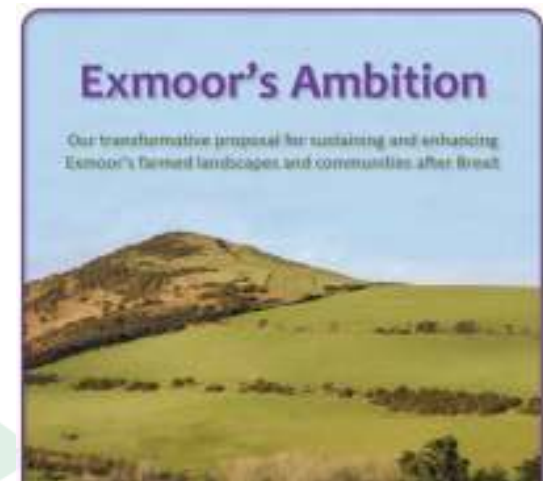


What have we learned from Agri-environment schemes?



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The first agri-environment pilot

1985: Broads Grazing Marshes
Conservation Scheme –
*first British experiment in payments for
environmental management*

**Identifying where farmers' underlying
wishes match conservation aims:**

*Simple approach to keep land extensively
grazed, not drained for cropping*



MAFF, 1986

- very successful: most farmers signed up rapidly, significant areas of marsh saved from irreversible loss
- Model for UK roll-out over 10 years.....

Schemes, 1986- 2015



ESAs designated in waves 1986 - 1994,
England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (15% farmland)

English Pilot **Countryside Stewardship** Scheme (CSS)
launched 1991, non-ESA, often 'high nature value' areas
(e.g. North York Moors, the Wash, borders)

Some National Parks ran their own schemes in the 1990s

Many CSS and ESA agreements transferred into HLS +
(U)ELS after 2005

ELS also picked up much land outside 'special' areas: at its
peak (2010) over 2/3 of English farmland

Trend in schemes & funds

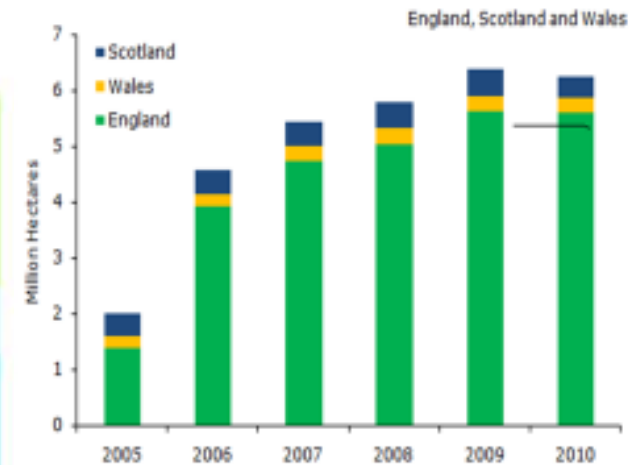
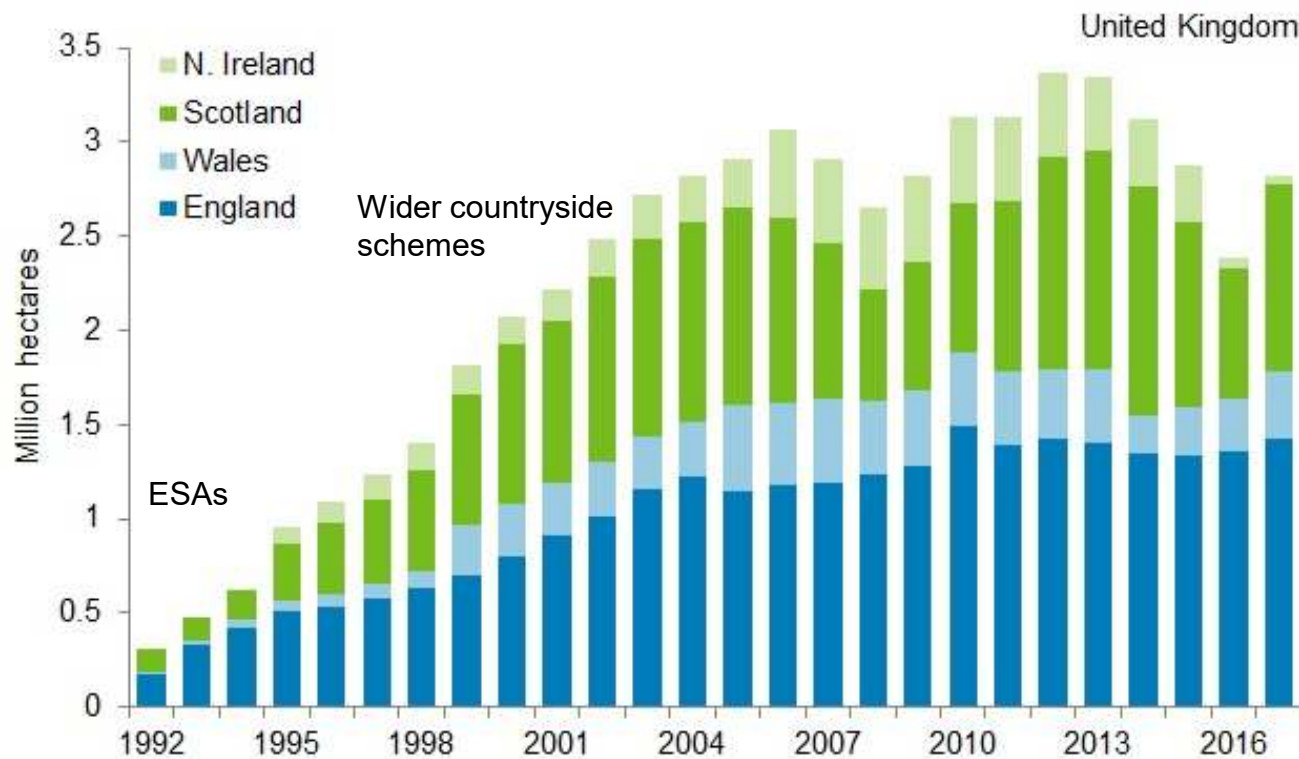


Higher level targeted schemes: c.20% of farm area by 2012

– *much more in National Parks*

Strong engagement, central to business viability for many upland farms

Entry-level schemes, 2005- 2012



Source: JNCC

Achievements: what worked

- Early schemes promoted by trusted local advisors who could help tailor a 'package' for each farm's situation, oversee progress and offer feedback
- Menu-based approaches, some choice built in for both parties



CSS 'special projects' for local opportunities and needs (e.g. curlew bunting recovery, New Forest Verderers, St Kevern) encouraged 2-way development, using local knowledge



Achievements: what worked

Both capital and revenue payments

- capital £ works with farmers' interest to maintain and enhance landscape, provides local employment
- revenue £ can ease cashflow if paid at a suitable point in the year, underpinning incomes, encouraging commitment

Raised awareness of biodiversity issues and goals, rare species, landscape character + identity

Stimulated ongoing learning and experiment, in some places –

Educational access and recreation - reconnecting with local communities

Helped diversification / adding value, for some farms



Issues grew, as time went on...



Insufficient attention to feedback & advice – *for awareness, understanding, enhancement*

Central, top-down management rules

- *not tailored to local conditions*
- *remove farmer incentive / opportunity for innovation, not enough respect for local knowledge*
- *some conditions were too restrictive, others simply wrong!*

Tensions with market drivers + capacity issues at farm level

- *people, customs and cultures strained, system break-down*
- *insensitive procedures (e.g. some commons)*
- *untapped potential to work with market trends / development*

Economic squeeze: too narrow and parsimonious – *lacked whole-landscape solutions, new / multiple land uses, climate resilience*

System breakdown



Moorland in schemes and under-managed

Enclosed land
farmed harder
with more
stock

Evidence that funding was used to intensify and out-compete others for land outside schemes (halo effects)

Entry and payment became so costly, complex, unsupported and uncertain that some people lost interest, others became disillusioned

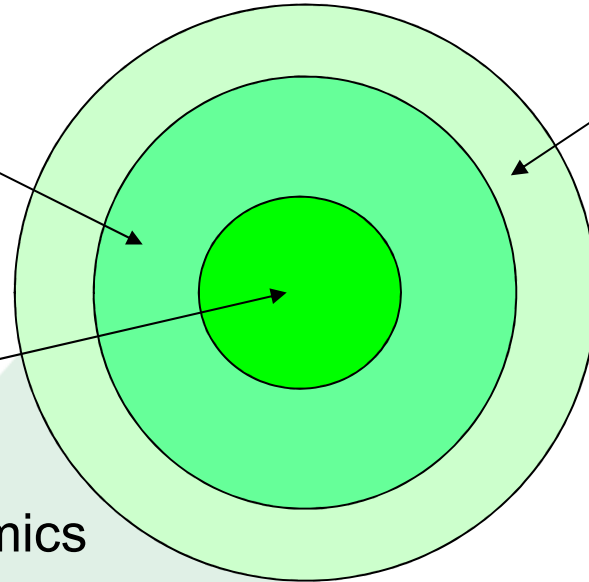
Drivers for innovation

- **Collective action by farmers / local actors**
 - Examples from England and Wales
Dartmoor Farming Futures, Pontbren, networks....
 - Some partly ‘within’ an existing agri-environment policy framework, some entirely outside, some evolving new policy linkages
 - Often linked to adding value and marketing / branding
- **Water catchment innovators**
 - Framework Directive requires a new approach
 - Water companies experimenting with significant funds
- **Policy seeking to find new models**
 - Nature Improvement Areas, Natural Capital Pioneers

Messages matter – they affect outcomes

Community level:
cultures, networks,
attitudes

Farm Level:
Individual,
household &
enterprise dynamics



Societal Level:
What role does
society want
farmers to play?

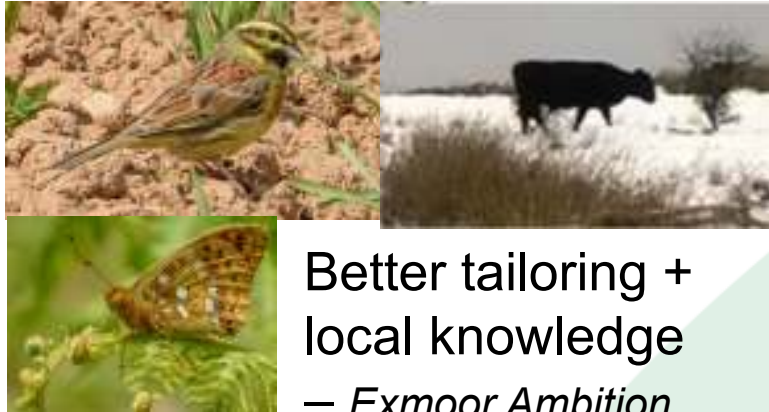
Schemes work better when they:

- *are sensitive to farm-level concerns and business realities*
- *work via community links, encourage people to learn together*
- *offer land-based businesses and families real opportunities for a positive self-image, trust and societal respect*

Proposed new pilots in National Park areas – learning the lessons

- Emphasise local ownership, partnering with farmers and other interests
- Most would pay on results / outcomes, not prescription (and reward prior good practice)
- Include peer support, collective action, local and trusted advice to foster learning & experiment
- Many combine environment with business / community development – circular economy, win-wins, resilience

What could they offer?



Better tailoring +
local knowledge
– *Exmoor Ambition*

Efficiency

Advisor-supported management plans + agreed outcomes, simpler admin procedures, 'self-reporting and peer review to ease the monitoring / control burden' Dartmoor



Dartmoor: farmer buy-in is key

Re-building trust
'canvassing local farmers indicates an erosion of previously high levels of farmer commitment to stewardship, into fragmented and variable levels of engagement' - Broads



Learning and engaging

"Our farm cluster is in its early days but we're already seeing things we can achieve working together – and sharing with the local community. I'm very interested to take part in any pilot agri-environment scheme where farmers are working together to achieve results at a landscape level." South Downs farmer

Results

'The most challenging thing so far is being able to count all the birds – for some farmers this has been really difficult due to the high numbers in the field... It's a nice problem to have!' Yorkshire Dales