

Farmers, livestock, habitats and

FIRE



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Graziers reducing fire risk as part of achieving favourable habitat condition?

No brainer or madman's dream?

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European Forum on
Nature Conservation
and Pastoralism

It's forage!



It's fuel load!

It's Annex
1 habitat
4030!



It needs to
be fresh
and green!



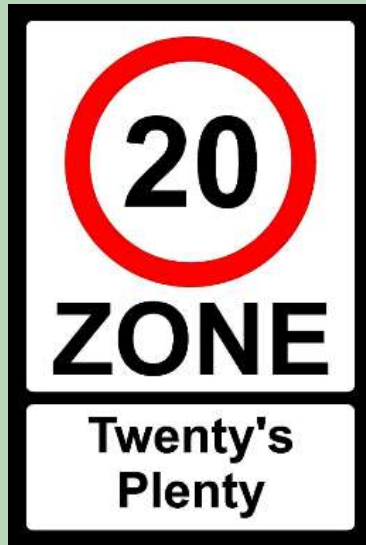
There needs
to be less of
it!



It's not as
simple as
that!







Success means:

Lower level of negative outcomes annually

Lowering then maintaining low risk

Easier situation for emergency services



Success means:

Lower negative outcomes in short term

Ever-increasing risk

Potentially unmanageable events



Fire and farmers: three possible roles



- Reducing fire risk by maintaining fire breaks
- Reducing fire risk by reducing fuel loads at landscape scale
- Managing habitats in part by controlled burning

Challenge: working together



- Finding a common vision
- Building bridges (replacing traditional suspicions)
- Finding the most effective solutions, regardless

Challenge: large-scale and urgent



- Most habitat change objectives
 - Can be over long time frames - except in case of gross damage (bare peat....), no real hurry
 - Every little helps? Better to do a little properly. Etc.....
- Reversing increasing fire risk
 - Potentially very urgent
 - Action needed has a scale
 - Delay brings further cost

Challenge: strong spatial element



- Many habitat change objectives are treated as having low spatial aspect
- Water issues is an exception, but policy struggles to deal with that
- Can't avoid the spatial element with fire
 - Connectivity of fuels
 - Aspect is important
 - Slope is important
- Puts a big premium on organisational aspects – having access to 'actions' is not enough



The rest of today

- The habitats perspective from NPWS
- The farm advisor perspective from the Wicklow Mts
- Farmer practitioner perspectives from
 - S France
 - Dartmoor, SW England
- Discussion session on 3 questions
 - Joined-up government when it comes to fire and fire risk
 - An appropriate package of measures and delivery frameworks integrating farming, livestock, habitats and fire risk management
 - How to bring the farmer to the centre of things





Desk study – three countries

- France
- Spain
- USA (California)

- <https://www.efncp.org/download/HHgrazingandfireriskinitiativesreview.pdf>

At their worst....



- Failure to prioritise fire in policy
- Lack of overarching coherent strategy for fire, for grazed habitats and for extensive livestock systems (and for C!!). Policies absent or actually antagonistic. Loss of local adaptedness.
- Silo thinking; grazing as the ‘other’; boys and their toys; risks of depending on ‘civilians’; stereotyping; institutional inertia
- Insecure or intermittent (or inadequate?) funding; short-term/project focus
- Lack of involvement of/ input from graziers in design of measures
- Failure to reflect costs adequately
- Move from objective-led, results-based, towards admin-based, tick-boxy (move into agri-env... ☹)

At their best....



- Integrated delivery as a norm (often starting as fresh collaborations)
 - What's needed where?
 - Looking holistically at the technical, policy and cultural aspects of grazing
 - Integration with other fire risk management FRM efforts
- Choosing the delivery mechanisms which are best suited to the need – objective-led at all times
- Cost-benefits of grazing in the toolbox recognised
- Ability to target activity and to reward it according to FRM needs
- Clear ethos of payment for a service, generating a positive image for graziers
- A solid attempt to differentiate payment according to cost
- Recognise the key role of support services (animation, coordination, honest-brokering and advice) in developing and delivering the FRM measures; continuous support (the less coherent the funding, the broader the need – strategic, not just tactical)



Possible vision

- Uplands deliver excellently for biodiversity, water quality, carbon sequestration and storage, archaeology, landscape and managed public access, as well as safety of life and property for adjoining settlements and forests, largely through and alongside viable and sustainable food production systems
- Management is not only geared towards short-term goals, but towards reducing long-term risks and keeping them at an appropriately low level
- Legislation, funding and the actions and collaborative working of State actors all work to this end, engaging with private sector actors in a way which ensures this is done in a spirit of open cooperation and mutual respect, recognising and utilising the skills of all concerned

An opportunity to reflect on Ireland



- How can joined-up government for fire risk management come about in and between Irish public bodies?
 - Any current good element to build upon?
 - What are the impediments?
 - What are the first steps?
- How can a coherent mix of appropriate, workable measures be designed and delivered in Ireland?
 - Any current good elements to build upon?
 - What are the impediments?
 - What are the first steps?
- Are graziers destined always to be occasional 'partners' to be engaged when it suits in wider fire risk management?
 - If not, what needs to change?
 - What are the first steps?