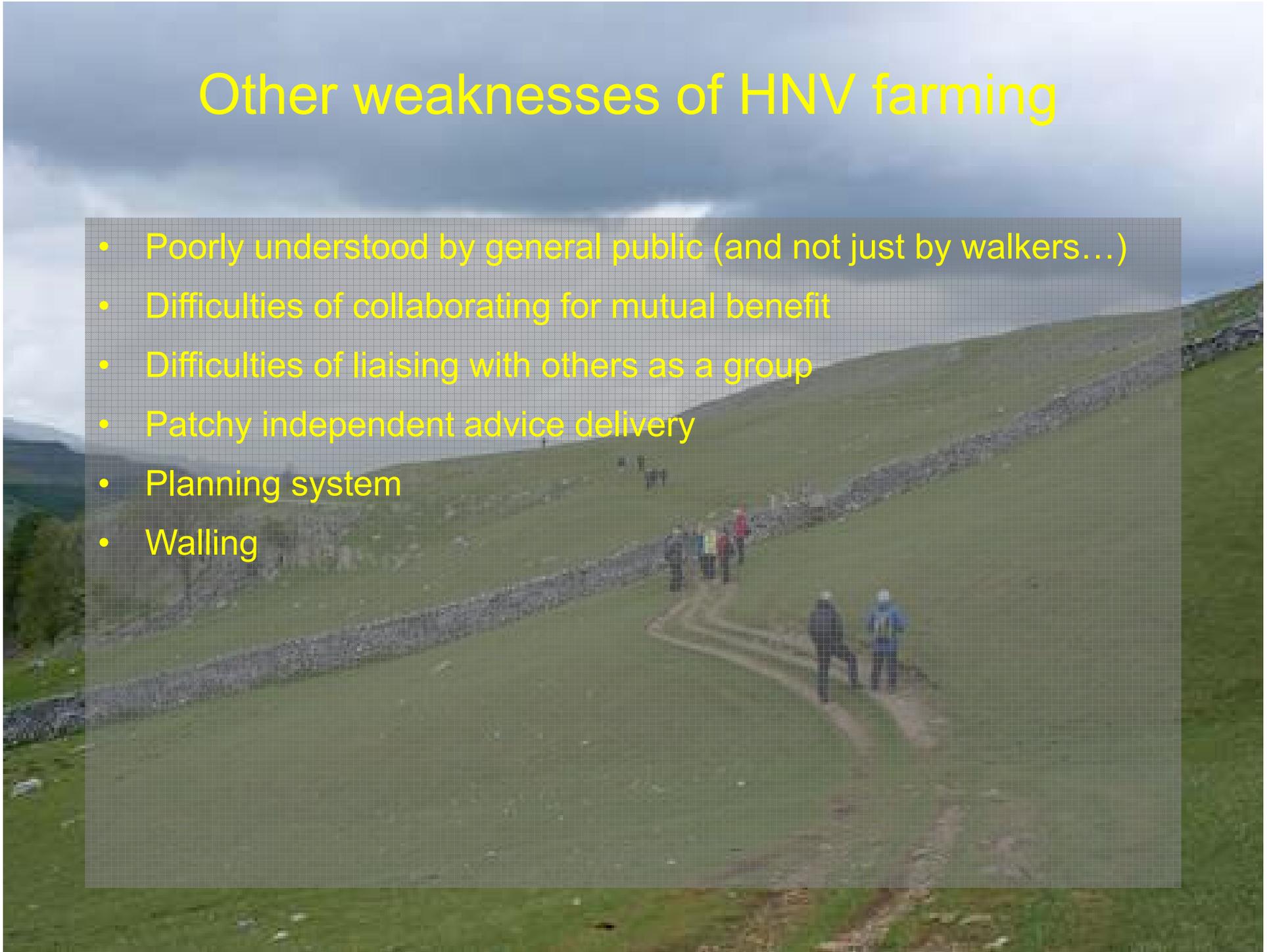
Understanding between conservationists and HNV farmers could be better

- Lack of understanding of hill farming, its economics and the connections within the system
- Lack of understanding of the legal duties, obligations etc on government on the part of farmers
- Sometimes agreements seem based on unbalanced power relationships
- Vermin question



Other weaknesses of HNV farming

- Poorly understood by general public (and not just by walkers...)
- Difficulties of collaborating for mutual benefit
- Difficulties of liaising with others as a group
- Patchy independent advice delivery
- Planning system
- Walling





High Nature Value Farming

in the
NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN

Yorkshire Dales National Park • North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Yorkshire Dales National Park • Yorkshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



What is High Nature Value Farming?

Sit in a flower-rich meadow in the Yorkshire Dales or walk across a North Pennines moor with the curlews taking and you get a very different picture from the one often associated with modern, intensive farming.

High Nature Value farming describes low intensity farming systems that are particularly valuable for wildlife, the environment and people. But low intensity does not mean low-maintenance – managing livestock, meadows, and thousands of miles of dry-stone walls is time-consuming, expensive, and requires high levels of skill and knowledge.



Why it matters

The Northern Upland Chain runs from the southern tip of Nidderdale to the Scottish border in the Northumberland National Park. Much of this stunningly beautiful area of hills and dales may look wild but it has been managed by generations of farmers.

More than any other part of England, the area is dominated by semi-natural wildlife habitats. Over 100,000 hectares have been designated as of national and international importance, including:

- huge areas of blanket bog and heather moorland
- most of the UK's upland hay meadows, and most of England's limestone pavement.
- iconic species like red squirrels, curlew, yellow wagtail, otter, rare orchids, and most of England's remaining black grouse population.



The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership was established in 2012, and includes over 50 organisations. It covers four nationally-designated landscapes: Northumberland National Park, North Pennines AONB, Yorkshire Dales National Park, and Holderness AONB.

Local farming systems use traditional livestock breeds like Cheviot and Swaledale sheep, which have adapted to cope with the harsh conditions. These form the backbone of the national sheep industry, accounting for 20% of British ewes.

HNV farming and land management in the Northern Upland Chain also:

- helps to regulate the flow of many major rivers, minimising flood peaks;
- conserves vast areas of peat and other soils that store huge amounts of carbon;
- maintains over 300,000 hectares of land that is accessible to the public for recreation;
- manages the beautiful landscapes that support a multi-million pound tourism industry.





The challenges

Farming in these uplands is difficult, with long, cold winters, high rainfall and a short growing season. The systems that make best use of the land are resilient, low productivity and labour intensive. In other words, farming here costs more and produces less.

Many of the benefits that HNV farming provides are generally not rewarded by the market. The numbers of traditional hill sheep breeds are in decline, and their market value is falling as producers switch to larger, cross-bred sheep.

HNV farmers tend to have low incomes, and a high turnover - a situation that is high risk, but low reward. Many do not make the equivalent of the minimum wage on the hours they work. As a result, HNV farming does not provide the capital needed to invest in improving farm efficiency or adapting to the restrictions required by environmental support schemes. This issue is most acute for tenant farmers.



The beauty of the landscapes maintained by HNV farming makes them very attractive places to live - driving up house prices to levels where farmers cannot afford to retire. Their children move away to find housing, and the poor access to local services can make families reluctant to move back.

Large amounts of public money are channelled to farmers in the Northern Upland Chain. Without these payments these types of farm would have largely disappeared. However, the current system fails to get the best outcomes for the farmers or the environment.



A call for action

HNV farming remains the best and only realistic way of maintaining some of this country's most valuable landscapes - but things could be so much better.

The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership has been collaborating with groups of local farmers to explore ways of securing a more robust economic future and delivering more environmental benefits.

We are now calling on the Government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, environmental agencies and the farming community to work together to support HNV farming here, including taking action to:

- Ensure that the new national Countryside Stewardship scheme targets support to HNV farmers in the Northern Upland Chain;
- Provide a stronger voice for HNV farmers in developing policy;
- Raise awareness of HNV farming and the fantastic food it produces;
- Develop tailored programmes of support, advice and capital investment that are more easily accessible to upland farm businesses;
- Introduce a more collaborative approach to the delivery of agri-environment schemes, using the skills and knowledge of HNV farmers to deliver environmental outcomes in a way that allows the whole farm to work and make sense as a system;
- Rapidly develop new payment mechanisms to enable the market to reward HNV farmers for the many public benefits they provide; and,
- Further reform the Common Agricultural Policy so that payment rates reflect the real cost to HNV farmers of maintaining some of our most important natural assets.

Get involved

To find out more visit our website at nuclnp.org.uk



High Nature value farming working group priorities to take forward

- Use the report to promote the value of HNV farming to the Local Enterprise Partnerships and Rural Networks, and encourage a coherent programme of economic support across the LNP;
- Ensure that support for HNV farming features strongly in the various LEADER programmes covering the LNP;
- Bring together staff from the four protected landscapes to share examples of existing good practice that might be rolled out across the LNP, and identify any gaps in current advice provision;
- Develop some whole-farm models to demonstrate the potential options for supporting more profitable HNV farming;
- Start a programme of farm visits for NE advisors and others to build a more detailed understanding of upland livestock farming;

High Nature farming working group recent developments

- Piloted a whole farm plan LEP funded project to deliver integrated business and environmental plans the D&MFIP
- Took a group of HNV farmers and advisers to Ireland to visit the EFNCP RBAPS in the Burren and the Shannon Callows & hosted a return trip to the NUCLNP by EFNCP RBAPS staff
- Expression of interest to DEFRA EIP for a NUCLNP HNMF collaborative group submitted, attending a DEFRA uplands workshop at Newton Rigg on Friday.
- Applied with NE for a RBAPS pilot in England, Arable in East Anglia and upland grassland in the Yorkshire Dales within the NUCLNP. If successful this pilot would be mainstreamed as a trialled RBAPS into the next RDP.



What do the
HNV farmers
think?