



European Forum on
Nature Conservation
and Pastoralism

High Nature Value Farming – a way forward for the uplands?

Gwyn Jones, EFNCP





High Nature Value farming
– a taboo for the uplands??







HNV farming – what exactly is it?



- Land managed for agriculture
- With high levels of semi-natural habitats
- Which has high levels of biodiversity



**LOW biodiversity, though may have
'nature value'.**



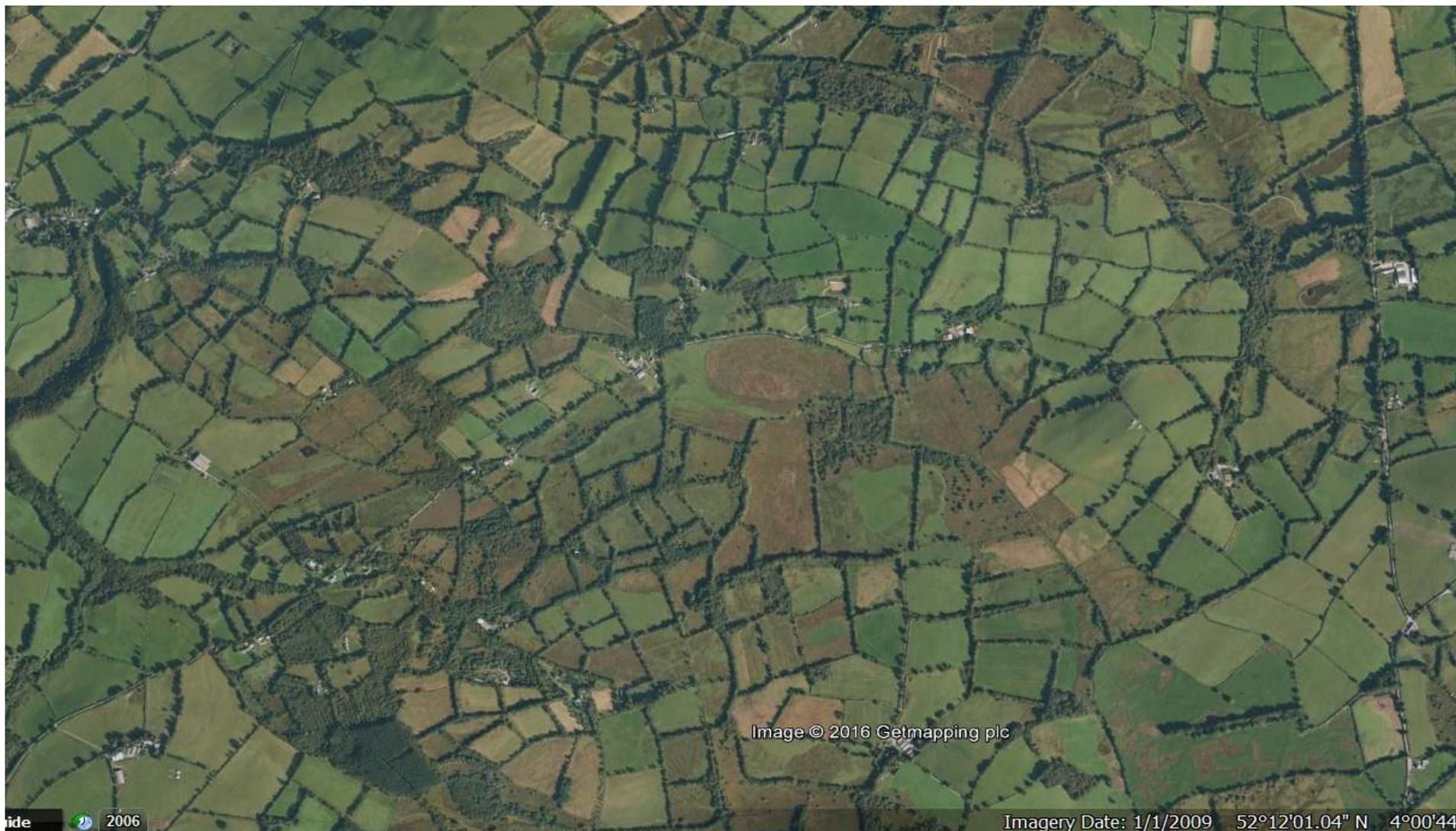


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HNV farming – not a one-trick pony



- Usually delivers a wide range of other public goods (ecosystem services with low or no market value)
 - Carbon sequestration and storage
 - Clean water (low chemical levels, low sediment/erosion)
 - Flow regulation
 - Landscape quality
- Complexity is a major feature and central to delivery of those services



The State of HNV Farming?

- Loss of all lowland HNV farmland?
 - On 'commercial' farms, destroyed by intensification
 - Abandonment is a reality in smallholding landscapes
- Mountain farms
 - Already at the 'farming of last resort'
 - Intensification seems to be the advice??
 - Vicious circle of deintensification and vegetation change?
 - Change is fine, but what will the new equilibrium be?
 - Even more difficulties on common land – social and policy
 - Loss of skills and culture
 - Who wants to marry a hill farmer? Socio-economics matters!
- What does that mean for public goods? Need to be sure!!

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Imagery Date: 1/1/2009 52°08'12.93" N 3°59'59.87" W elev 226

Low-intensity farming
(High Nature Value farming)
usually survives at the margins
and *because* it's at the margins:



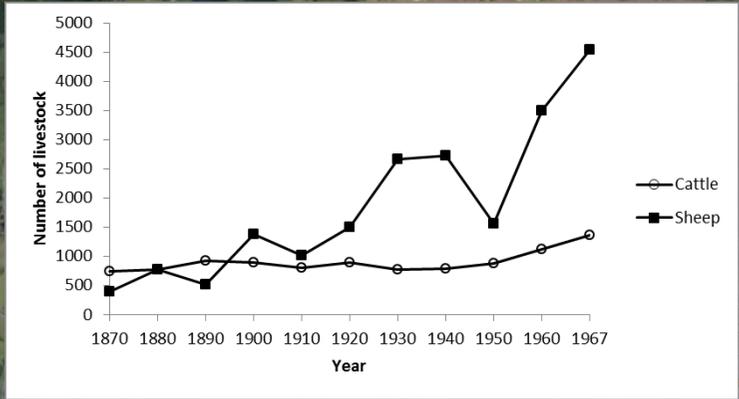
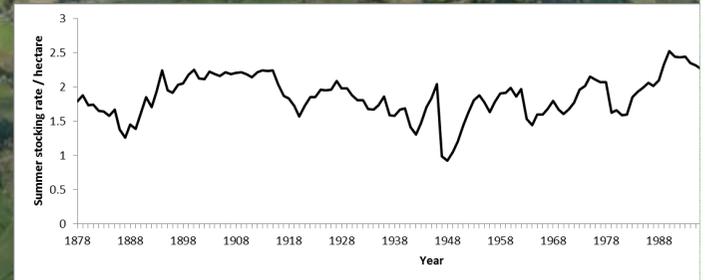
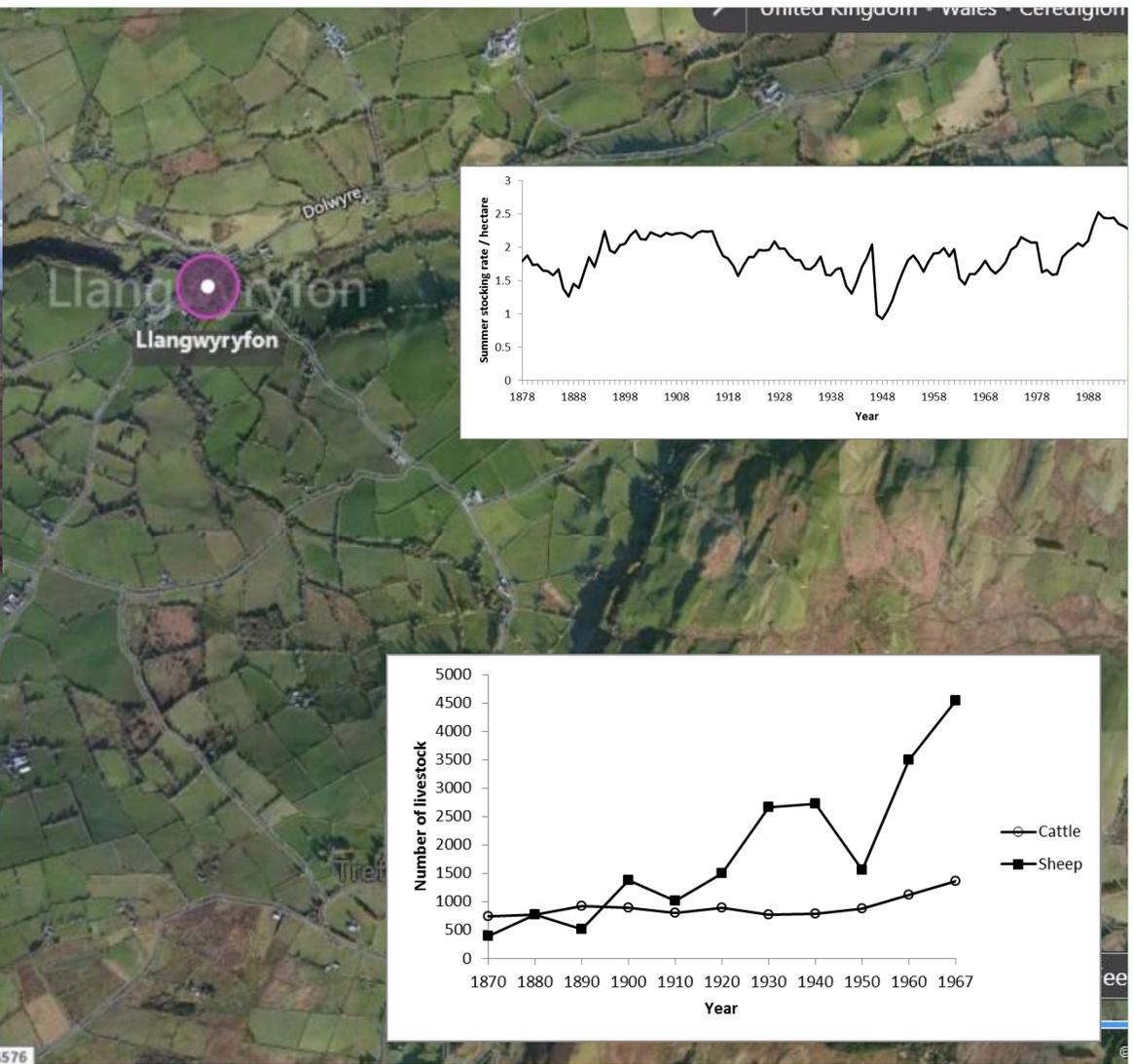
- farms mostly economically small - low gross margins;
 - low reward for farmer's labour;
- high dependency not just on policy decisions but public funds

HNV farming doesn't exist in a vacuum

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Imagery Date: 4/18/2014 52°22'15.13" N 4°01'20.16" W elev 151 m eye

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Intensive farming and the agro-food chain makes the marginal marginal



Can we break the link between the delivery of public goods and low farm incomes?

And keep farming central?

Won't happen without intervention at the scale of the system (not just the parcel)

Increase in profit needs to come from HNV farming, not parallel intensification, diversification etc.

HNV farming – a way of looking at things



- Doesn't claim everything is perfect



- But recognises the farmer's skills and experience

HNV farming – is a different approach possible?



- Which doesn't mean fossilisation or back to the past
- Which doesn't rely on prescribing simple answers
- Which recognises that farming systems with high biodiversity are possible
- Which recognises the fairness of a viable income for delivering public goods



HNV Link Innovation Network

We need innovation in low-intensity, HNV farming systems, but innovation which helps break the low-income/public goods link without losing the public goods

Technical and technological - Products and markets -
Social and institutional - Regulatory and support



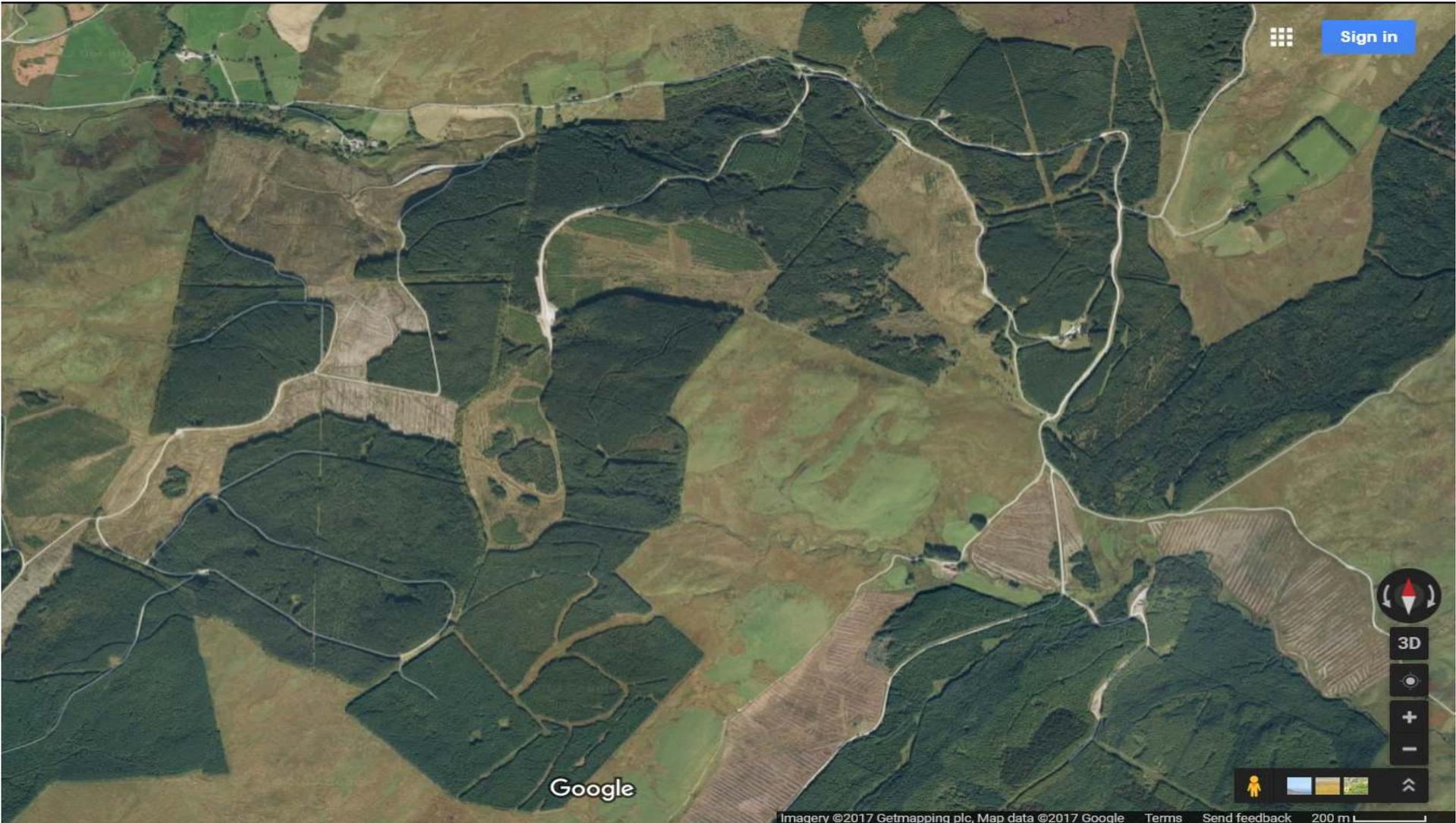
HNV farming – if we value the farmer....



An opportunity for a results-based approach?



- Where 'success' defined in biodiversity terms for the participating farmer, and is the focus throughout
- Where indicators of success are meaningful but as simple as possible and, where possible, amenable to change by the farmer
- Where rules kept to a minimum, as unprescriptive as possible
- Where the farmer uses initiative to achieve 'success'
- Where level of 'success' linked somehow to amount of payment
- Where penalties play a much smaller role



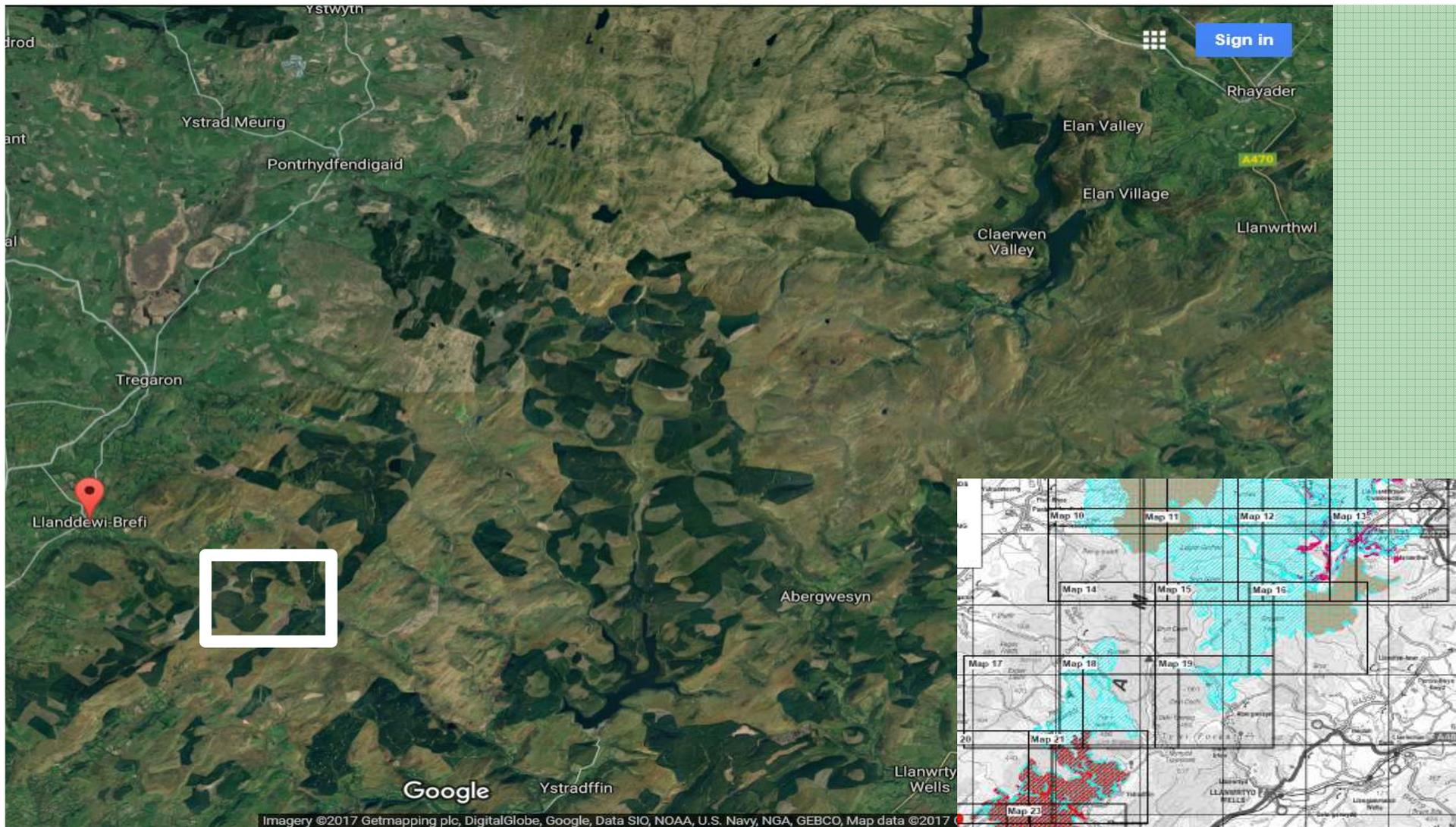
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There WAS a policy

But it was too simple and short-sighted



Surely not the only choices?

**Need a coherent, comprehensive,
landscape-scale policy reflected
throughout its instruments**

Summary



- Low-intensity farming is important for delivering many public goods
- Policy should aim to deliver them through farming (not just farmers), focussing on results and rewarding them properly
- Need to break link between system and poverty, with no dependence on cross-subsidy, which means counteracting the macro-economics
- Invest in appropriate innovation, education, research
- Policy instruments should ALL work together to deliver in an integrated, comprehensive, coherent way

Some challenges...

- **Government – coherent, clear vision**
 - Differentiated and relevant
 - Thought through to the level of the farmer's income
 - Macro-economically realistic
 - No public goods for less than the minimum wage
- **Government (and others?) - policy delivery**
 - Delivering with and through the farmer
 - Clear exposition of what results policy wants at farm level with payment accordingly where appropriate
 - Common land-proof
- **Farmers – open-mind, taking on the issues**
 - History of massive change, but not always in a good direction
 - Requires confidence in a shared vision which you have the skills to deliver