

Dartmoor Learning Area, UK

Note of Regional Meeting, 15th February 2019

A meeting was held on Friday 15th February to update progress and to explore what happens next to promoting High Nature Value farming on Dartmoor, focusing on the development of one of the innovations – Dartmoor Farming Futures in the context of the development of the proposed post-Brexit centrepiece of agricultural support, the Environmental Land Management System ELMS.

The meeting was held at the Dartmoor National Park Authority's offices at Parke, Bovey Tracy, and within the Dartmoor National Park. The event was generously hosted by the Dartmoor National Park Authority (DNPA).



A Defra spokesperson explaining the Government's ambition for a reward system suitable for farmers and other land managers.



This project has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovations programme under Grant Agreement No. 696391

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Context

It is anticipated that the UK will leave the EU in March 2019. In preparation of this event the UK's government has announced a reward and support system for the UK's farmers, which it is intended will eventually replace both pillar 1 and 2 of the CAP. The Government's stated ambition is for the proposed Environment Land Management System ELMS to reward farmers for their delivery of land management that delivers public benefits.

To progress this system the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Defra, which has overall responsibility for environmental and agricultural matters, is in the process of establishing a Test and Trials approach to steer the development of ELMS.

Dartmoor Farming Futures (DFF), one of the Dartmoor's Learning Area's (LA) innovations selected for particular attention within the HNV-Link project, has recently been selected as one of the Test and Trials. In consultation with local stakeholders, it was decided that the Regional Meeting for Dartmoor would be used to foster greater understanding of the ELMS development process overall and of the tests and trials element in particular, and to provide an opportunity to influence government thinking and promote the important role of innovation in securing a future for HNV farmland, and particularly common land, on Dartmoor.

The Regional Meeting

The event was structured to provide an update on current Government thinking and to provide examples of potential solutions whilst enabling farmers to debate the practical application of various proposals and ideas, including their suitability for common land. The two primary outcomes of the workshop were a better informed test and trials team within Defra and a better informed group of key stakeholders on Dartmoor, with the hope that this would lead to a more effective and better focussed ELMS test and trial in the LA.

The meeting was divided into two parts; the morning featuring a series of presentations and the afternoon session being primarily a workshop designed to encourage farmer participation.

The programme is set out in Annex 1

The presentations are available at <http://www.efncp.org/events/seminars-others/parkeboveytracey2019/>



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The workshop generated a lively discussion on the suitability and practicality of some of the proposals.

To set the scene Gwyn Jones (EFNCP) explained the role of innovation in HNV farming and the achievements of HNV-LINK project over the past three years and reminded the meeting that innovation within farm support payments was just one element of the much larger infrastructure needed to provide the holistic underpinning which HNV farming systems require. Other important aspects include the place of HNV farming in lifelong learning, the role of advisors and animators and the way Government regulates and supports more intensive farming.

Miriam Jones-Walters from Defra's Test and Trial team updated the meeting on the Government's ideas and proposals and of the timetable for the next few months.

Brett Day from the University of Exeter's challenging presentation explained how public benefits might be valued, and outlined some possible approaches to designing and targeting rewards in a system tailored to the economics and sociology of the particular problem, illustrated by a very interesting initiative to reduce the use of metaldehyde slug pellets.

James Moran (Galway & Mayo IT and the Burren LA team in HNV-Link) provided an insight into the development of potential rewarding processes currently under development in Ireland, emphasising the need for making things as simple as possible, especially from the farmer's perspective.

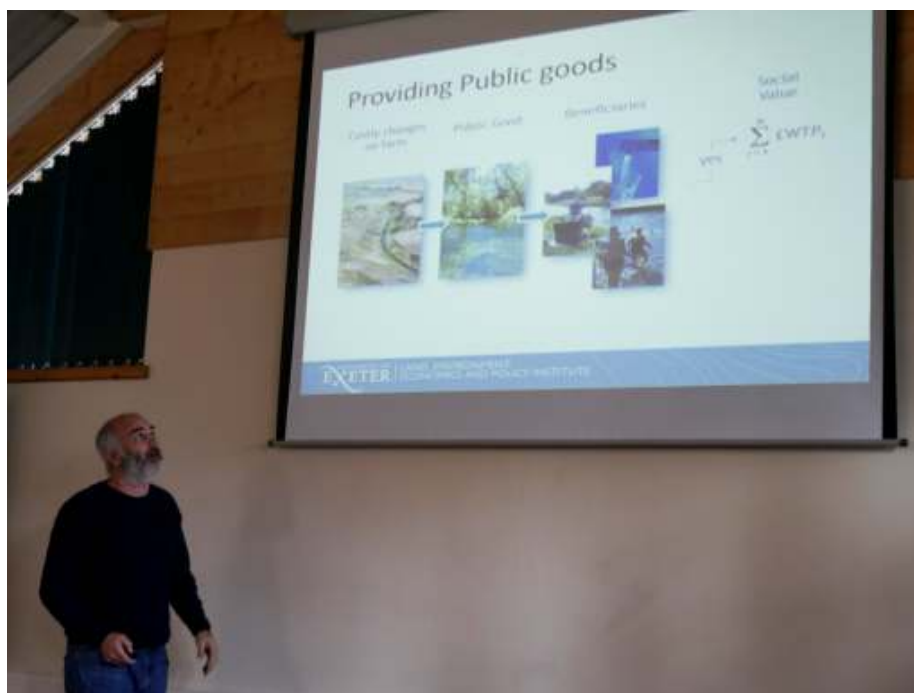


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Janet Dwyer (CCRI) reminded the audience of the lessons to be learnt from previous land management schemes, especially agri-environment schemes, setting out some of the issues which had arisen, time and again in some cases, over the last 30 years and more.

Lastly Tracy May provided a farmer's perspective on how payments for providing public benefits might be developed based on her learning after visiting the Burren LA and some of Ireland's other results-based innovations.



Brett Day explaining a method of valuing public goods and benefits.

Attendees

To enable the workshop to be as successful as possible and encourage farmer participation the number of participants was restricted, with 50% of the participants being active farmers with experience of current and previous agri-environment schemes.

So of the 26 participants, 13 were farmers, of which 9 exercise their common grazing rights on common land. Of the remaining participants, 3 were government officials from the Defra ELMS team, 3 were academics with considerable expertise in agricultural and/or economics, 3 were from the DNPA, 2 from the HNV-LINK project, one represented land owners and one the local water company. A full list of participants can be found in annex 2.



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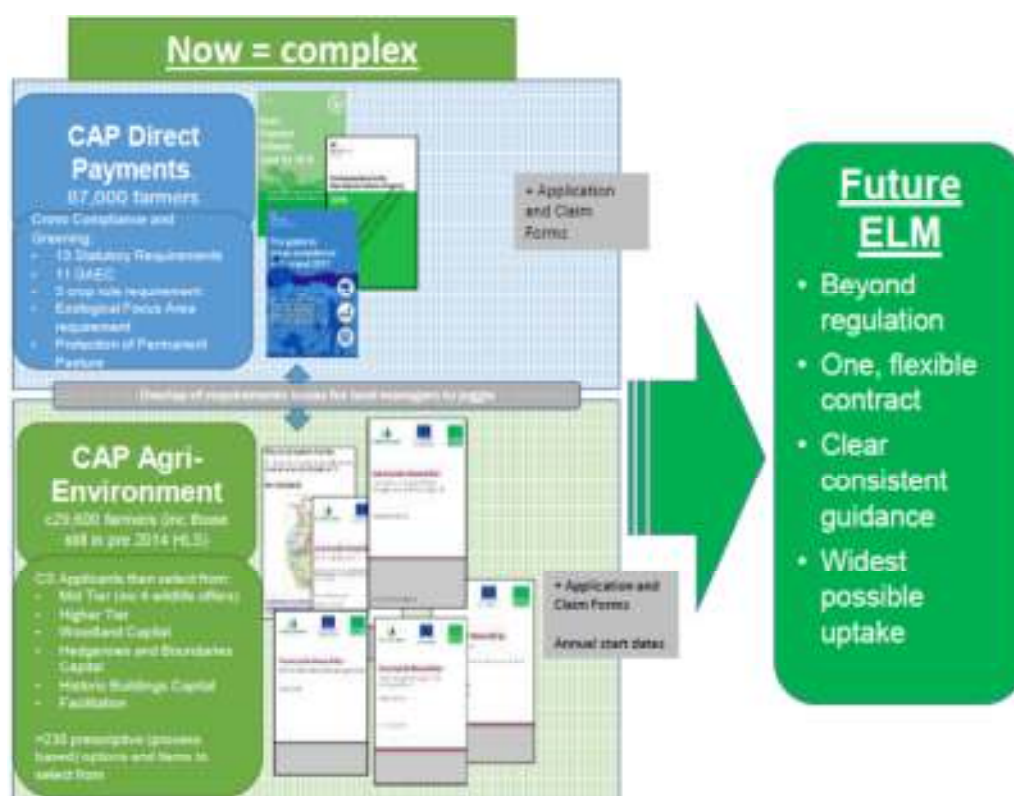
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Information and learning: main findings

Confirmation of the UK Government's ambition to reward farmers for the delivery of a range of public benefits, including biodiversity and natural ecosystems. There will only be one system (ELMS) to address all aspects of land management, including farm land and amenity land.

The role of innovation in securing benefits for HNV farmland were presented alongside evidence for the essential role of advice and facilitation in securing change and development. It is apparent that the Government does not value the role of free advice.

The ELM system will be predicated on a set of outcomes that reflect the government's main environmental objectives and not be prescriptive. This model is similar to DFF.



An example of the UK Government's wish to provide a simple process to reward delivery.



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The main messages from the workshop included:

- Farmer participation at all stages of ELMS development is essential to ensure the practicality and applicability of the final system.
- Designing a payment/reward system for common land is complex and difficult, however it is essential if the impressive range of public goods found on common land are to benefit. Governance of common land requires support and recognition.
- Unless the farm is viable there won't be the resources (people) to manage the common land and its associated public benefits. The link between common land and the farms must not be broken. The natural environment on enclosed farmland has often suffered due to the requirements of some aspects of moorland management. On Dartmoor the greatest loss of HNV farmland has been on the enclosed land surrounding the moorland (common land).
- Payment levels will have to be sufficient to ensure the viability of hill farming in the Less Favoured Areas (LFA). This may require a payment uplift for farms similar to the support payments prior to the Single Payment Scheme.
- ELMS should be plan led; providing a local plan (at farm or common land unit) will be essential and will be expected to sit within a wider area plan that include a set of priorities for that area.
- The roles of independent and accessible advice and facilitation are essential. Providing free advice is very effective in securing successful change.
- Testing DFF on a farm (it is currently on trial on common land only) would provide an opportunity to develop the reward and payment system.

Next steps

Defra will announce what they want the DFF Test & Trial to address.

DFF will consider developing a payment structure informed by results based payments under development with the UK and Ireland. This will include incentivising payments to ensure environmental improvement and enhancement.

Work will continue on the level of payment required to secure the long term viability of farms on Dartmoor.



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Annex 1

Programme

- 10.00 – 10.05 Welcome Kevin Bishop DNPA
- 10.05 – 10.15 Introduction to HNV-LINK. Gwyn Jones EFNCP
- 10.15 – 10.30 Defra's ambition. Miriam Jones-Walters
- 10.30 – 12.30 How might we value and pay for public benefits, Professor Bret Day, Exeter University (20 mins)
- Keep it simple: Ireland's approach to payment by results, Dr James Moran, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (20 mins)
- What can we learn from past and current experience of operating and paying for agri-environment schemes? Professor Janet Dwyer, CCRI (20 mins)
- The view from the farm, Tracy May (20 mins)
- 12.30 – 13.15 Lunch
- 13.15 – 13.30 The Dartmoor Test and Trial proposal Kevin Bishop/John Waldon
- 13.30 – 15.00 Facilitated, roundtable discussion focused on developing proposals for the Dartmoor trial focusing on how you pay for public benefits in ways that engage the farming/land management community, demonstrate value for money and reward delivery
- 15.00 – 15.30 Tea
- 15.30 Summary and next steps
- 16.00 Close



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Annex 2

Attendees

Abel – Colin *farmer/commoner*

Alabi – Joshua *Defra*

Ashford – Russell *farmer/commoner*

Atwell – David *DHFP/ DNPA*

Bishop – Kevin *CE DNPA*

Branfield – Layland *farmer/commoner*

Cole – Matt *farmer/commoner*

Day – Brett *University of Exeter*

Dracup – John *farmer*

Dwyer – Janet *CCRI*

French – Philip *farmer/commoner*

Giles – Chris *DNPA*

Jones – Gwyn *LINK & EFNCP*

Jones-Walters – Miram *Defra*

Jordan – Rob *farmer/commoner*

Kohler – Ally *DNPA*

May – Tracy *farmer/commoner*

Moran – James *LINK Galway & Mayo IT*

Oakley – Naomi *farmer/commoner/Natural England*

Pollard – Ed *farmer*

Radmore – Helen *farmer/commoner*

Retallick – Maurice *farmer/commoner*

Scarrott – Rob *farmer*

Stratton – Tom *Duchy of Cornwall/landowner*

Stewart – Jane *Defra*

Waldon – John *LINK & EFNCP*



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