



High Nature Value Farming in the Upper Dales

Ideas for Future Action

Gwyn Jones & Jonathan Brunyee



EUROPEAN FORUM ON
NATURE CONSERVATION
AND PASTORALISM



Our starting point:

Landscape and habitats are products of the farming system and should make sense within a farming system

“What mattered to [the farmers] was not the biodiversity of the meadows which we treasure not, but the productivity of the vegetation, how much hay of decent quality could be produced given the more natural input of nutrients available from the muck the animals produced. From such necessities, mediated through generations of caring management, the heritage of the meadows we value has been bequeathed to us....” - John Rodwell, writing in ‘Hay Time’



Ideas for Future Action

What could the AONB help with...?

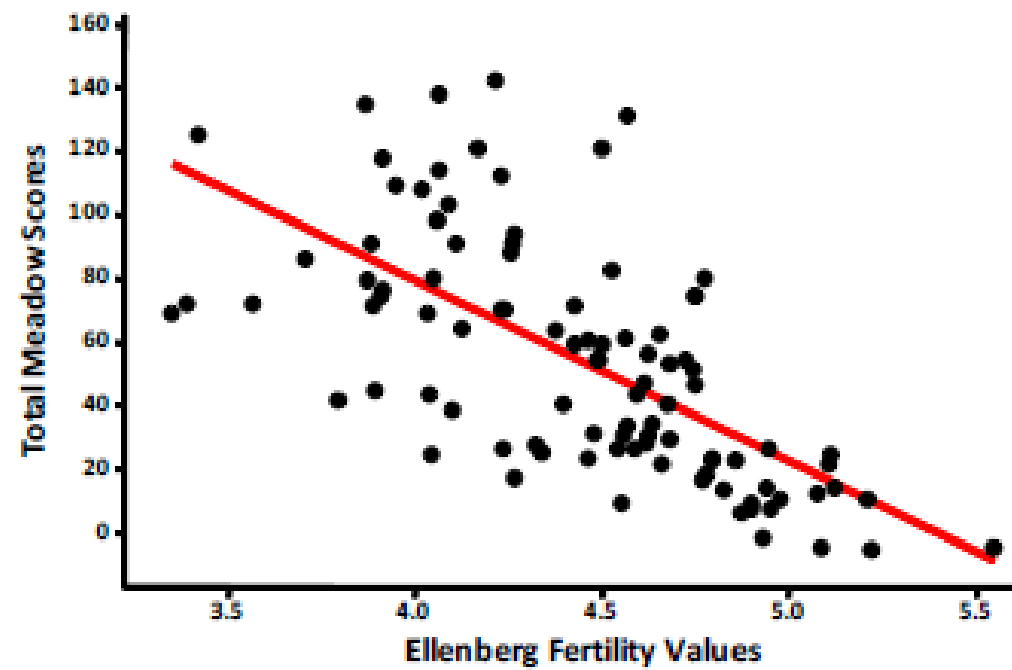
- Nurture better understanding between all involved
- Rediscover 'agricultural' solutions to 'conservation' issues
- Engage farmers in the agri-environment process
- Work towards more suitable support payments
- Offer quality farm business and environmental advice
- Encourage positive planning advice and policy
- Foster farmer cooperation
- Promote farming in the North Pennines



1) Nurture better understanding between administrators, advisors and farmers

- Conservation administrators and advisors need to understand farming
- Training of case officers in the upper dales farming systems, including not just fell and meadow management but the whole farm economy (why not by farmers?)
- Farmers would benefit from better understanding of what the administrators and advisors are legally obliged to do
- Need to explain and *discuss* the concept of Favourable Condition of SSSI units – WHAT does it mean/look like (and the flexibility within that), and HOW to get there
- Evidence based decision making





2) Learn from farmers – develop and rediscover (?) ‘agricultural’ solutions to ‘conservation’ issues

- Meadows and fell are products of farming; meadows in particular were by implication well-managed by farming at some point
- Seems like no-one is remembering that meadows can be both agriculturally **and** ecologically excellent - getting worse in both senses at present
- There is an urgent need to discuss WHAT an agriculturally-appropriate/rational meadow looks like and HOW this can be (and was in the past) achieved?
- (May not work in every case – very wet meadows, perhaps the fell... But even there, would be good to avoid unintended consequences)



Meadow quality



Control of species like rushes, soft brome, creeping buttercups



Role of species like hay-rattle, marsh marigold, meadowsweet



Frank discussion of condition monitoring results as regards fertiliser, lime, slag



3) Engage farmers in the agri-environment process

- Agri-environment schemes are crucial to the survival of farms in the area
- They need to look at things like the farmer does – i.e. at the whole system
- The prescriptions and processes have to be workable and flexible
- Need to fully engage farmers in agreement development (targeting, objective setting, prescriptions and monitoring)
- Need farmer buy in and ownership
- Dartmoor Farming Futures example
- Flexibility crucial (grazing numbers, timings etc)



4) Work towards more suitable support payments (1)

- Payments need to be looked at the whole farm level too
- Do CAP Pillar 1 (direct payments) and Pillar 2 (agri-environment payments) fully reward you for what you provide on your farm?
- Need to develop payment systems that are fair reward for High Nature Value Farming and Ecosystem Services
- Need to look at payment calculations (income forgone and whole farm costs) and model the impacts of change
- Consider not only income, but financial risk to farmer
- Current CAP and AE proposals may be a step in the right direction but there will be winners and losers (and more paperwork etc.!).)



4) Work towards more suitable support payments (2)

- Consultation is out NOW on implementation of the CAP 2014-20 in England
 - *Payments rate uplift for SDA and moorland?*
 - *Greening*
 - *Young Farmer Scheme*
- New Environmental Land Management Scheme - engage NOW as the new scheme is being developed
 - *Options and prescriptions*
 - *Capital works*
 - *Payments rates*
- Future rural development support could help farm businesses become more productive, efficient and resilient
- Explore and develop opportunities from Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes



5) Offer quality and independent farm business and environmental advice

- Farm business and management
 - *Partial budgets and gross margins*
 - *Future strategy*
 - *Diversification*
 - *Co-operation*
 - *Succession planning*
- Farm environment
 - Agri-environment schemes
 - Greening
 - Resource management (soil, water, air, nutrients etc)
- Farm skills and training
 - Digital by default



6) Encourage more positive planning advice and policy

- Need for local housing, enterprise, renewable energy generation etc
 - *Farm visits and liaison*
 - *Guidance*
 - *Good practice*
 - *Policy*
 - *Innovation*



7) Foster farmer co-operation

- There is scope for local farmers to work more closely together
- Cost reduction, resource sharing, access to new markets and ideas e.g.
 - *specialist machinery sharing ring (soil aerator, weed wiper etc)*
 - *linkage or a 'dating agency' for cattle store producers and finishers*
 - *linkage between local farmers and sheep away wintering farms – sharing haulage, shepherding etc.*
 - *landlords, graziers, young farmers – new land partnerships*
 - *marketing*



8) Promote farming in the North Pennines

- Promotion of farming to the public is important
 - *Generates support (for public funding)*
 - *Enhances understanding and appreciation*
 - *Supports local food and tourism*
 - *Can deliver important messages (need for dog worming and control, crime prevention etc)*



Farmer Questions and Feedback

Comments on please.....

Our initial ideas

Priorities

Additional needs and ideas

How things can be taken forward

