The HNV Link project – an example of an innovation that benefits HNV farmers

This project has received funding from the European Union Horizon 2020 research and innovations program under Grant Agreement No. 696391
Dartmoor Farming Futures
An outcome focused agri-environment scheme

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Project initiated and supported by Dartmoor National Park Authority, Dartmoor Commoners’ Council and Natural England.
Why?

- Agri-environment essential to farmers in the uplands (LFA)
- Agreements on common land failing = lack of ownership of agreement.
- 401,200 ha common land in England and 59% of notified as SSSI (national importance for wildlife) and 49% as Natura 2000 (internationally important).
- Farmers in AE schemes for over 20 years but still unclear what the scheme/payments were for.
- Farmers want to be part of the solution and offer experience/skills.
The Forest of Dartmoor (common) 11,400 ha. moorland dominated by blanket bog and deep peat. Notified as an SSSI/Natura 2000 and includes several important water catchments. 78 active farmers.

The Haytor and Bagtor commons. Managed as one unit (c700 ha.) well used for recreation and public access. It is rich in historical sites and includes a geological SSSI. 9 active farmers.
New scheme design

- Designed by farmers on 2 commons + independent facilitator
- Designs merged = new scheme trial/pilot (started in 2012)
- Outcome focused – outcomes agreed following consultation between farmers and agencies
- No prescriptions – farmers decide land management to deliver outcomes
- Address array of ecosystem services (biodiversity, water, carbon, archaeology, public access)
- Monitoring programme essential – give confidence to farmers and agencies.
### Forest of Dartmoor: Ecosystem services / natural resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural resources</th>
<th>relevant to location</th>
<th>further information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public access</td>
<td>limited</td>
<td>open public access + tracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archaeology and historic environment</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>national &amp; international importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nature or biodiversity</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>national &amp; international designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>national and international importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water - quality and quantity</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>also reduce flood risk down stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carbon</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>mapped and measured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>food production</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>livestock - sheep &amp; cattle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An example of outcomes: Haytor

**Access**
The main access routes and paths, identified by DNPA, are widened by the removal of vegetation.

**Nature/biodiversity/ecological**
The areas of Western Heath, mires and areas of bracken are managed to prevent an increase in area and to create a mosaic for specific species (no SSSI).

**Historical/archaeological**
Selected archaeological sites (6), including the Tramway and boundary stones are kept free of encroaching vegetation

**Water**
No actions by the commoners will result in reducing the water quality

**Landscape**
Grazing cattle, sheep and ponies remain in the landscape. The tors remain visible and connecting paths are not visually intrusive.

**Food production (farming)**
There is no decline in the number of grazing livestock days (number of cattle and sheep x days grazing).
Lessons learnt – so far

- New scheme improves understanding of aim of agreement – what it is hoping to achieve.
- Enables traditional/local farming practice to continue.
- Farmers have more ownership & responsibility.
- Improved relevance of land management to local conditions.
Further information from Dartmoor National Park
www.dartmoor-npa.gov.uk