



High Nature Value Farming in the Northern Upland Chain

Gwyn Jones



EUROPEAN FORUM ON
NATURE CONSERVATION
AND PASTORALISM



**The Northern Upland Chain is almost all
High Nature Value farmland**



Dominated by semi-natural rough grazings



Usually complemented by improved inbye
nowadays



But still some magnificent hay meadows



Extensive livestock grazing on a range of habitats



Significant species populations



© Malcolm McGregor (www.sa...

Provisioning services: food, breeding stock, shooting, water supply..



Regulating services: climate, water flows..



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



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



A photograph of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark jacket and a patterned shirt, leaning against a red wooden fence. He is holding a white plastic bottle with a yellow nipple and is feeding a black and white lamb. The lamb is lying on a patch of light-colored grass. The background is the red wooden fence.

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



**Decoupled payments distort power balance
where renting involved**



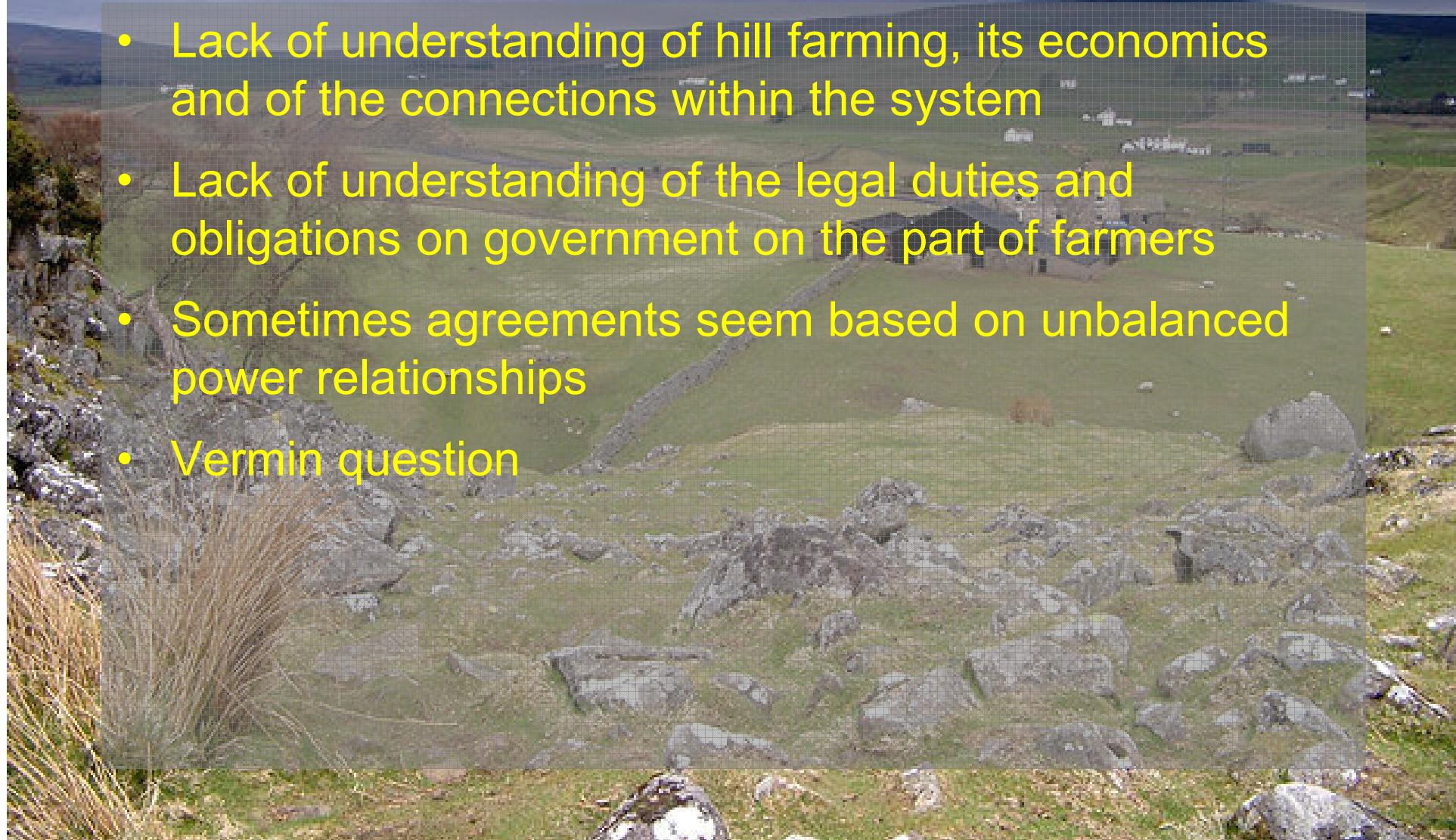
**Driven to look for profit
by other means –
policy is still driving
intensification**



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

Understanding between conservationists and HNV farmers could be better

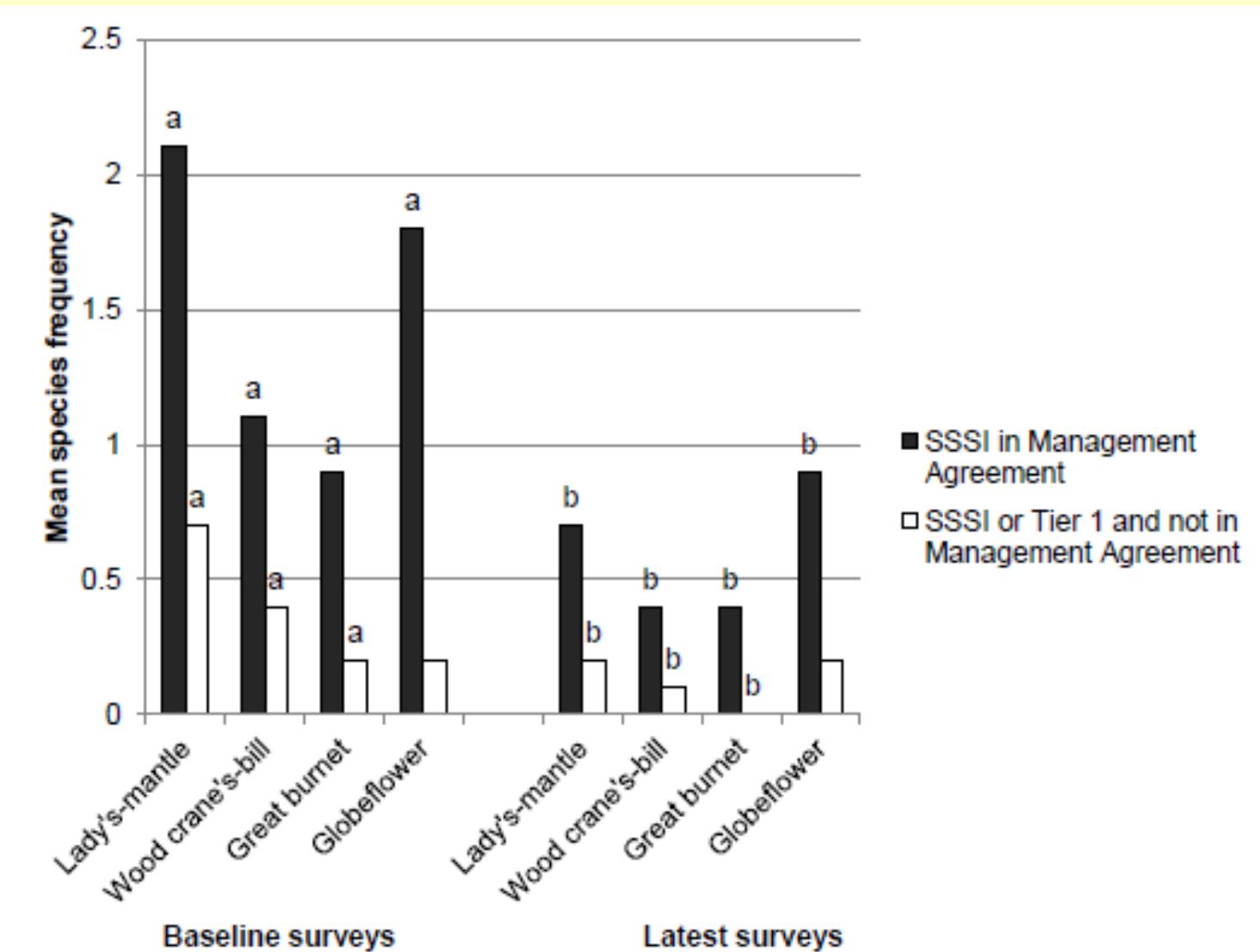
- Lack of understanding of hill farming, its economics and of the connections within the system
- Lack of understanding of the legal duties and obligations on government on the part of farmers
- Sometimes agreements seem based on unbalanced power relationships
- Vermin question





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

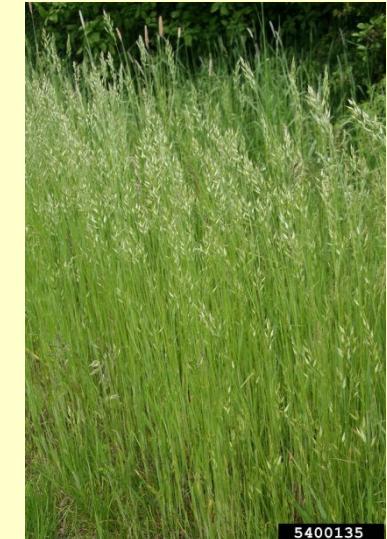
Meadow ecological quality dropping



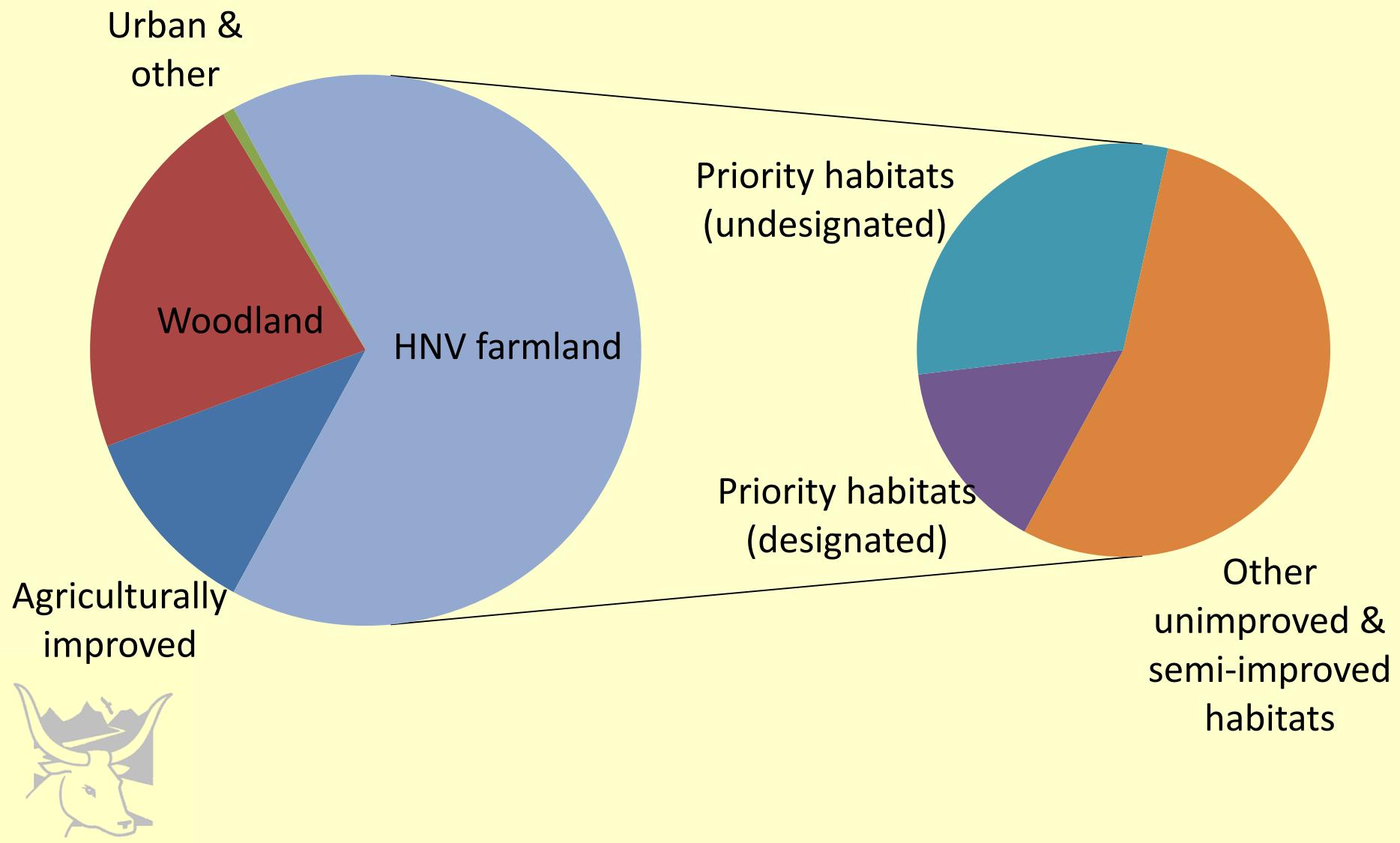
(Starr-Keddle, 2013)



Meadow agricultural quality dropping

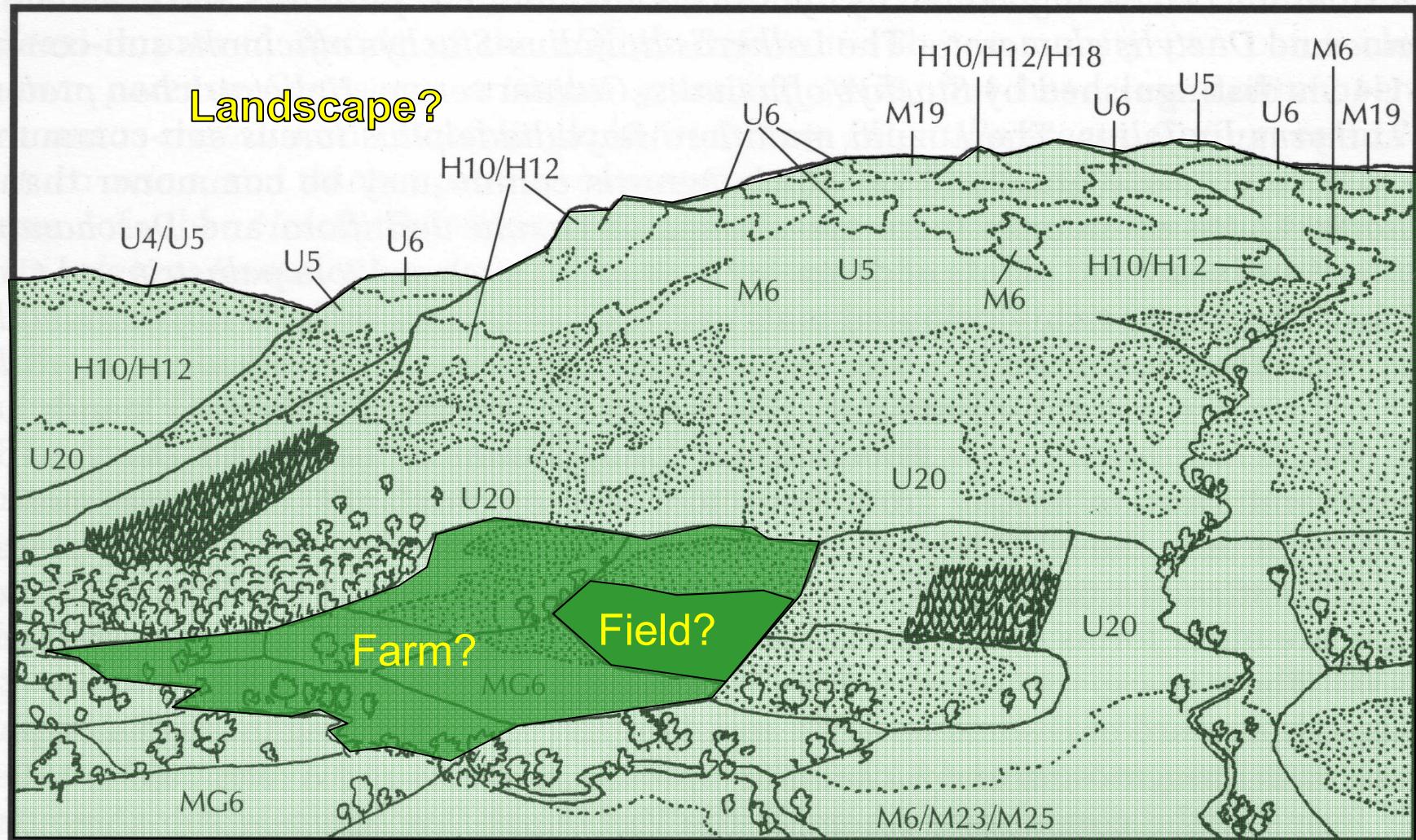


Conservation priorities and HNV farmland





At which scale does support really work?

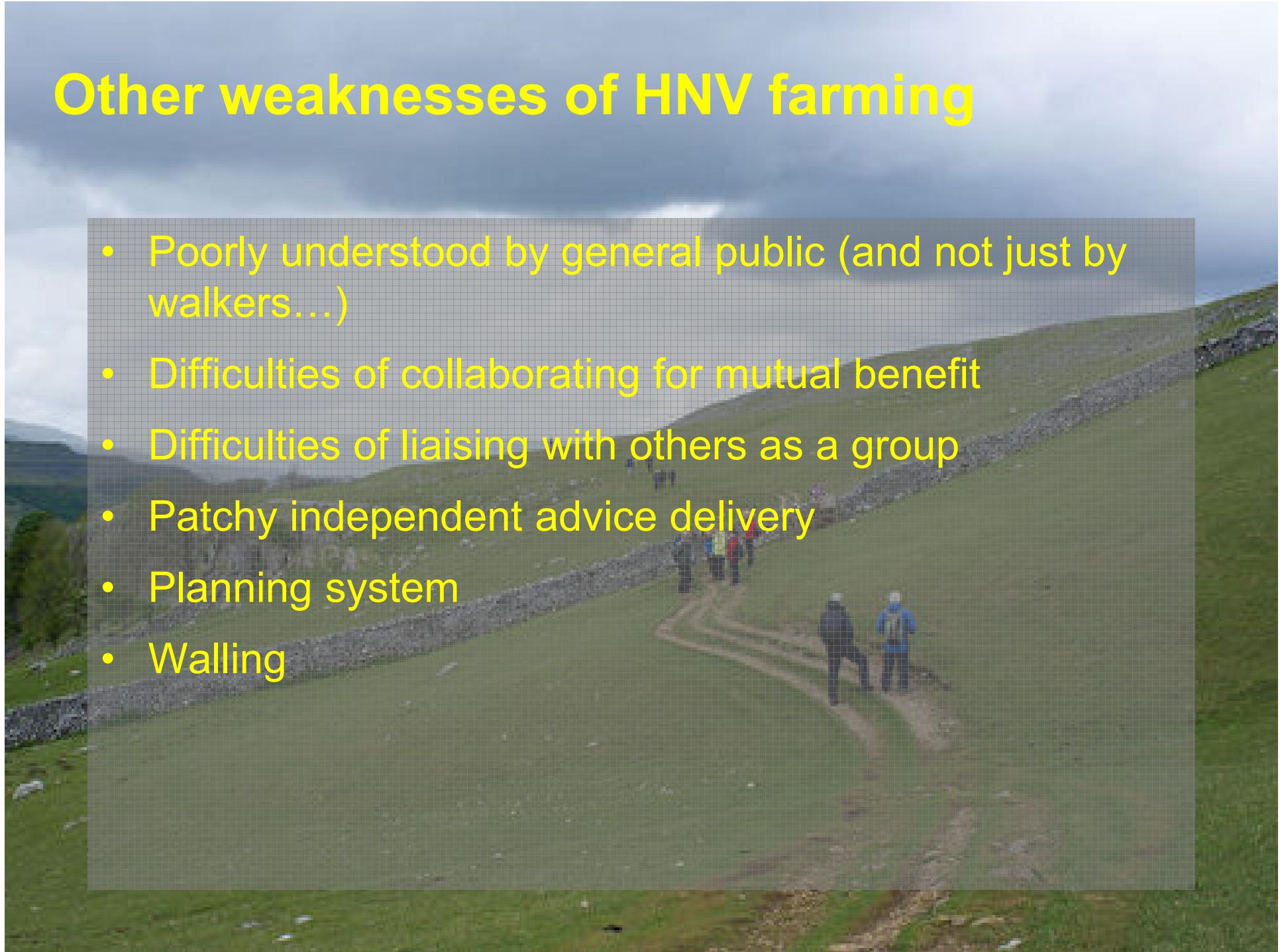


Impediments to new entrants to HNV farming

- 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

Other weaknesses of HNV farming

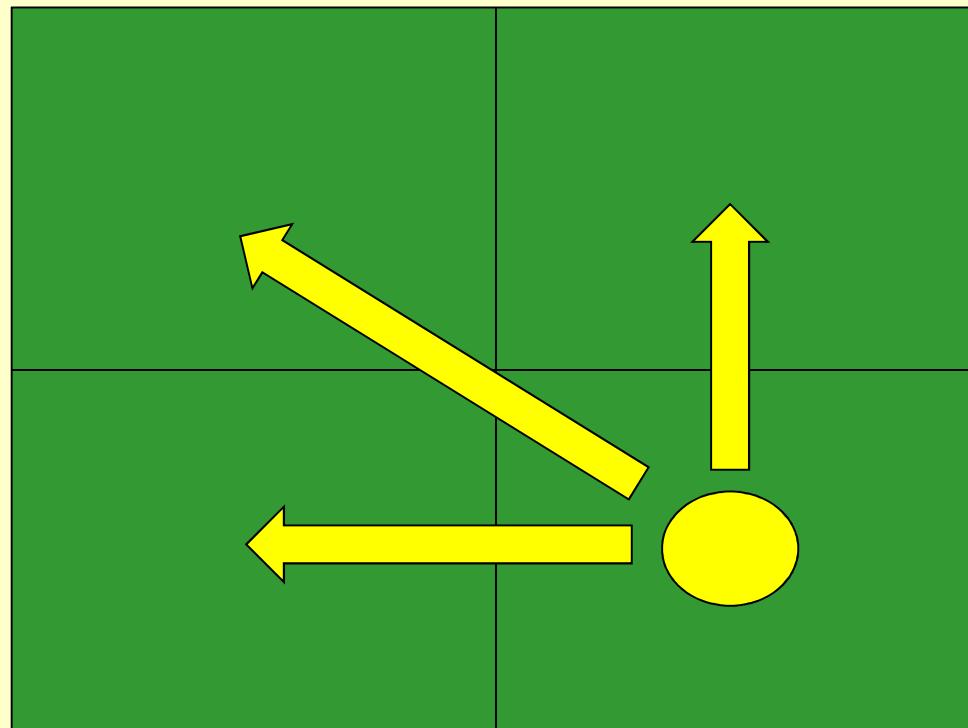
- Poorly understood by general public (and not just by walkers...)
- Difficulties of collaborating for mutual benefit
- Difficulties of liaising with others as a group
- Patchy independent advice delivery
- Planning system
- Walling



Can we for the first time since modern agricultural advances have farming systems which are both *profitable* and *HNV*?

High profitability

Low profitability



Low nature value High nature value





**What do
you think?**