

LAND MANAGERS FORUM

Tuesday 13th December 2022 10:00 – 12:30
Aldern House, Bakewell DE45 1AE

FINDINGS FROM THE WORKSHOP

Several challenges to nature recovery and scheme uptake were identified by participants in the Environmental Land Management Test conducted by the Peak District National Park Authority between 2019 and 2021.

Those present were split into five groups, each with two challenges to consider in more detail, and suggest any potential solutions.

Members were then asked to rank their top two challenges for each topic. More detail is provided in the table below.

TENANCIES (length, type, details, grazing, financial arrangements between landlord and tenant(s), relationships between landlord and tenant(s))	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Tenancy length vs agreement length (1)	Flexibility in tenancies and agreements. Baroness Rock review, may help if implemented.
Tenancies need flexibility. Landlord objectives and tenant objectives might conflict and risk breaches of covenant, e.g. arable reversion assumed that could plough it back up, land use permanently changed)	
How landlord and tenant can both benefit (2)	Joint ventures. Good scheme design. Clear guidance in layman's English.
Landlord objectives (avoid breach of covenant)	Clear guidance in layman's English.
Land being taken back 'in hand'	Schemes designed with tenants in mind.
Tax planning	Good advice. Joined up thinking in government departments.
Infrastructure grants – who pays the balance	Greater grant rates. Flexibility within tenancy agreements.
Tenancy reform	Government to implement

NATURE AND/OR FOOD PRODUCTION (perceptions, perceived conflict, and/or, pressure for trees)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Payment rules on income foregone and not true cost of delivery, with outdated figures Profitability (1)	Acknowledge impact of losing BPS – need payment to cover cost of delivery and incentive. Stock payments – more clarity required. Must reward existing good benefits.
Income foregone is not the true cost of delivery. BPS has been underpinning past AES. Needs to be plus incentive for hassle factor and potential penalties. Stacking of payments a potential but need clarity. Must reward good existing habitats not just change.	
Assumption trees are best for carbon sequestration (2)	Evidence. Research. Right tree, right place, right time.
Assumption that trees are better for carbon sequestration than good grassland management. Productive agriculture can co-exist with environmental delivery. Learn from 30 years of AES - where it's worked and where it hasn't, not everything has been bad, promote the good also.	
Over-simplistic solutions	Other options so productive agriculture can co-exist with environmental delivery.
Demonisation of ruminants	Fact checking. Education.
Clear messages for farmers/ land managers on what good looks like and why	More information.

IT & TECHNOLOGY (access, connectivity, broadband, cost, generation, time, apps)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Rural communities access to broadband and the cost of technology (1)	Getting better!
Satellite compared to fibre. Mobile phone coverage more important to help rural businesses. Need for training and shared farmer to farmer knowledge.	
Mixed messaging – 4G vs 5G (2)	Is there a need?
Mixed messaging by companies selling broadband and mobiles, don't need 5G, just 4G if works well. 5G for some places and 4G for others that don't need it?	
Mobile phone coverage – lots of apps available	Training/ shared knowledge farmer to farmer.
Access to technology increasingly required for basic business functioning	Use of agents, but has a cost. Use of farmer groups to increase use/ shared learning.

RECOGNITION & REWARD (public perceptions, public support, public understanding, language, past and existing delivery, financial, supporting local business, responsible visiting)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Mixed messages – disconnect between public and farming (1)	Education – school visits, farm visits, national curriculum. Targeting at a young age.
How media is portraying farming vs what is happening on the ground, e.g. Countryfile. Need education, farm visits, moorland visits, national curriculum.	
Lack of clarity on what is responsible visiting. Impact of visitors on honeypot areas vs agricultural impact in wider landscape. (2)	Education (as above).
Sustainable food production – issues with what is ‘sustainable’	Independent advice.
Profitable agriculture limited to standard of living – Succession - Loss of rural agriculture and impact on landscape (positive or negative)	
Rules don’t apply in relation to visitors using landscape	

ADVICE (one to one, one to many, online, in person, workshops, webinars, farm visits, peer to peer, guidance, specialist, business, nature, local, trust, facilitation)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Local, ongoing. Consistency and quality of advice (1)	Increase focus on regional/ local rather than national advice, including radical reform of RPA
Consistent quality advice on ongoing and local basis, increase in focus on regional and local advice. No RPA, radical reform of national advice system, both for consistency and quality and flexibility.	
Inflexibility (2)	Importance of having a consistent advisor. Designated care. Abolish the RPA.
Who to go to for advice	
Constant support	Designated case officer to provide consistency.
One point of contact	
Local knowledge	
Future uncertainty	

DATA & ACCESS TO INFORMATION (where, what, who, personal, data protection, national/ local, farmer and land managers knowledge, maps)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Rural payments data, e.g. eligibility, problems with accuracy (1)	Scheme guidance easy to find (all of it) and easy to understand.
Understanding magic maps and other online information sources Knowing what data sources are available (2)	Training and awareness about it and extent. Training sessions with Peak Farmers Group and in their newsletter. 'Idiots guide' Adviser support. Attending markets. Other means of passing on relevant information.
Training, e.g. for MAGIC, lack of awareness for e.g. MAGIC Other means of passing on relevant information (not all information), newsletters, events.	
Knowing who to contact for what	See advice above.
Data protection – what information is out there about individuals/ holdings?	

MONEY (finance, investment, reward, payment rate, ELM, private finance, payment by results, income foregone)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Funding shortfalls (1)	Alternative funding.
Making a living – environmental improvement doesn't always generate viable income (2)	Income foregone payments must adequately replace farming income.
Income foregone is a dangerous concept, limits value you place on good quality habitats, require more management, need income foregone plus.	
Uncertainty over BPS payments	BPS alternative.
Feeding the population	Less food wastage.
Public money for public goods	Must be defined. Results payments.
Longevity of schemes	Long-term commitment.

UNCERTAINTY (government direction, lack of clarity and information, mixed messages, multiple organisations, planning for the future)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Funds not linked to real world costs Balance of food production and other public goods (1)	Better relations and understanding from policy makers. Cash flow timescales which are realistic.
Payments not linked to real world costs, realistic cash flow scales. Balance of food production and public goods. Better relationships and understanding with policy makers.	
Confidence in future support system – vacuum of clear policy Political instability around farm policy (2)	Very good at delivery but need a clear ask for what is required. Urgent need for policy/ funding requirement.
Vacuum of clear policy due to political instability. Farming community good at delivering but need a clear ask to deliver.	
Longevity/ certainty/ long-term commitments vs flexibility	Schemes linked to local solutions.
Generic approach is a challenge to bespoke needs of individual holdings	Confidence to share experience and share business approach.
Agreement on metrics and sound data	Better use of academic community to give accurate data. Then disseminate amongst farming community. Scientific community understanding what the questions are.

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT (financial, permanent land use change, trees, rewetting, contracts, business planning, conservation covenants, tax)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Less intensive requires a longer term approach than present short term policy (1)	
Playoff between longevity and certainty, one is flexibility (having schemes linked to local solutions). Understanding that less intensive requires a long term approach which contrasts with short term policy	

FLEXIBILITY (weather, timing, outcomes, circumstance (local, personal, protected landscapes), contracts, growing ambition)	
Challenges:	Solutions:
Weather (1)	Soil health, e.g. drainage, no poaching, more diverse swards.
Climate change and effects on weather: cropping choice and farming methods need to change. Non-inversion cultivation but leads to problems with weed control, and glyphosate is a dilemma, but 60 weeds roundup resistant.	
Inflation, changes in payment schemes and market changes (2)	Payment schemes which react.
Criteria which can't be controlled, e.g. habitat and wildlife improvement	Realistic and measurable schemes.
Climate change	Cropping choice. Farming methods. Stock management.