



# High Nature Value Farming in the Northern Upland Chain

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# **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



**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**





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



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



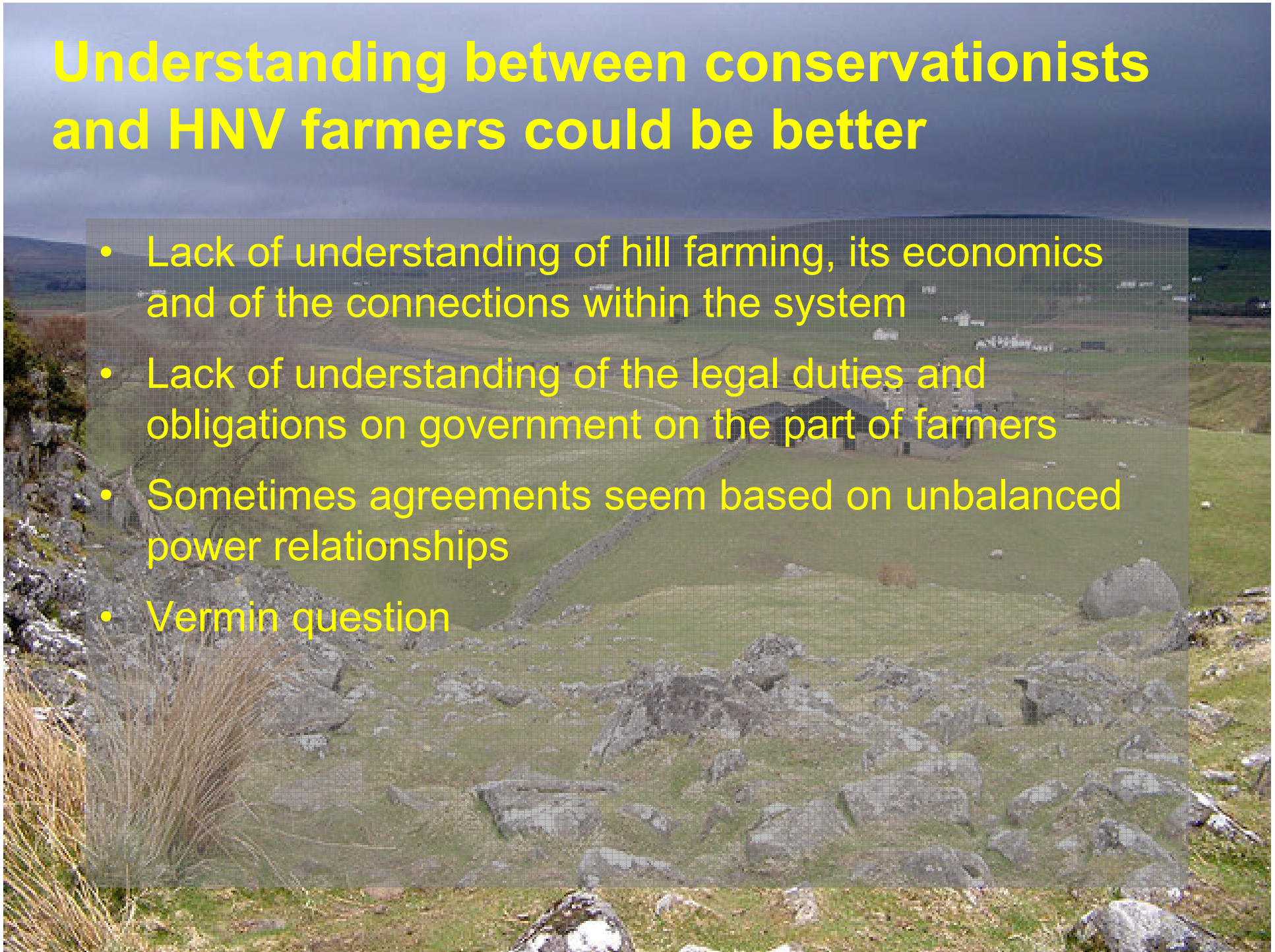
Driven to look for profit  
by other means –  
policy is still driving  
intensification

A landscape photograph showing a wide, green field in the foreground. In the middle ground, there are rolling hills and a small cluster of buildings. To the right, a wooden fence runs along the edge of the field, with several bare trees behind it. The sky is filled with large, dark, grey clouds, with some lighter patches where the sun might be breaking through. The overall scene is rural and somewhat somber due to the weather.

**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

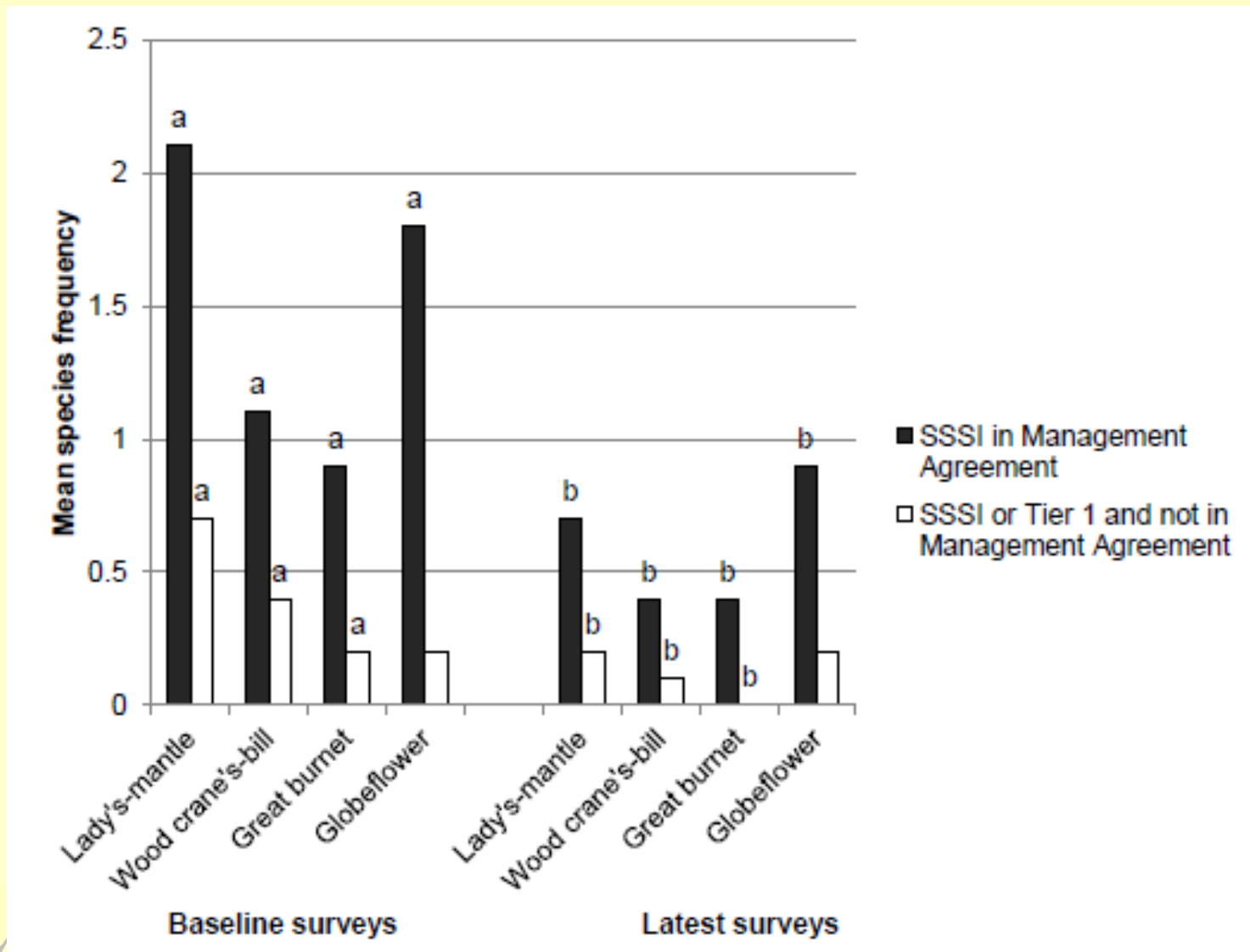
- Lack of understanding of hill farming, its economics and of the connections within the system
- Lack of understanding of the legal duties and obligations on government on the part of farmers
- Sometimes agreements seem based on unbalanced power relationships
- Vermin question





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

# Meadow ecological quality dropping



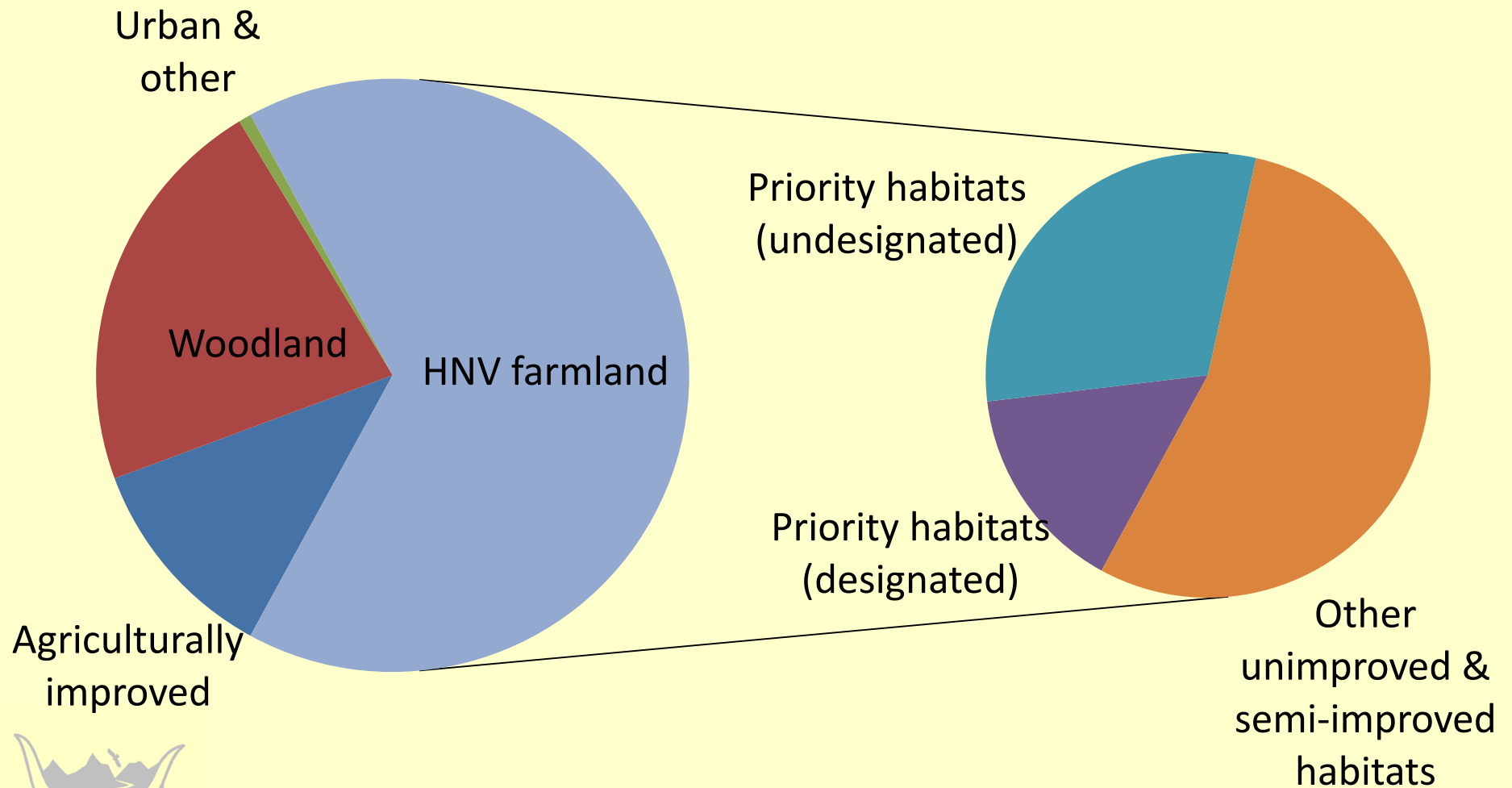
(Starr-Kedde, 2013)



# Meadow agricultural quality dropping

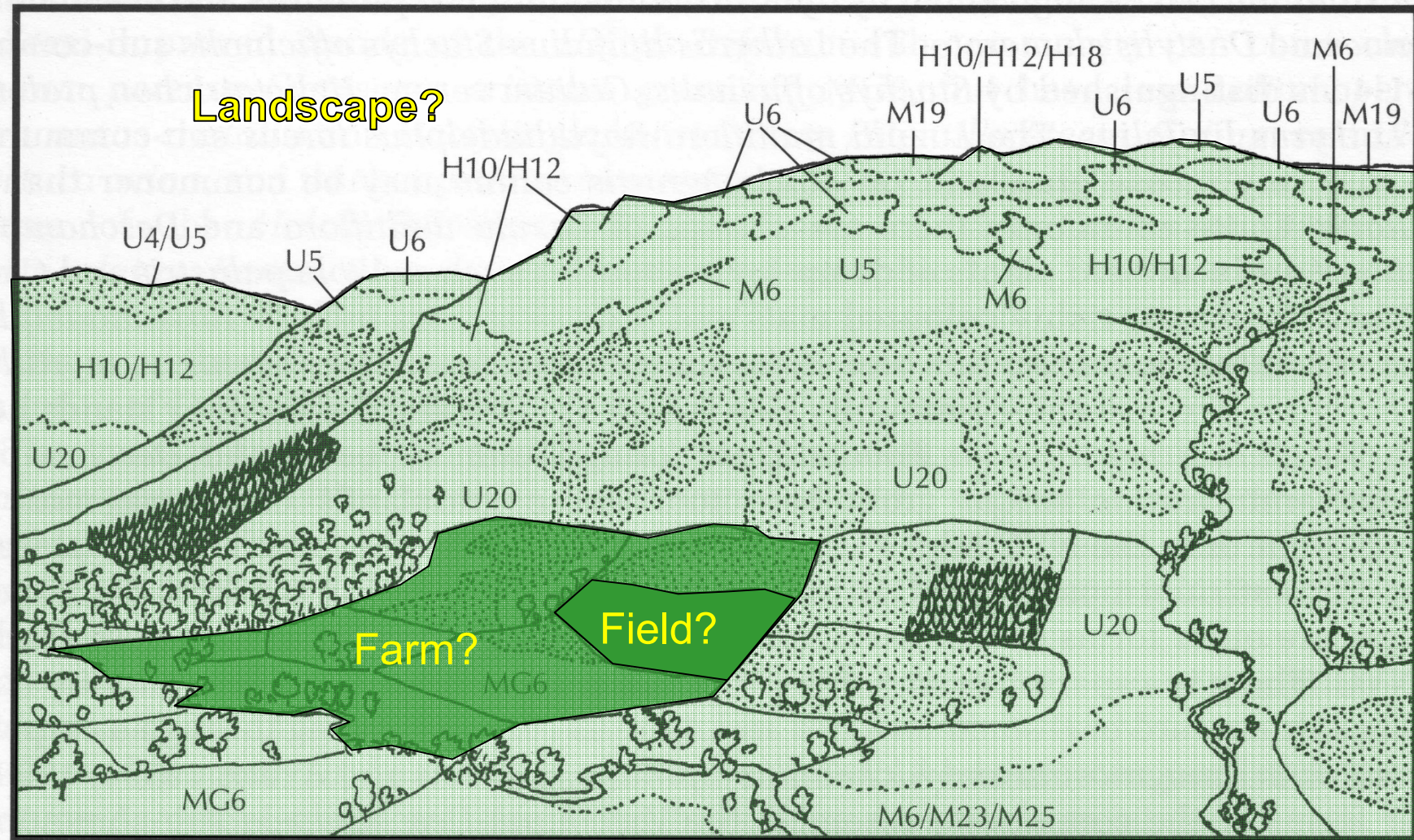


# Conservation priorities and HNV farmland





# At which scale does support really work?



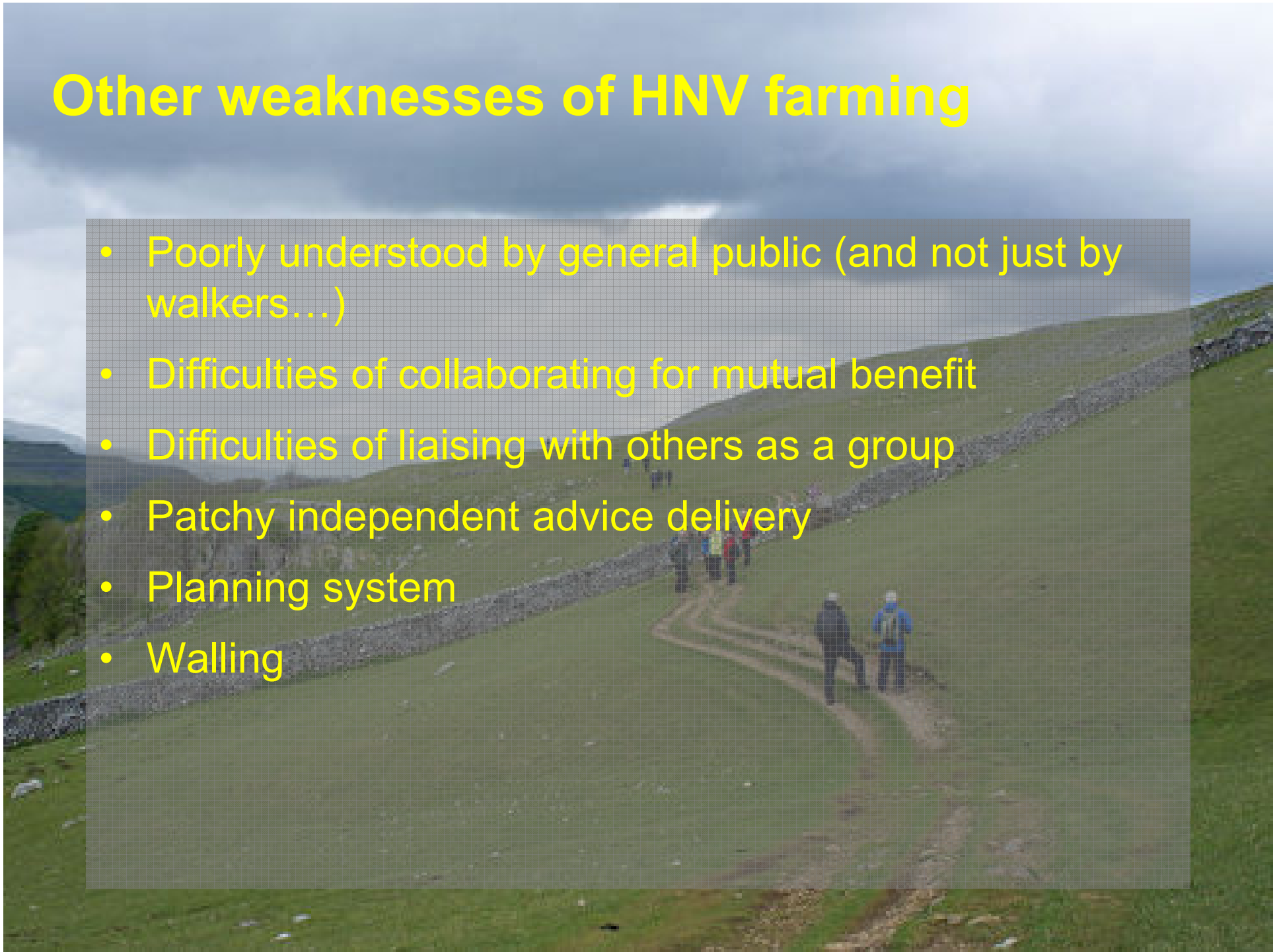
# Impediments to new entrants to HNV farming

- 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

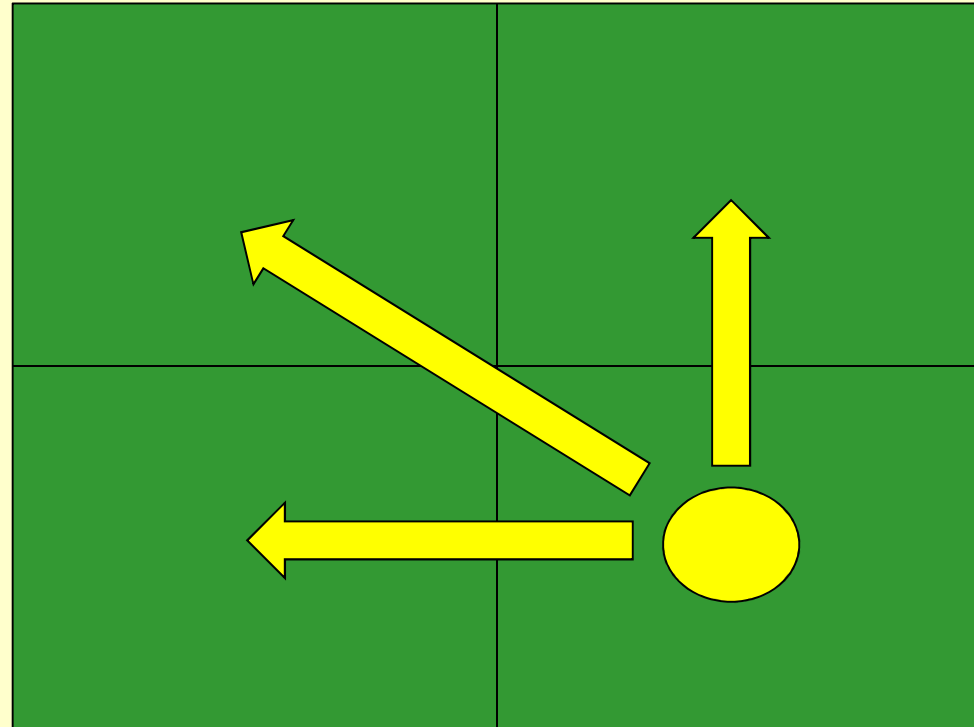
- Poorly understood by general public (and not just by walkers...)
- Difficulties of collaborating for mutual benefit
- Difficulties of liaising with others as a group
- Patchy independent advice delivery
- Planning system
- Walling



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?**