

Extended Abstract

Paper Title	Discussion paper - innovating to deliver multiple goals for upland farming in England
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Abstract prepared for presentation at the 97th Annual Conference of the Agricultural Economics Society, The University of Warwick, United Kingdom

27th – 29th March 2023

Abstract	200 words max
<p>This paper will review and summarise emerging data and analysis of upland farming systems in South West England, alongside current market and policy developments, to consider how far they meet government objectives for these internationally-important protected landscapes. Indicators of economic performance suggest that these systems perform quite well on efficiency and productivity, notwithstanding the natural and policy-related constraints within which they operate: notably from agri-environment schemes and other environmental policies. However, income projections also demonstrate increased vulnerability as transition proceeds, in ways which the policy rhetoric so far appears not to acknowledge. By creating future scenarios for likely landscape systems change, we focus discussion on the pragmatic and rapid mobilisation of strategies for public and private action to address this vulnerability, as well as longer-term frameworks which could sustain environmental land management and social value in these territories.</p>	
Keywords	upland farming, productivity, policy impacts, scenarios, resilience
JEL Code	Q12, Q15, Q18 and Q58 see: www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q)
Introduction	100 – 250 words
<p>This paper will examine and discuss current challenges in Upland farming, particularly in SW England. It is based on ongoing applied research in Exmoor and Dartmoor, where the authors are evaluating the social-ecological and economic situation of farming systems and their likely future adaptive capacity. These high-nature-value landscapes display a diversity of farming systems and agro-ecological conditions. The steady withdrawal of the BPS CAP subsidy represents for them a significant reduction in public funding, on which FBS data and case study evidence demonstrate a generally high dependence. The paper will explore how they, and the contexts within which they work, are likely to respond to this policy transition under scenarios of different combinations of public support and market development, and how those would affect delivery of government goals for these landscapes. The aim is to generate suggestions for the implementation of ELM and other transition support initiatives, as well as for medium-term planning and investment.</p>	

Methodology	100 – 250 words
<p>The research applies mixed methods including 1) agrarian diagnosis using modelled farm archetypes based on farm interviews and landscape analysis, 2) participation in farmer-led and partnership-based experiments testing alternative policy approaches, and 3) policy and market scenario definition and analysis. Key steps are the determination of core economic indicators including farm added value per AWU and examination of principal cost and output values, along with identification of adaptation drivers and responses for each archetype, based upon their business strategy and room for manoeuvre. Combining these with scenarios developed from analysis of policy and market trends enables an assessment of likely change at a landscape scale, and the drivers that will determine this. Causal analyses draw from participatory work on alternative approaches to suggest how these could support adaptation. This combination of evidence and ex-ante assessment enables us to examine the potential for new approaches. Our modelled archetypes give us generalisable findings for the south-west uplands.</p>	
Results	100 – 250 words
<p>We will present and discuss analysis suggesting that upland farms are often efficient and display high labour productivity as well as responding swiftly to changes in markets and policy. We identify specific examples that counter a general rhetoric which claims that BPS payments encouraged little improvement in productivity in UK agriculture. We also show how agri-environment schemes, promoted strongly in these upland areas, have limited productivity and flexibility to a point where today, under-management is a significant environmental concern. The schemes also limit the opportunities for farming system development and adaptation in response to dramatically changing market conditions. As it is a discussion paper, we are still refining these results and their implications for the future. Our strategy is to look for pragmatic short-to-medium term policy and practice changes that are closely suited to, and generated with, local contexts and knowledge. These combine innovative modes of ELM support alongside strategic co-investment in sustainable business and supply chain development, to deliver more resilient social, ecological and economic performance.</p>	
Discussion and Conclusion	100 – 250 words