



Defra - Agricultural Economics Society Conference, January 2021

The Future of Farming Across the UK

Agenda

Morning Session

Chair: Ciaran Devlin, Deputy Director, Future Farming Evidence and Analysis, Defra

Introduction by Chair	10:00-10:05
Perspectives on the Future of Farming in the UK Jonathan Baker (Defra), Rosemary Agnew (DAERA), James Owen (Welsh Government), John Kerr (Scottish Government)	10:05-11:35
Scottish agricultural policy: keeping conditional direct payments in the mix Professor Davy McCracken (SRUC), Dr Andy Moxey (Pareto), Steven Thomson (SRUC)	11:45-12:15
Stability of farm income: The role of agricultural diversity and agri-environment scheme payments Dr Caroline Harkness (University of Reading)	12:25-12:55

Lunch

Afternoon Session

Chair: Professor Deborah Roberts, Agricultural Economics Society

Holistic Top-down Approach to Monitoring and Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Agricultural Sectors in NI Dr Ziping Wu (AFBINI)	13:35 - 14:05
Understanding the motivations of operators of Very Small and Small farms in Wales Professor Berkeley Hill (Imperial College), Dr Dylan Bradley (IHS Markit)	14:15 - 14:45
Panel Discussion Reflections on the day, including future research and data needs, questions and comments from the floor.	14:55-15:45



Paper Abstracts

Scottish agricultural policy: keeping conditional direct payments in the mix

Speakers: Professor Davy McCracken, Steven Thomson, Dr Andrew Moxey

In contrast to England, direct payments are to be retained in Scotland. This partly reflects judgements about the practicalities of implementing different support systems. This presentation considers how attaching more meaningful conditionality requirements to direct payments could contribute to the pursuit of 'public money for public goods.'

Stability of farm income: The role of agricultural diversity and agri-environment scheme payments

Speaker: Dr Caroline Harkness

Instability (or variability) in farm income represents a significant challenge for farm management and the design of public policies. Engaging in agri-environment scheme options are considered to improve ecological functions and landscape resilience; however, their effect on the stability of agriculture is not well known. Using Farm Business Survey data, we identified three key aspects of farm management and policy that improve stability of farm income and food production: i) increasing agricultural diversity, ii) increasing the efficiency of agrochemical use and iii) agri-environmental management. An increase in direct subsidies paid to farmers based on the area farmed is associated with a relatively large decrease in the stability of farm income. We also found differences in effect size of adaptation options between farm types, emphasising the need for flexible agricultural policies.

Holistic Top-down Approach to Monitoring and Mitigating Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Agricultural Sectors in Northern Ireland

Speaker: Dr Ziping Wu

In 2019, agricultural emissions including both Agriculture and the agricultural part of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) in the IPCC report accounted for 36% of total greenhouse gas emissions in Northern Ireland, which is well above the UK national average. More significantly, contrary to the UK-wide trend, agricultural and land-use emissions in Northern Ireland have grown in the past three decades. By using a holistic input-output and CGE modelling approach, we identify the main drivers of emissions in different agricultural sectors. We then provide recommendations for ways to monitor and mitigate agricultural GHG emissions in NI.

Understanding the motivations of operators of Very Small and Small farms in Wales.

Speakers: Dr Dylan Bradley and Professor Berkeley Hill

Very Small and Small farms, which together account for almost nine in ten farms in Wales, are numerically important in terms of people and land and are of interest to policy makers, especially in the context of reorientating support towards the provision of public goods and away from more production-based approaches. Our research sought to provide an understanding of individual motivations and decision-making processes taking place within those farming households, and assess the way individual motivations have influenced actions in the post-Brexit operating environment.



Speaker Biographies

Policy Speakers

James Owen

James joined the Civil Service fast stream in 2001 and has subsequently worked in a wide range of leadership roles at the heart of Government in Wales and the UK. James is currently responsible for leading the programme to ensure Welsh farming is sustainable for future generations in support of the Welsh Government's strategic priorities around responding to the climate emergency and reversing the loss of biodiversity. This includes the design of evidence-based policy, the development of the underpinning legislative framework and all aspects of stakeholder engagement and business change within the agricultural sector.



John Kerr

John grew up on a dairy farm in Ayrshire and trained as an Agri-Food and Environmental Chemist at Glasgow University where he stayed on to study a PHD on phytoremediation. His career has been as a Scientist and Civil servant with a long-standing interest in how we improve the way humans work with and impact on nature. John has recently moved from a science role supporting agriculture to a more policy focused role heading up Agriculture and Crofting policy for the Scottish Government. John has the good fortune to spend time working in and around the UN, in agricultural quality standard work, and this has reinforced his view that the good things in the world are built upon the methodical, steady often unseen, but always determined and focused, efforts of hard-working public servants. Things like the food on our plates, low infant mortality and high levels of protection from disease through vaccination are all built on the work done by people who serve the public interest.





Jonathan Baker

Jonathan Baker is Deputy Director for Programme Policy, Engagement and Strategy in Defra's Future Farming and Countryside Programme. Jonathan's team are responsible for overarching policy across the agricultural transition period, the strategic direction of the reforms to England's agricultural policy, engagement with farmers and stakeholders and developing networks of agricultural policy reform across the UK and internationally. Within Defra, has Jonathan headed up teams leading on numerous parts of the Agriculture Act (2020) and during the initial response to the pandemic was joint head of Access to Labour and Seasonal Agricultural Workers. Prior to working in Defra, Jonathan was a Senior Land Use Advisor at the Country Land and Business Association (CLA) where he led on environmental and land use policy. Jonathan has an analytical background having worked in consultancy for several years including a period as a Research Fellow within Defra where he focussed on policy evaluation. Jonathan is also a Nuffield Farming Scholar having completed his studies looking into the agricultural policies of developed countries outside the EU.



Dr Rosemary Agnew

Dr Rosemary Agnew is the Director of Transition Policy within DAERA. She leads on the development of future agricultural policy in Northern Ireland. Her Division is one of seven within the Food and Farming Group. Rosemary works closely with agri food stakeholders in Northern Ireland on the co-design of future farm policy. She holds a PhD in Animal Science and has held a number of roles within the DAERA, from technical/advisory, scientific, policy development and laterally in the Department's preparations for EU Exit. In 2004 she was made a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Agriculture in Northern Ireland.





Academic Speakers

Professor Davy McCracken

Davy McCracken joined SRUC 26 years ago and has been Head of SRUC's Hill & Mountain Research Centre, at Kirkton & Auchtertyre farms near Crianlarich, for eight years and Head of SRUC's wider Integrated Land Management Department for three years.. Davy studies farming and wildlife interactions and has been working on agricultural and agri-environmental policy at a national and international level for 30 years. He was one of the founders of the High Nature Value farming concept and much of his research over the years has been into the challenges and opportunities facing High Nature Value farming systems across Europe



Dr Andy Moxey

Andrew Moxey is an agricultural economist with over 30 years' experience of applied policy analysis gained as an academic, senior civil servant and now independent consultant. Consultancy clients seeking advice on future agricultural policy under the twin climate and biodiversity emergencies include Defra, the European Commission and the Welsh Government, as well as the Scottish Government. For the latter, Andrew has - together with colleagues at SRUC and elsewhere - been heavily involved in discussions with officials and stakeholders on policy options, competing ambitions and likely constraints.



Steven Thomson

Steven Thomson has nearly 30 years' experience in applied agricultural policy analysis and rural development research. He has comprehensive knowledge of contemporary agriculture systems and is considered an expert on aspects relating to agricultural policy. He has contributed significantly over recent years to evidence and policy insights for officials and stakeholders as they look to evolve Scottish agricultural support. Steven currently is joint coordinator of the Rural Industries work package of Theme 2: Productive and Sustainable Land Management and Rural Economies of the Scottish Government's 2016-2021 Strategic Research Programme and also acts as the SEFARI Gateway knowledge exchange lead for Business and Communities where he is responsible for liaising with industry stakeholders and disseminating key research findings relating to farm businesses and communities.





Dr Caroline Harkness

Caroline Harkness recently completed a PhD at the School of Agriculture, Policy and Development at the University of Reading. Caroline's PhD was joint funded by the University of Reading and Rothamsted Research and focused on identifying farming practices and subsidies that led to more stable food production and farm income, over a wide range of conditions, including a variable climate. Caroline is interested in the impacts of climate change on the resilience of agriculture, and how environmentally friendly farming can enhance ecosystem functions to improve sustainability at the farm level. In addition, Caroline is interested in the development of agricultural policy; in particular, in providing adaptation options and reducing climate risks to the natural environment and agricultural systems. Prior to her PhD Caroline completed a Masters at the University of Reading in Agricultural Economics. Caroline is now working as a Natural Scientist at Defra.



Dr Ziping Wu

Dr Ziping Wu is a Principal Agricultural Economist in Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) in Northern Ireland. He was a lecturer on agricultural and rural development policy at Queen's University of Belfast before AFBI started in 2006. He is specialised in the evaluation of agri-food and rural development policy in the EU and China by using econometrics, partial equilibrium models (FAPRI-NI and AGMEMOD) and general equilibrium models (NI input-output tables, IFPRI and NI-GTAP models). He has led over 20 research projects sponsored by governments and funding bodies in the EU, UK, China, Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland, covering a range of areas such as competitiveness of international trade, land market and land consolidation, CAP reforms and future agricultural policy, Brexit / NI Protocol, energy use and climate change, food safety and AMR etc. He is the member of advisory boards for 3 SCI journals (Food Policy, China Agricultural Economic Review and Animal Nutrition), evaluator for H2020 and UKRI projects, external examiner for 7 PhD thesis, external Expert on policy, trade and development of Sustainable Food Systems, Ireland and consultant to OECD on AMR issues.





Dr Dylan Bradley

Dr Dylan Bradley is a Director in Agribusiness Consulting within the Agribusiness Intelligence division of IHS Markit, the international business to which Agra CEAS Consulting belongs. Agra CEAS started as a spin-off of Wye College, University of London, with a focus on UK agriculture within the EU and its Common Agricultural Policy. Dylan has worked with Berkeley Hill extensively since 2003, including for the Welsh Government in a succession of projects that have included the evaluation of rural development programmes (*ex ante*, mid-term, and *ex post*), the social contributions of agriculture, the potential use of insurance to cope with weather disasters, and (for Mentor a Busnes) the performance of *Farming Connect*, the publicly-funded advisory and knowledge transfer system for Welsh farmers. Dylan and Berkeley have also provided quantified studies for the AHDB on the possible implications of Brexit for farm incomes, including for farmers in Wales.



Professor Berkeley Hill

Professor Berkeley Hill is Emeritus Professor of Policy Analysis at Imperial College London, attached to the Centre for Environmental Policy. He has researched and written on agricultural economics, farm income statistics, and policy since 1970. A former President of the AES, Berkeley has been an advisor to many international organisations and to UK national government departments. Berkeley has worked with Dylan Bradley extensively since 2003, including for the Welsh Government in a succession of projects that have included the evaluation of rural development programmes (*ex ante*, mid-term, and *ex post*), the social contributions of agriculture, the potential use of insurance to cope with weather disasters, and (for Mentor a Busnes) the performance of *Farming Connect*, the publicly-funded advisory and knowledge transfer system for Welsh farmers. Dylan and Berkeley have also provided quantified studies for the AHDB on the possible implications of Brexit for farm incomes, including for farmers in Wales.

