

Uplands Alliance

A network for England's Uplands

Creating a Brighter Future Project

**Meeting with you
Hill Farmers from the South Pennines
held in
Slaithwaite Cricket Club Pavilion
on 12th July 2019**

Meeting Notes

1 Welcome & Introduction

- 1.1 An attendance list is at the end of these notes.
- 1.2 This was a meeting for the hill farmers but everyone was invited to engage in the discussion about the issues.

2 The Creating a Brighter Future Project

- 2.1 The objectives and outcomes of the first CABF meeting, held in London on 18th March 2019, were summarised:
 - 2.1.1 To enable hill farmers to contribute to the development of Defra's future farming policy and assess the likely impacts of emerging policy on upland farming, including consideration of the livestock production trade and the delivery of public benefits.
 - 2.1.2 To identify how hill farmers can best contribute to the development of ELMS.
 - 2.1.3 To assist the UA in reaching out to support hill farmers through this period of transition.
- 2.2 It was noted that the discussion had focussed on eight issues:
 - 2.2.1 Succession
 - 2.2.2 Financial pressures
 - 2.2.3 Landlord – Tenant
 - 2.2.4 Trends in the Tenanted Farm Sector
 - 2.2.5 BPS
 - 2.2.6 Other Schemes
 - 2.2.7 The Agricultural Bill
 - 2.2.8 Environmental Land Management Scheme
- 2.3 During the meeting, the idea had been developed to invite the hill farmers, who attended the meeting, to hold follow-up meetings in their local area. This was one of nine meetings that are being held throughout the English uplands in July.
- 2.4 Short notes will be taken from each meeting and circulated to those who attended.

2.5 All the notes will be collated into one report, which will be passed to Defra. Copies of this report will be circulated to everyone who attended the meeting and it will be made available through the Uplands Alliance network.

3 Hill Farmer Views - best hopes, worst fears,

Best Hope	Worst Fear
An effective farm assurance will be introduced that everyone will be required to enter.	Farmland will turn back into wasteland.
Farms will become more efficient so that they are able to produce a profit without subsidy.	The value of farm outputs are undercut by the import of cheap food which has been produced with questionable standards.
Farmers will feel wanted. They will be seen as part of the solution, not the problem.	It will continue to be possible to control farmers with the carrot of payments.
Farmers will be respected members of society.	Public relations will not improve and farmers will continue to be portrayed as the villains.
The new scheme will be simple and accessible.	Consumers will not be interested in where their food has come from and will buy purely on price.
Under the new scheme, and with full support from Defra, public confidence in farming will be restored.	The numbers of farmers will continue to decline.
It will still be possible to manage upland areas to generate income and keep people on the land.	There will be too much focus on planting trees on moorland for carbon storage purposes.
Children of current farmers will be able to obtain a good living from farming.	Hill farms will become unviable and go out of business.
Outputs from farming will be valued and that appropriate payments will be made for these outputs.	The new scheme – fear of the unknown – fear of over-complication.
There will be enough incentives in farming to attract the next generation.	The large firms will dominate the milk market and drive out the smaller producers.
An integrated approach is adopted that values the knowledge and skills of everyone e.g. gamekeepers.	Changes result in taking the land out of production and out of management.
There will be a renaissance of farming.	Brexit and its impact on livestock farming.
A fully functioning and efficient livestock sector.	

4 Environmental Land Management

4.1 John Powell is a member of the Tests & Trials Team working on the development of Environmental Land Management (ELM) at Defra; he provided an update about the development of the scheme.

- 4.2 As the ELM scheme is still under development, some of the details were provided in confidence and are not included in these notes.
- 4.3 The fundamental principle of ELM is to provide public money for public goods, and Defra is seeking to co-design it with the farming community.
- 4.4 The objectives for ELM include:
- 4.4.1 Transforming the role that agriculture and other land management activities play in delivering environmental goods.
 - 4.4.2 Generating public goods from public money and being a major component of the delivery of the 25yr Environment Plan.
 - Food production is not a public good, as it is rewarded by the market.
- 4.5 Under current plans, direct payments will be phased out and end in 2027. ELM will offer support with productivity, research & development, skills development, data collection and analysis and increasing resilience. A range of funding methods are being considered, such as: reverse auctions, use of net gain from development, payment by results, nature recovery networks and support from the private sector.
- 4.6 It is proposed that ELM will pay for the provision of six public goods:
- 4.6.1 Clean and plentiful water
 - 4.6.2 Clean air
 - 4.6.3 Thriving plants and wildlife
 - 4.6.4 Reduction in and protection from environmental hazards
 - 4.6.5 Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change
 - 4.6.6 Beauty, heritage and engagement with the environment
- 4.7 To test the proposals for the new scheme, a series of pilots (Tests & Trials) will take place 2021-2024, with a view to the new arrangements starting to be implemented from 2024. The aim will be for payments to be linked to achieving agreed results (payments by results).
- 4.8 The tests and trials will feed into a National Pilot that will have the objectives of:
- 4.8.1 Testing the scheme before it is launched to make sure it works,
 - 4.8.2 Increasing confidence that the scheme will work,
 - 4.8.3 Proving that it is able to work in different locations,
 - 4.8.4 Increasing collaboration to allow work to take place at a greater scale, and
 - 4.8.5 Providing more scope for innovation.
- 4.9 Direct production subsidies will no longer be paid but productivity support, in the form of grants or loans, may be available in the future.
- 4.10 Eligibility criteria are being reviewed. Funding may be available to anyone who can demonstrate the delivery of public goods.

5 Key issues for the future of Hill Farming in the South Pennines

- 5.1 Branding of local produce should be considered as a way to add value to the output from farms.

- 5.2 Compliance with the requirements of a farm assurance scheme should be a prerequisite for the receipt of public funding. There is some disillusionment with the Red Tractor assurance scheme, which needs to be improved.
- 5.3 Rewilding is not viewed as a valid option. Advocates pressing for this form of management to be adopted have no vision of what the land might look like.
- 5.4 Press coverage of farming is viewed as being negative. The BBC came in for particular criticism.
 - 5.4.1 Farming needs a better voice to explain the benefits, including environmental benefits, that hill farming provides.
 - 5.4.2 The benefits of farming should be promoted without responding to the vocal minority.
 - 5.4.3 In a recent AHDB survey, farmers were the most trusted people.
- 5.5 Farmers are feeling threatened by all the negative press output relating to such issues as the methane output from cattle and receiving funding for doing nothing. Defra should provide a strong sense of direction and be more openly supportive of farmers and farming.
- 5.6 Mixed experiences of encounters with members of the public were reported. On one farm, which included moorland, the relationship was strained and no-one wanted to speak to the farmer. On a dairy farm, the opposite was true with people stopping to ask questions about the stock and the farm.
 - 5.6.1 On the moorland farm it was suggested that the visitors were predominantly bird watchers who were suspicious of any form of management.
- 5.7 One farmer had been questioned by walkers whether 2-day old lambs were about to be slaughtered. This demonstrates the lack of understanding about farming practices and the concerns that some people have about the association between animals and meat.
- 5.8 It was reported that schools were promoting an anti-farming view by organising meat-free weeks.
- 5.9 Farm shops are thought to be at a saturation level, and it was noted that they rely on people travelling by car. On-farm bottling and direct sales of milk is working well in the area.
- 5.10 There should be a single scheme but it must be flexible enough to cope with the wide diversity of farms.
- 5.11 Payments should be linked to the quality of the environmental features delivered through the scheme.
- 5.12 The New Zealand model of vertical integration of the supply chain should be considered as a way to monitor the share of income that everyone in the supply chain receives.

- 5.13 It is not just farming that delivers environmental benefit on hill farms / moorland – a joined up approach is required to maximise the benefits.
- 5.13.1 For example, the role of gamekeepers in carrying out predator control is essential, if viable populations of ground nesting birds are to be achieved.
- 5.14 The development of individual Land Management Plans will allow some flexibility to be incorporated. Some discussion took place about the sort of advice that might be required about the completion of plans.
- 5.14.1 A range of people should be available so that a farmer can choose the one that offers the best support.
- 5.14.2 Having a local advisor could allow the plan to be developed to provide more benefits during its life
- 5.14.3 A local advisor might be able to sort out any problems with the plan, and its delivery, before getting to a point when the only option is to impose penalties.
- 5.15 The level of funding available for the different elements of ELM has not been decided. It has been agreed that the BPS budget will be recycled into ELM and the overall level of funding will remain the same during the life of the current parliament.
- 5.16 There was concern about large charities buying up land that would not be paying tax. Would this introduce a two-tier market place that would place commercial farmers at a disadvantage?
- 5.17 Support for capital works would be required at market rates. For example, if payments were made for dry stone wall repair, it must cover the costs of this, otherwise it would not get done.
- 5.18 Funding from the private sector might be available and this could be a useful way to fund the achievement of larger benefits from farmers collaborating with each other.
- 5.18.1 Funding proposals to encourage carbon capture and storage was given as an example.

6 Actions

- 6.1 These notes will be circulated to all who attended, or expressed interest in, the meeting.
- 6.2 The notes from all the nine CABF meetings will be combined into one document and submitted to Defra. This document will also be made available to everyone who has attended the meetings.

7 Recommendations & Conclusions

- 7.1 Defra should be asked to respond to the report from the CABF project and this feedback should be circulated to the farmers.
- 7.2 The farmers should consider further meetings and discussions to include others who were not present at this meeting. If a further meeting(s) takes place, additional input from Defra should be requested.

7.3 Based on the length of time that the support schemes under the CAP took to develop, the new arrangements that are put in place as we leave the EU will be influencing agriculture for many years. Therefore, this is a once in a generation opportunity to contribute to setting up arrangements that work; hill farmers are encouraged to keep up to date with developments and discuss the options and opportunities with other farmers.

8 Thanks

8.1 Tim Garside was thanked for organising and hosting the meeting.

8.2 Special thanks were given to John Powell for the ELM presentation and his input to the discussion during the meeting. The farmers valued the opportunity to talk directly to someone from Defra about these important issues.

8.3 Will Jackson from AHDB was thanked for attending and for his specialist input from the perspective of the beef and lamb markets.

8.4 Delegates were thanked for their attendance. The input from the younger farmers was appreciated in particular.

Attendance List

Name	Surname
Farmers	
Sam	Shaw
Neil	Briggs
James	Howard
Simon	Bamforth
Jeremy	Housley
Kerry	Dyson
Ralph	Dyson
Tony	Garside

Harry	Garside
Tim	Garside
Other Attendees	
John	Powell
Will	Jackson
Simon	Thorp
Apologies	
James	Crowther
Andrew	Turner
Bo	Scholefield