Agri-environment on Common Grazings

- a weakness in the RDP process?

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A good test for any rural policy:

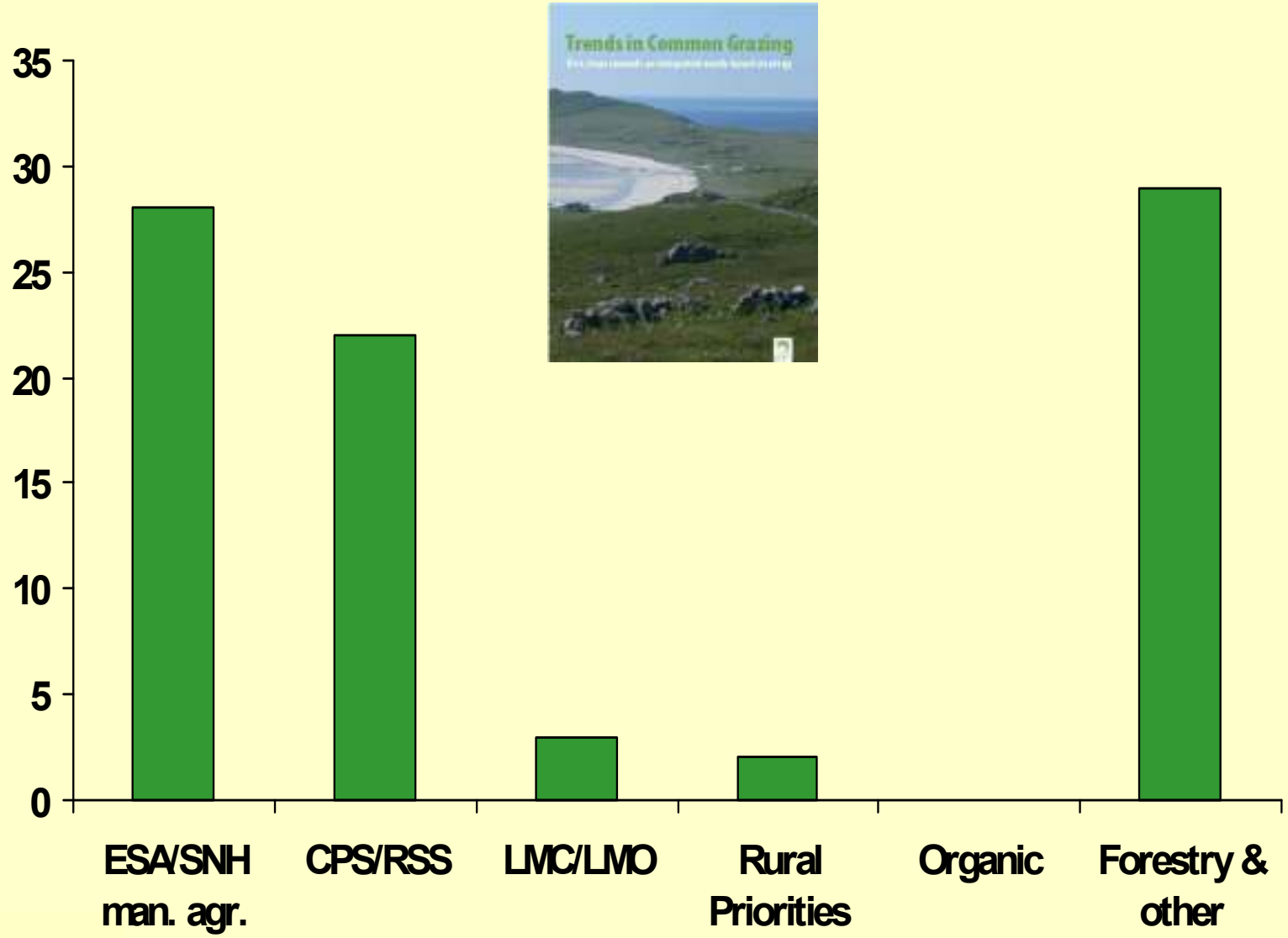
Does it work on common grazings?

We hold these truths to be self-evident?

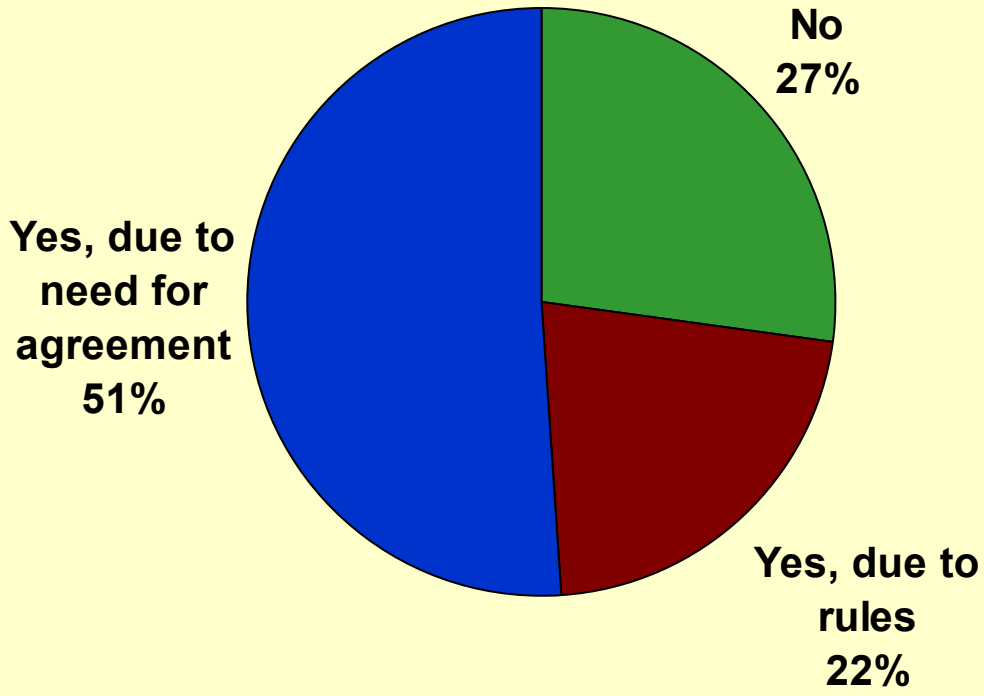
- Common grazings are High Nature Value farmland which deliver a whole range of public goods; maintaining HNV farming systems is a Community objective for RD Axis 2

- Over time, agricultural activity on common grazings has largely been unprofitable without public support and by definition there is no direct market support for public goods

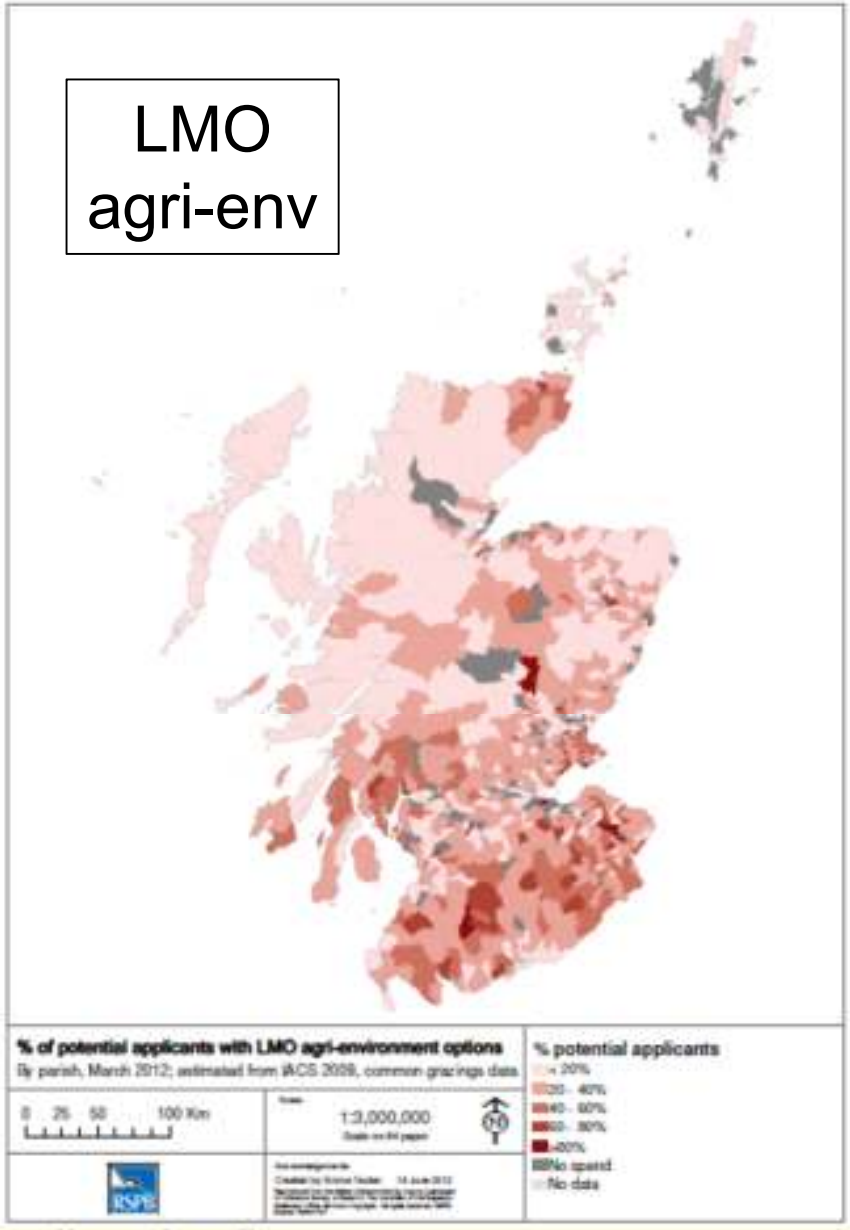
- RDP mechanisms should be easily accessible (and in fact accessed) by all significant classes of ‘deserving’ producers (where ‘deserving’ is understood in terms of policy goals).

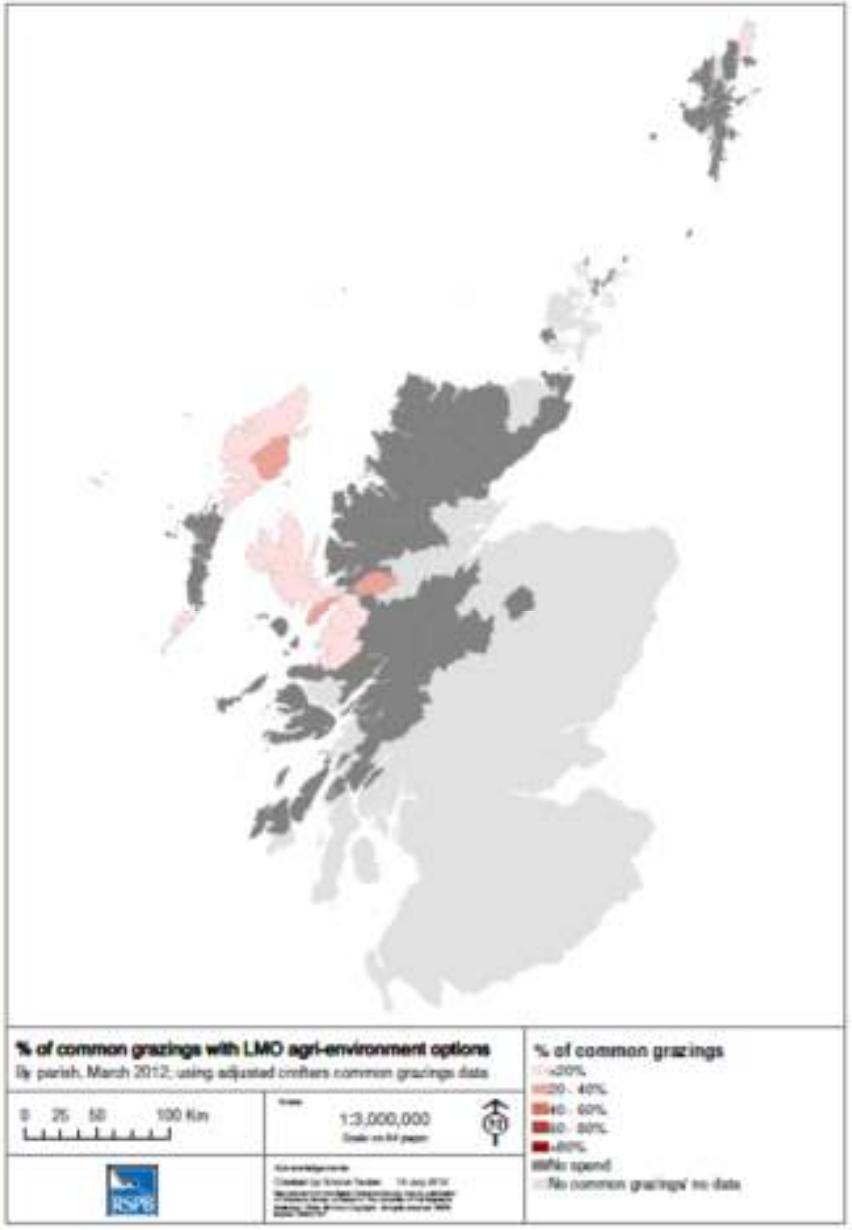

Trends in Common Grazing
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
ESA/SNH man. agr.
CPS/RSS
LMC/LMO
Rural Priorities
Organic
Forestry & other

Do common grazings have more problems getting into schemes than hill farms?



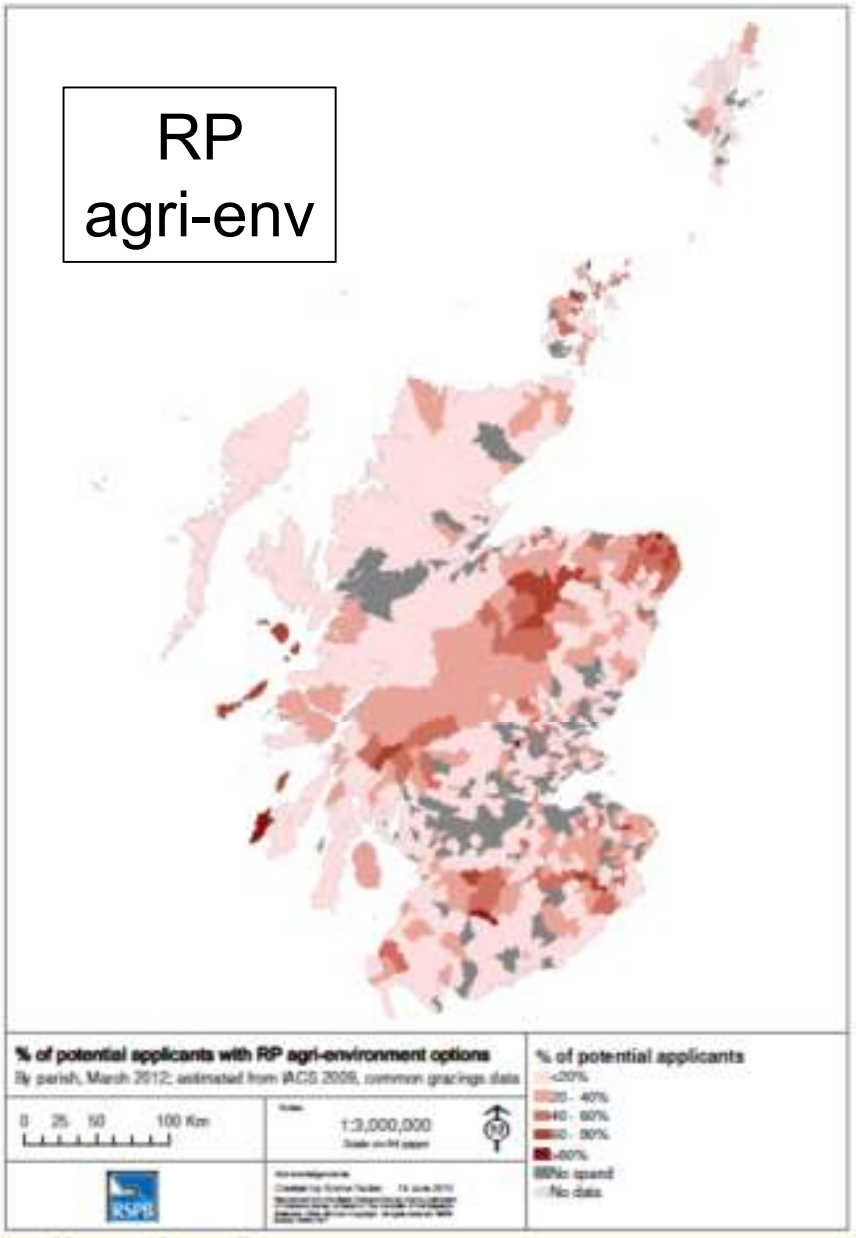
LMO
agri-env

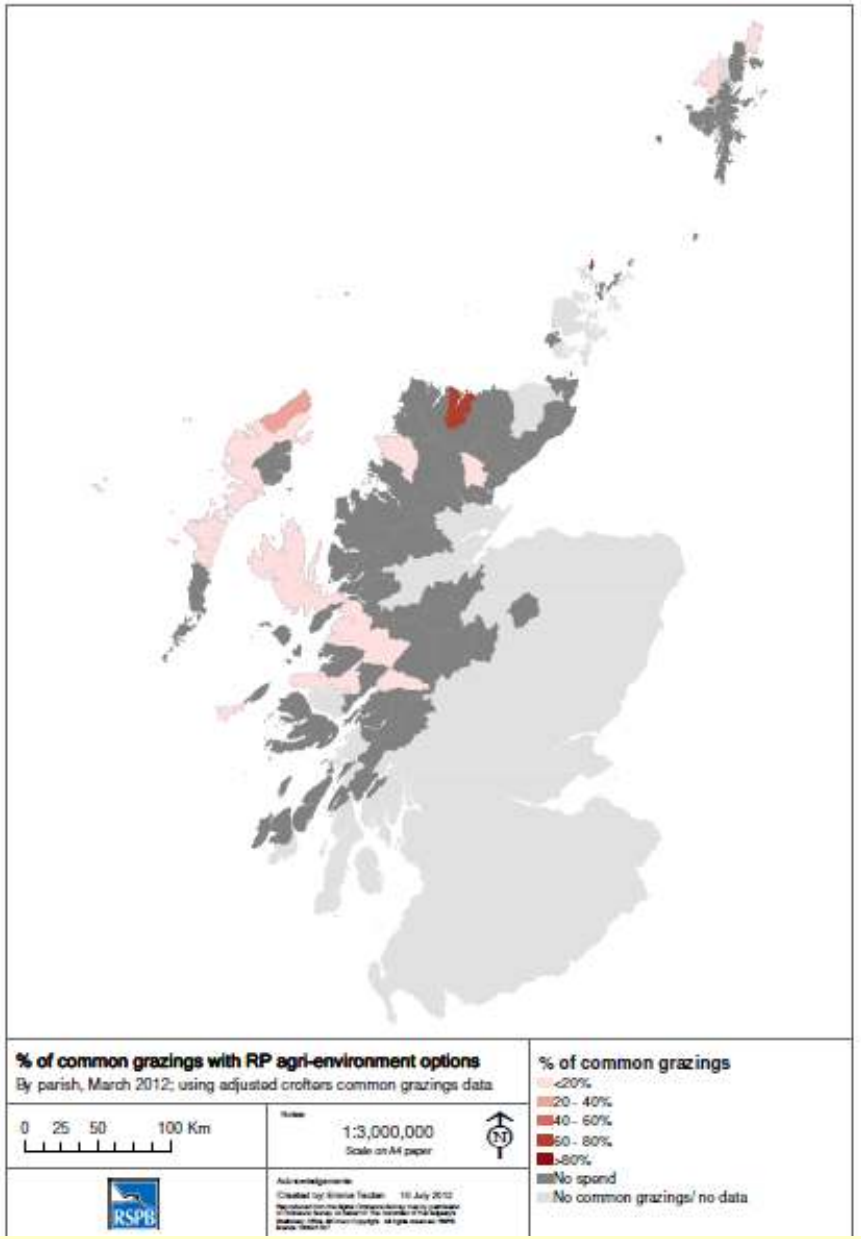




% by parish participating in scheme of..	Mean	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
..all potential applicants	25%	12%	23%	34%
..potential common grazings applicants	2%	0%	0%	0%

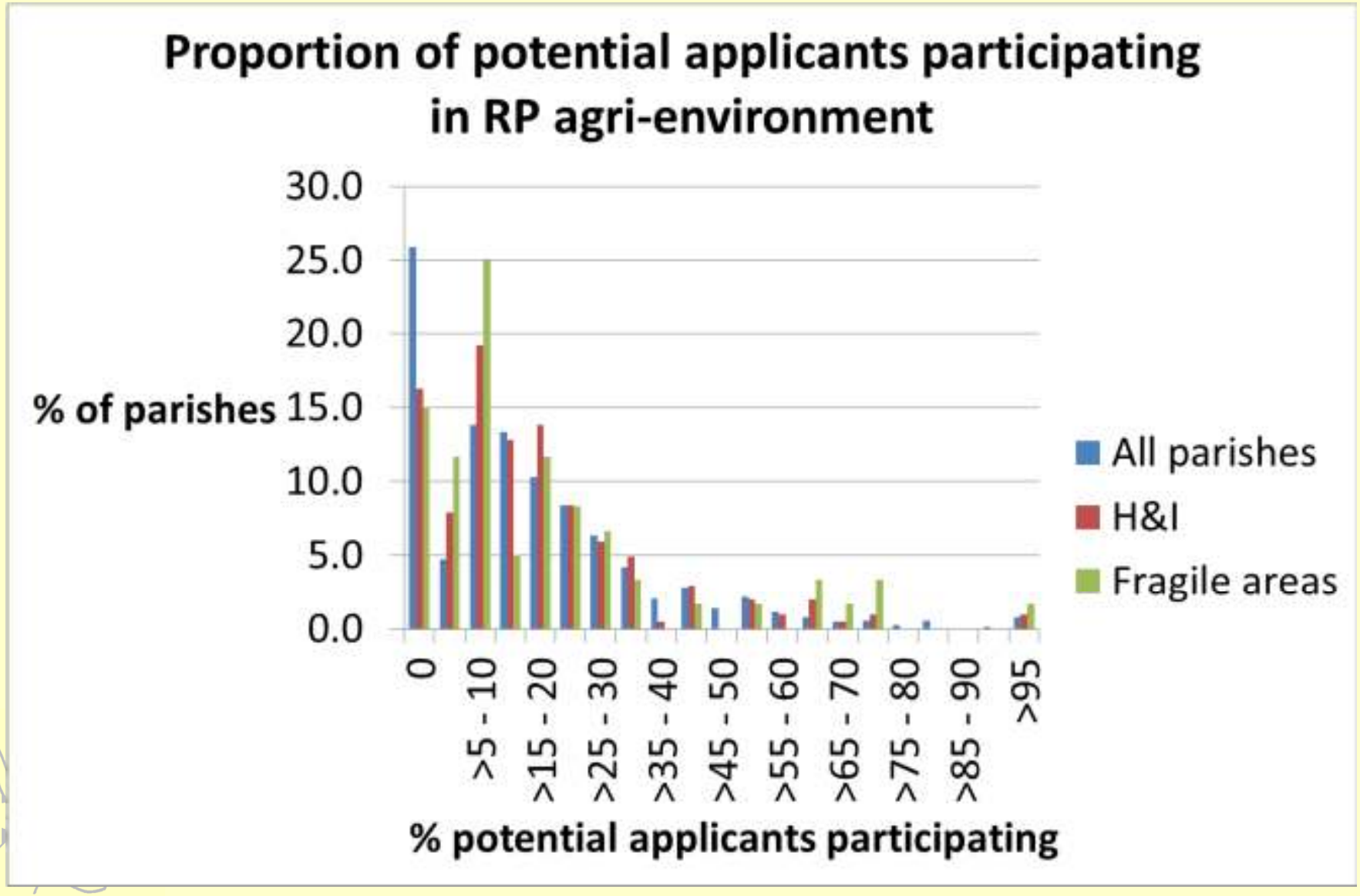
RP agri-env



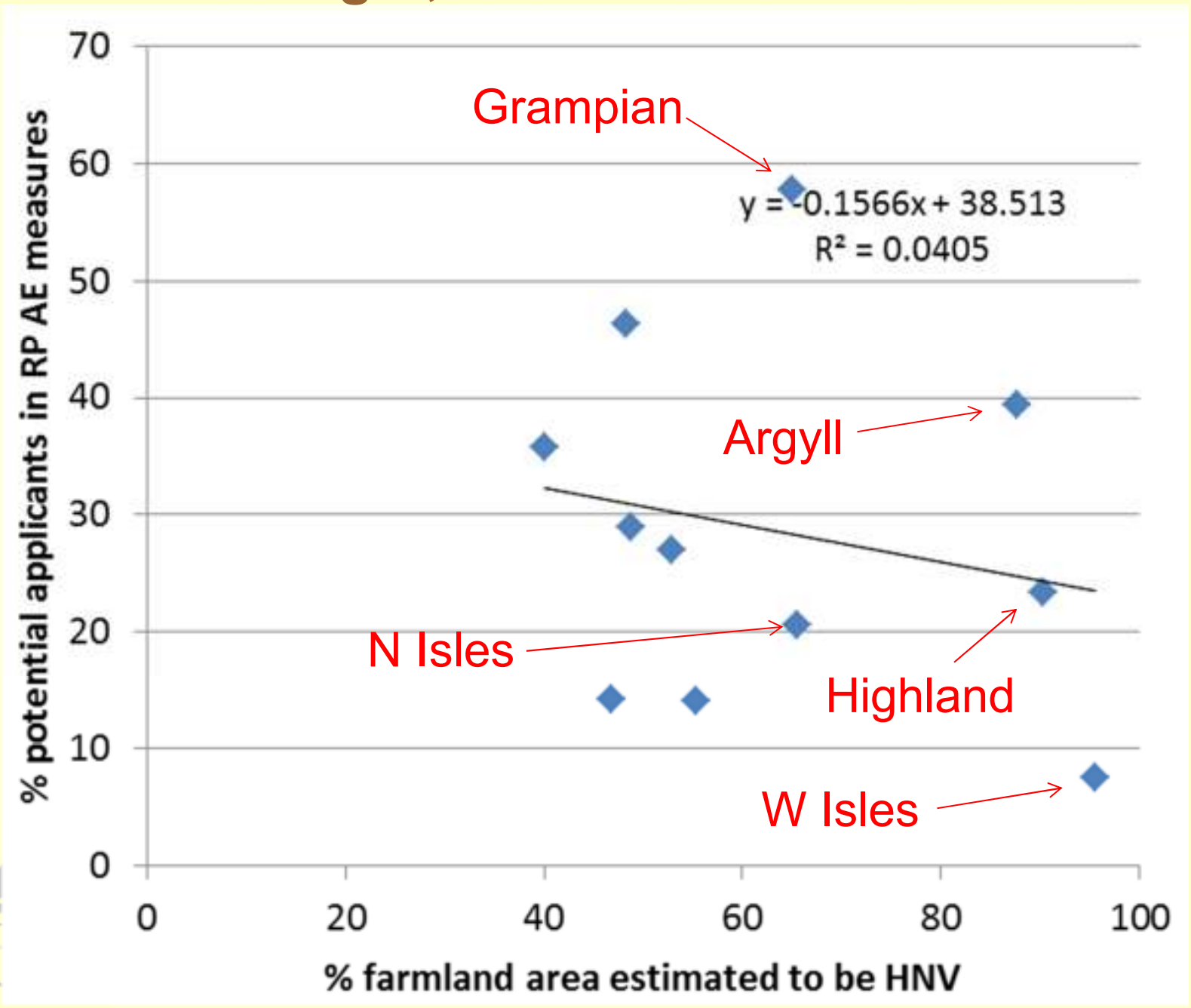


% by parish participating in scheme of..	Mean	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile
..all potential applicants	16%	0%	12%	23%
..potential common grazings applicants	4%	0%	0%	0%

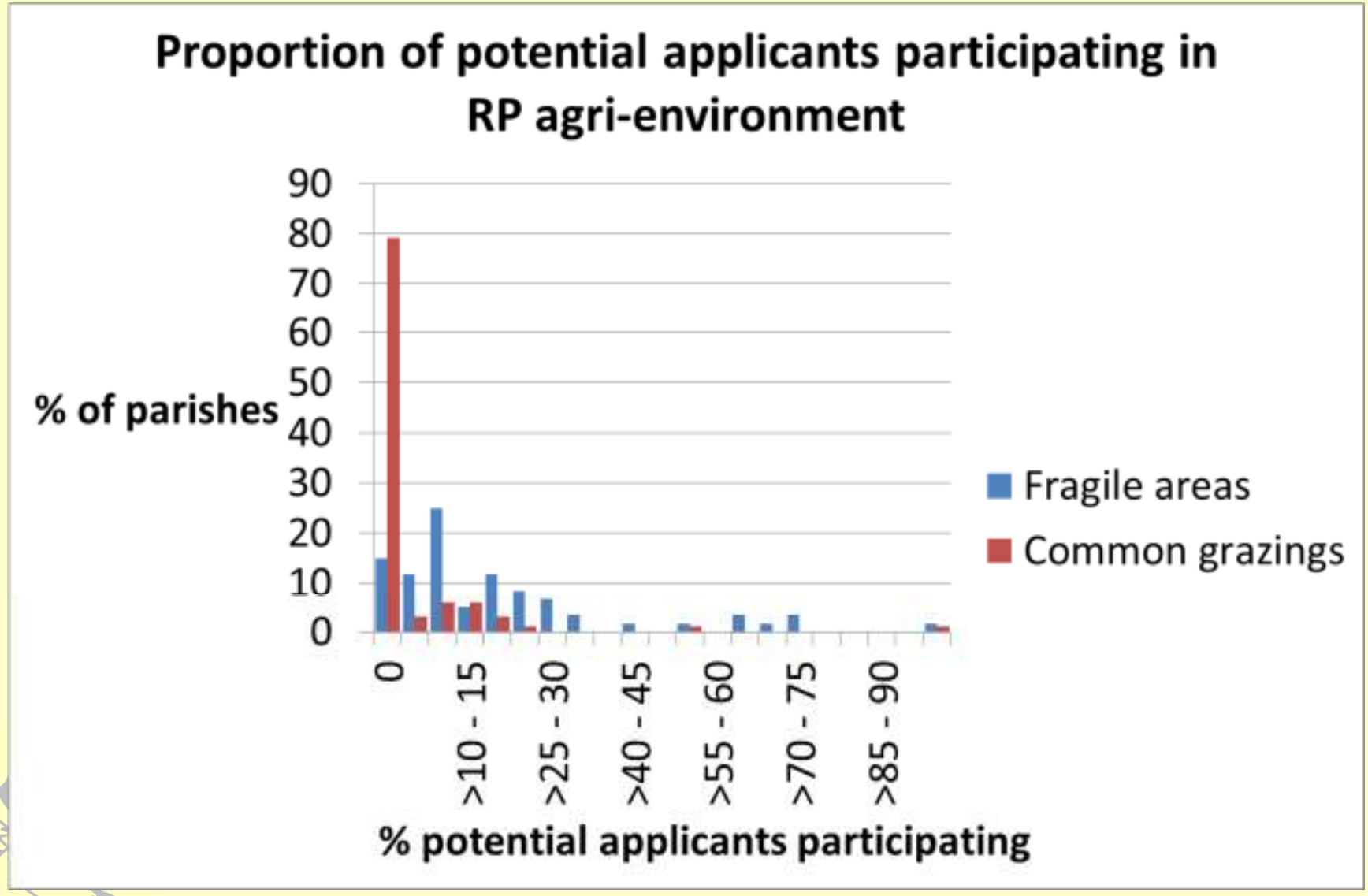
Is it a matter of all producers in those areas being disadvantaged?



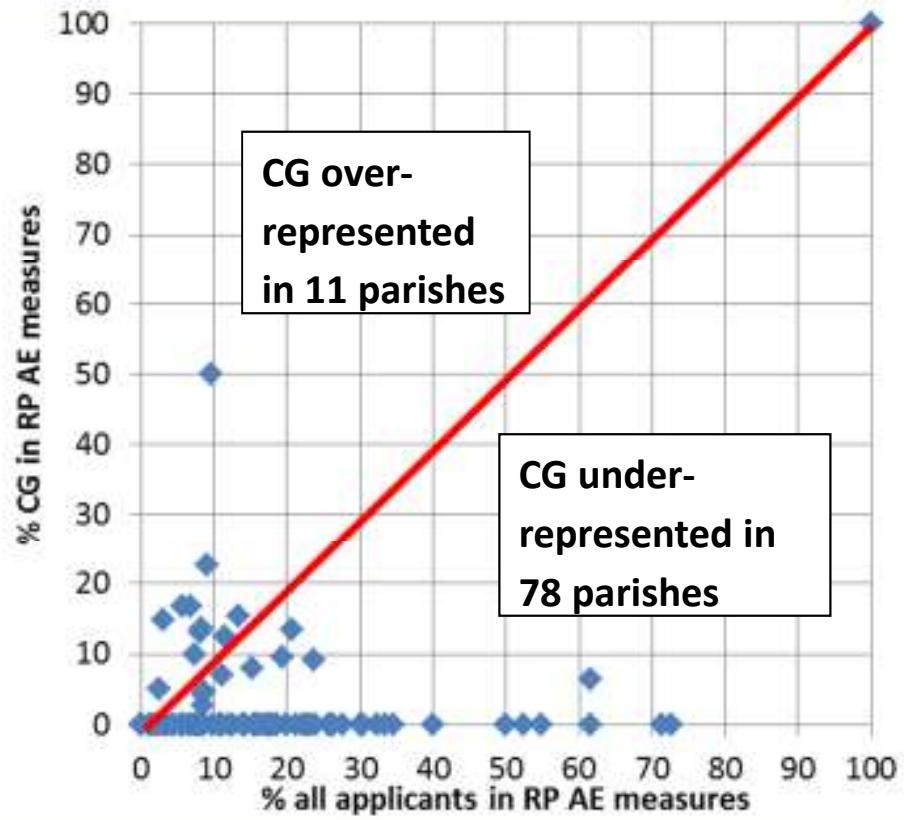
Not at first sight, but then…..

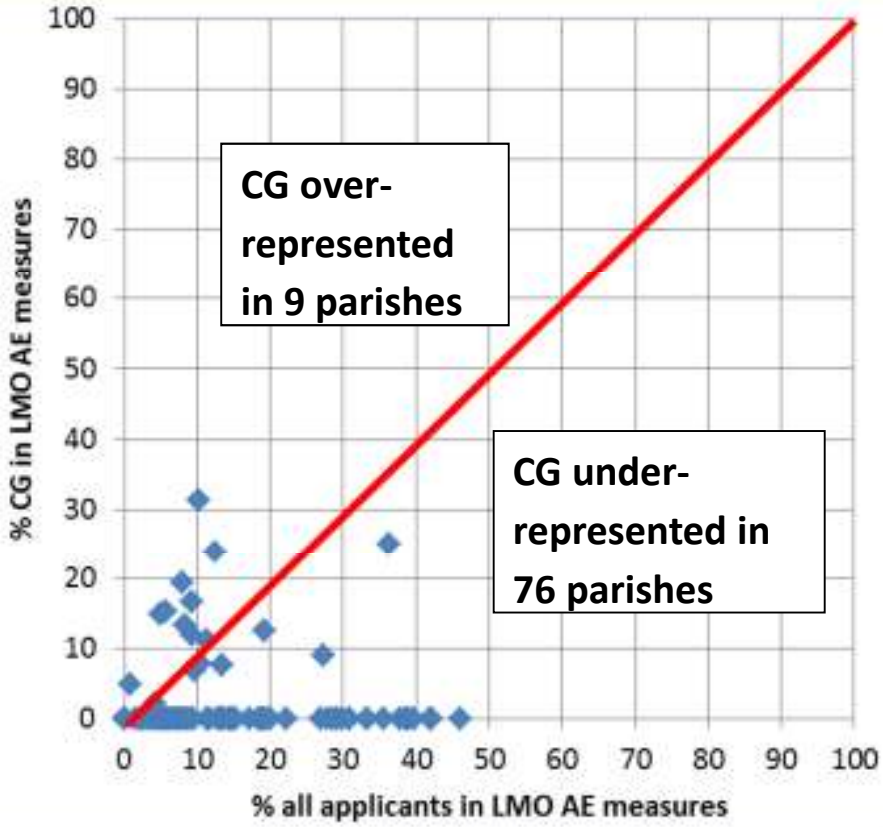


Common grazings participating less than Fragile Areas in general



Common grazings are less likely to participate than producers in general in the same parish





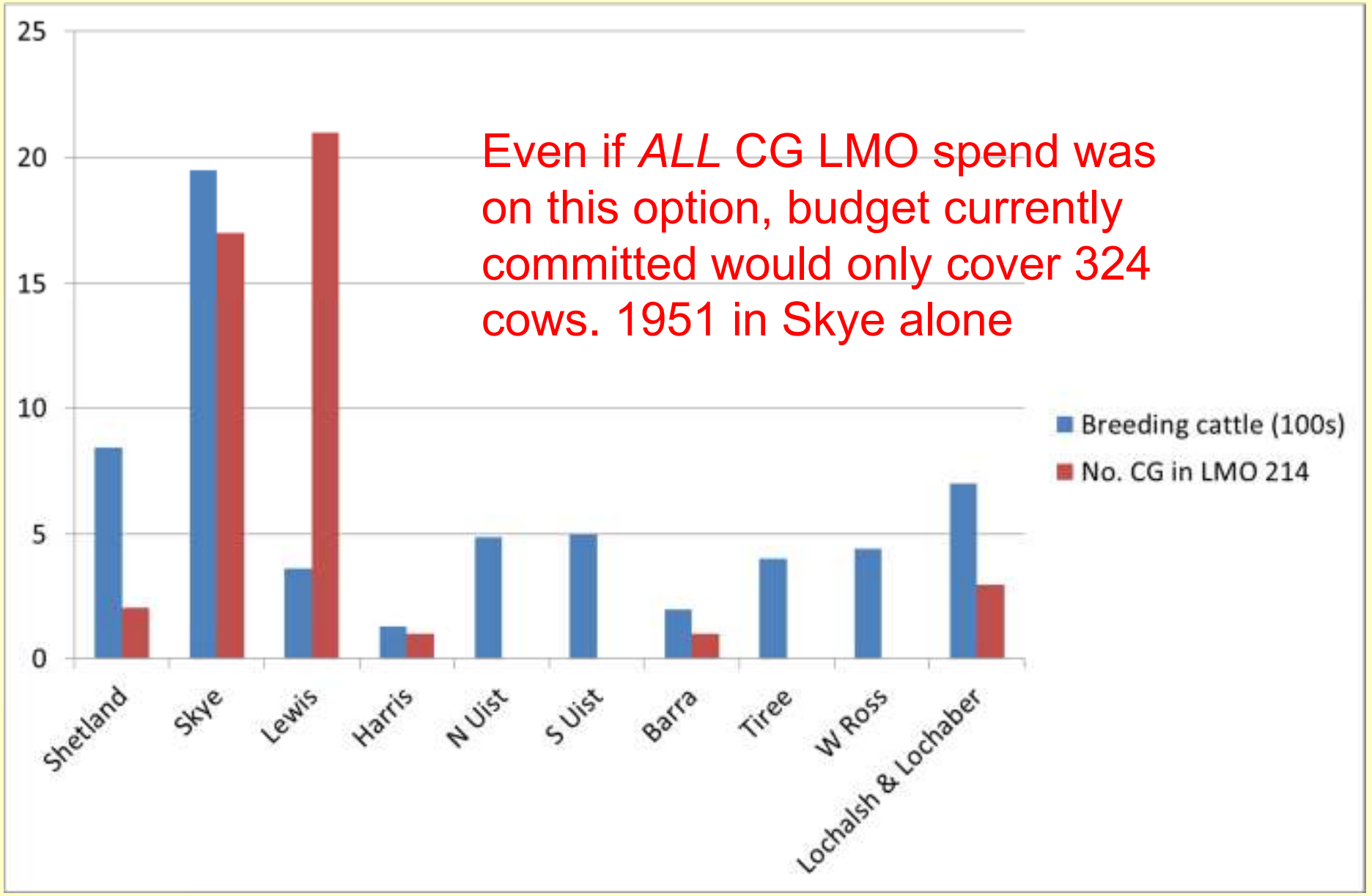
Parishes where CG over-represented generally have a low overall level of participation

Is it due to lack of rough grazing options?

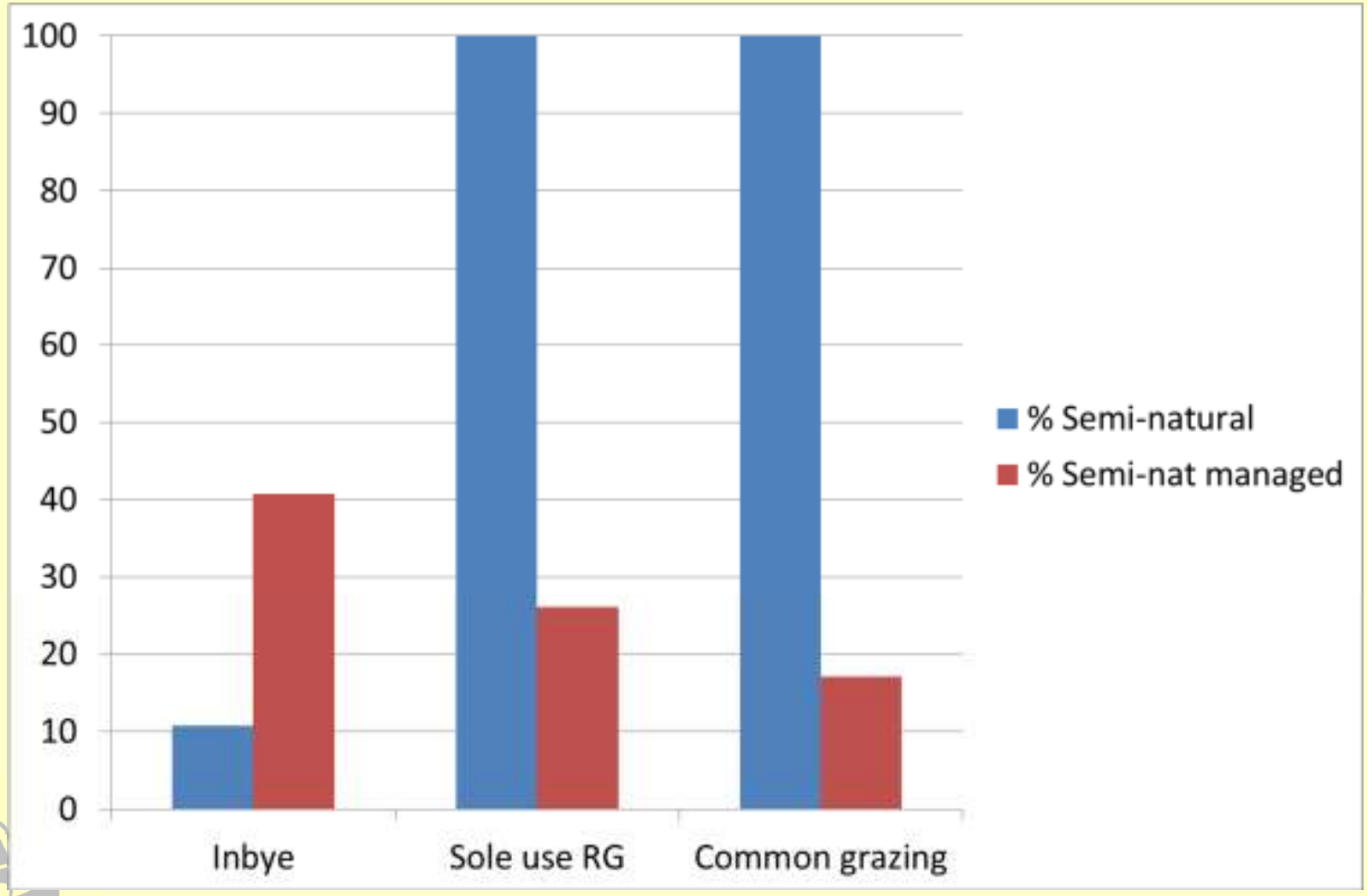
- Limited range of options in RP for rough grazings
- Almost all ‘normal’ RP options for RG predicated on *change* of management (unlike inbye options)
- Almost all RP options for RG also predicated on need to graze less - despite ‘Retreat from the Hills’, around 30% of funds are still spent on removal of ewes from the business

- LMO has the only real support for positive management which is not habitually couched in terms of overgrazing – Summer Cattle Grazing
- Poorly thought out, least accessible where it is most needed

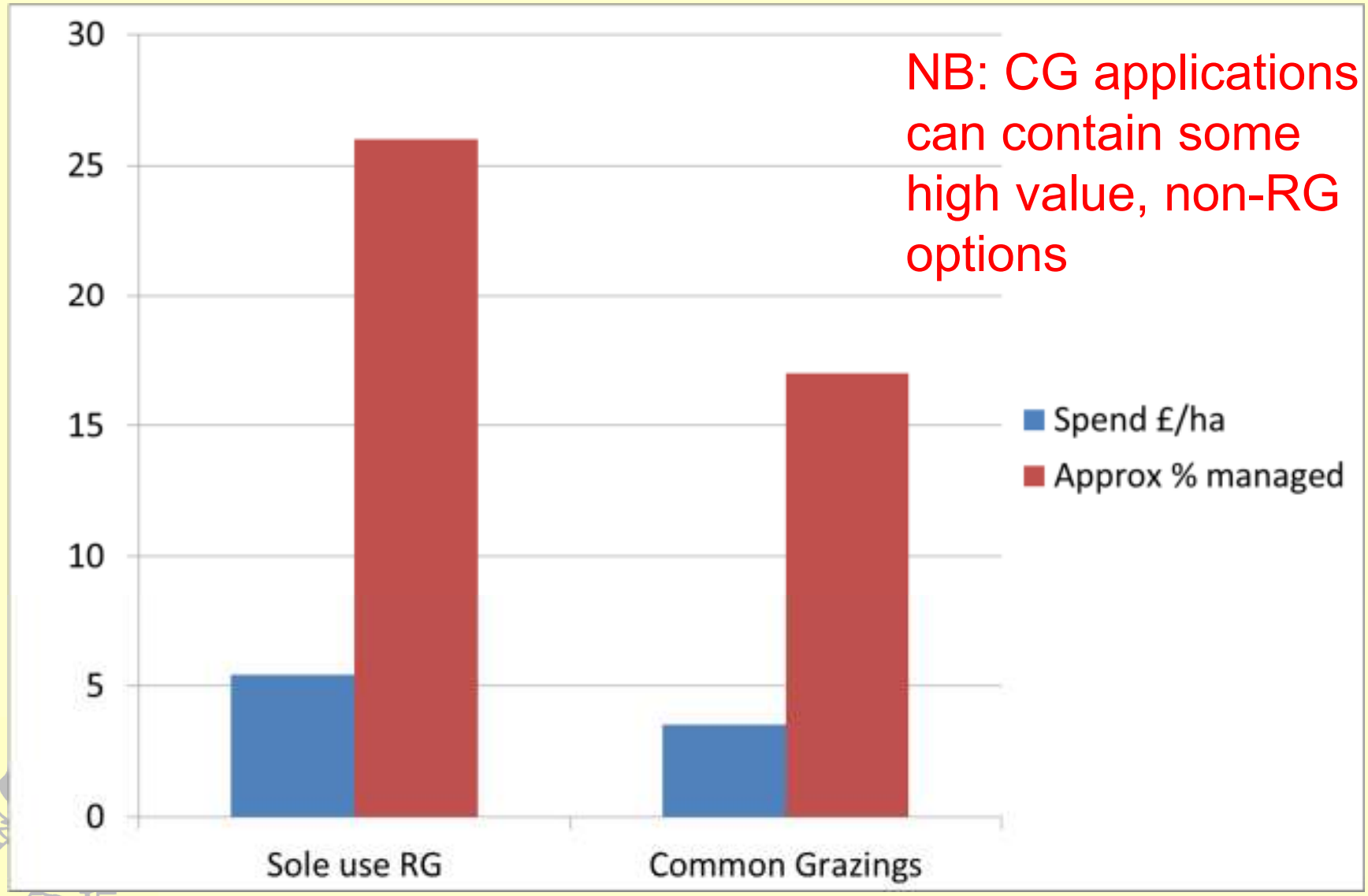
Breeding cow numbers and LMO AE uptake in some primarily crofting areas



But while rough grazing in general under-represented in schemes, CG still worse….



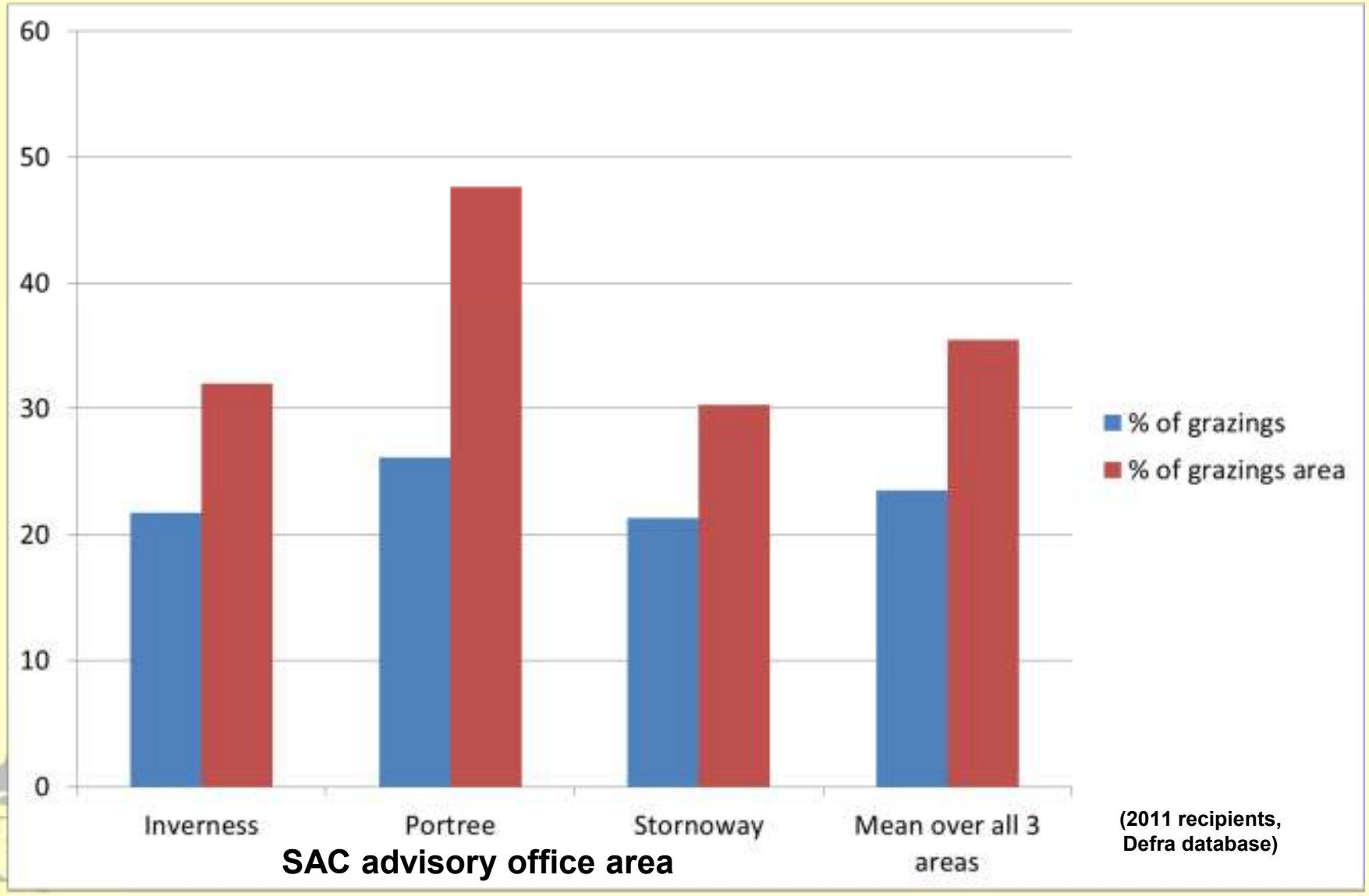
Not only less area managed but less spend per ha on management of existing habitats through RP



Other transaction costs and difficulties particular to common grazings

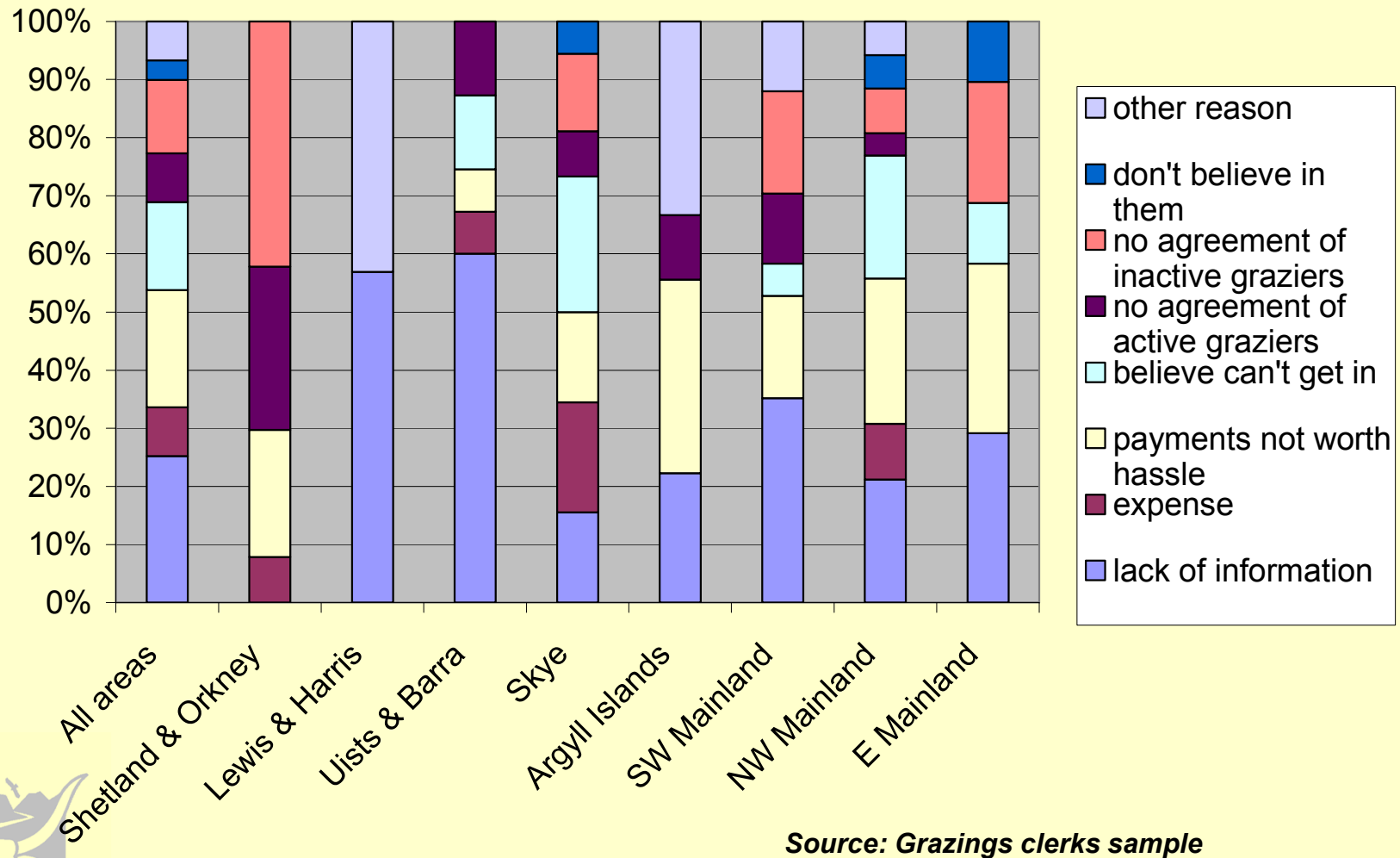
- Need for a committee
  - Around 30% of grazings not regulated
  - Requirement to report is deterrent to re-election of committee
- Negotiating between active shareholders (whether or not active or inactive on the actual grazings)
- Need to engage inactive shareholders: “The written consent of a majority of the crofters ordinarily resident within the township and sharing in the common grazing” (going way beyond the thresholds set in the Crofters Acts)
- If total RP payments >£30k, need to submit accounts for all shareholders

Some regional variation in overall engagement with CAP support



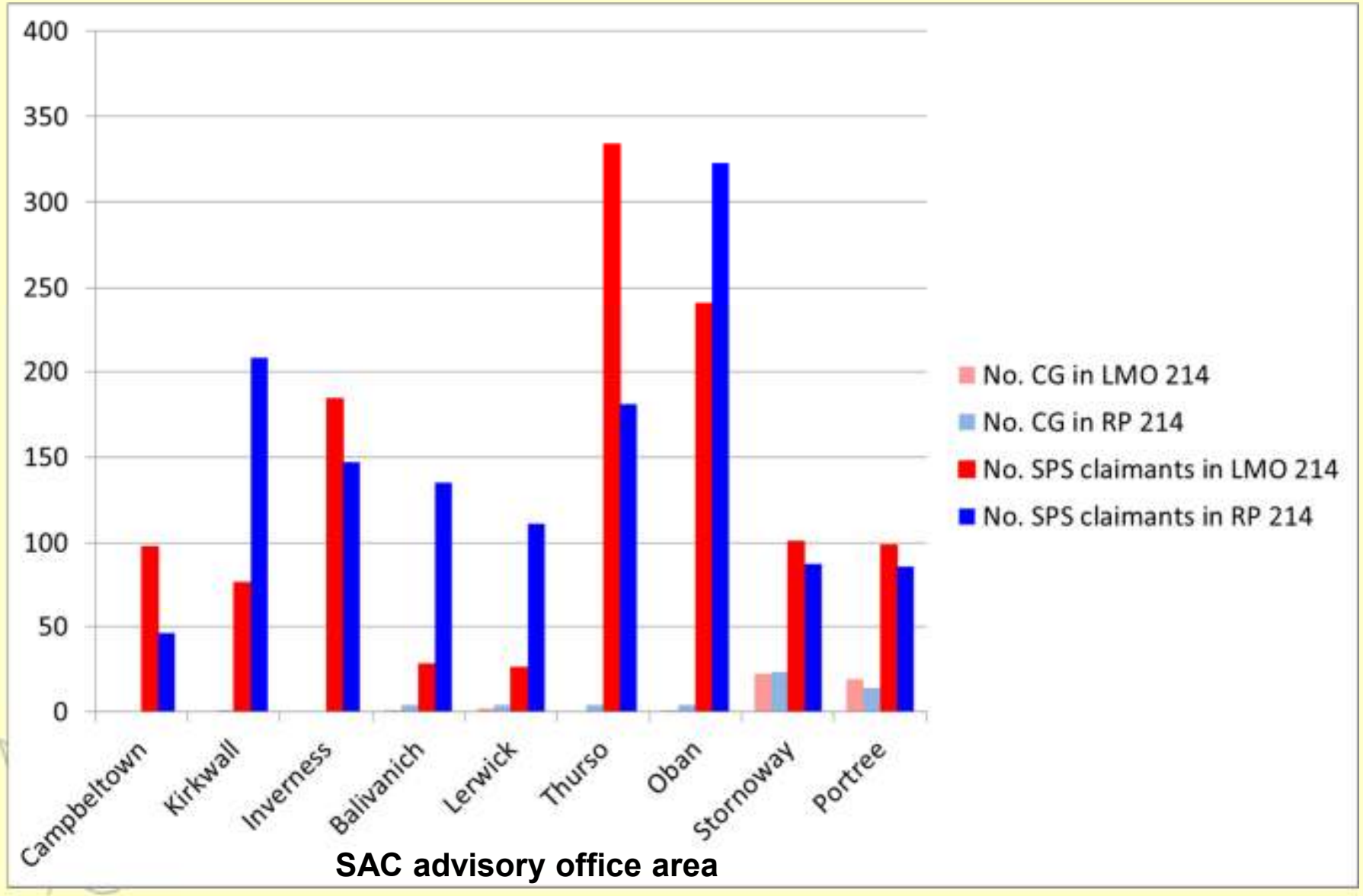
(2011 recipients, Defra database)

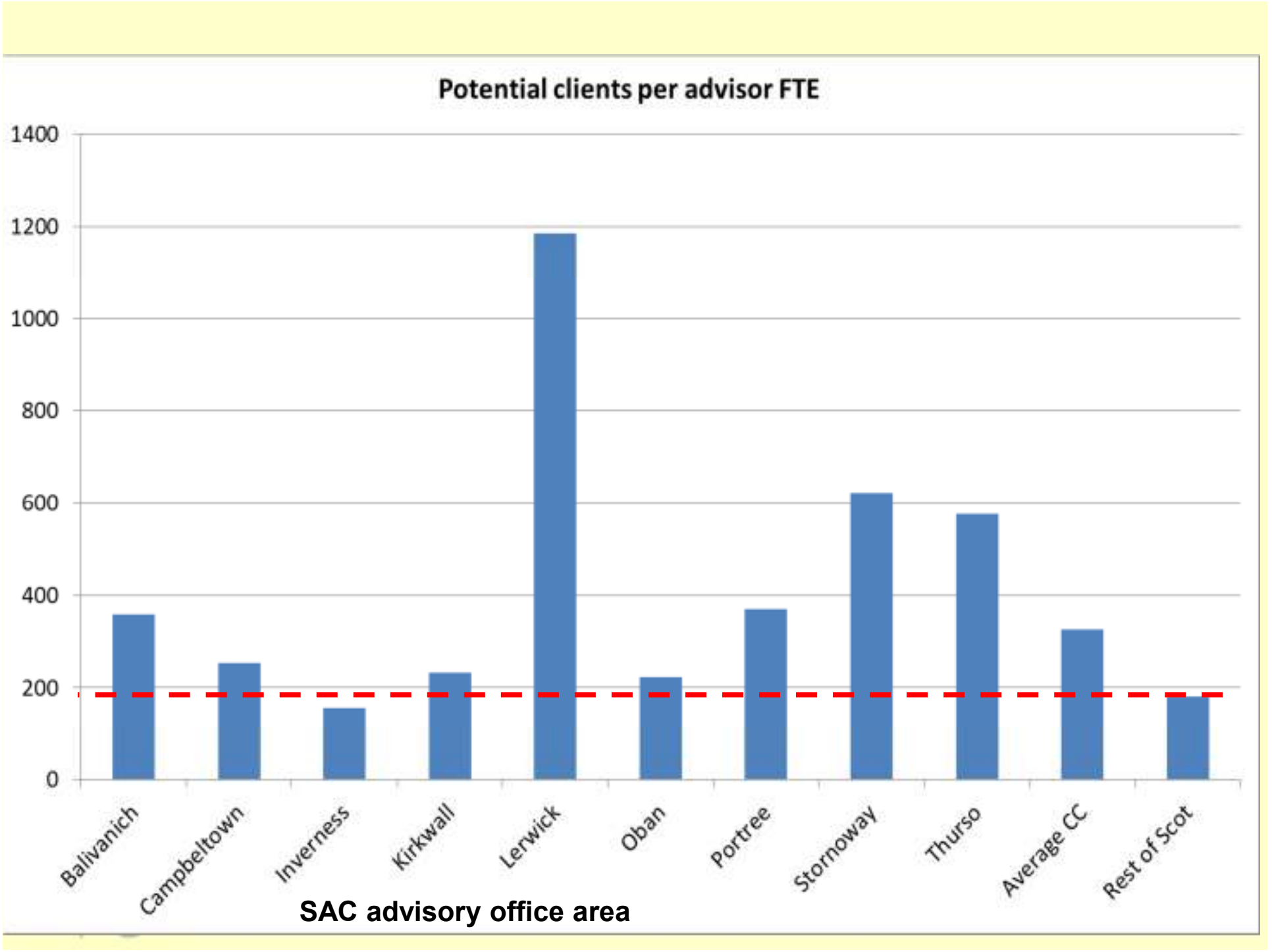
What other reasons could there be for non-participation in agri-env/forestry schemes?



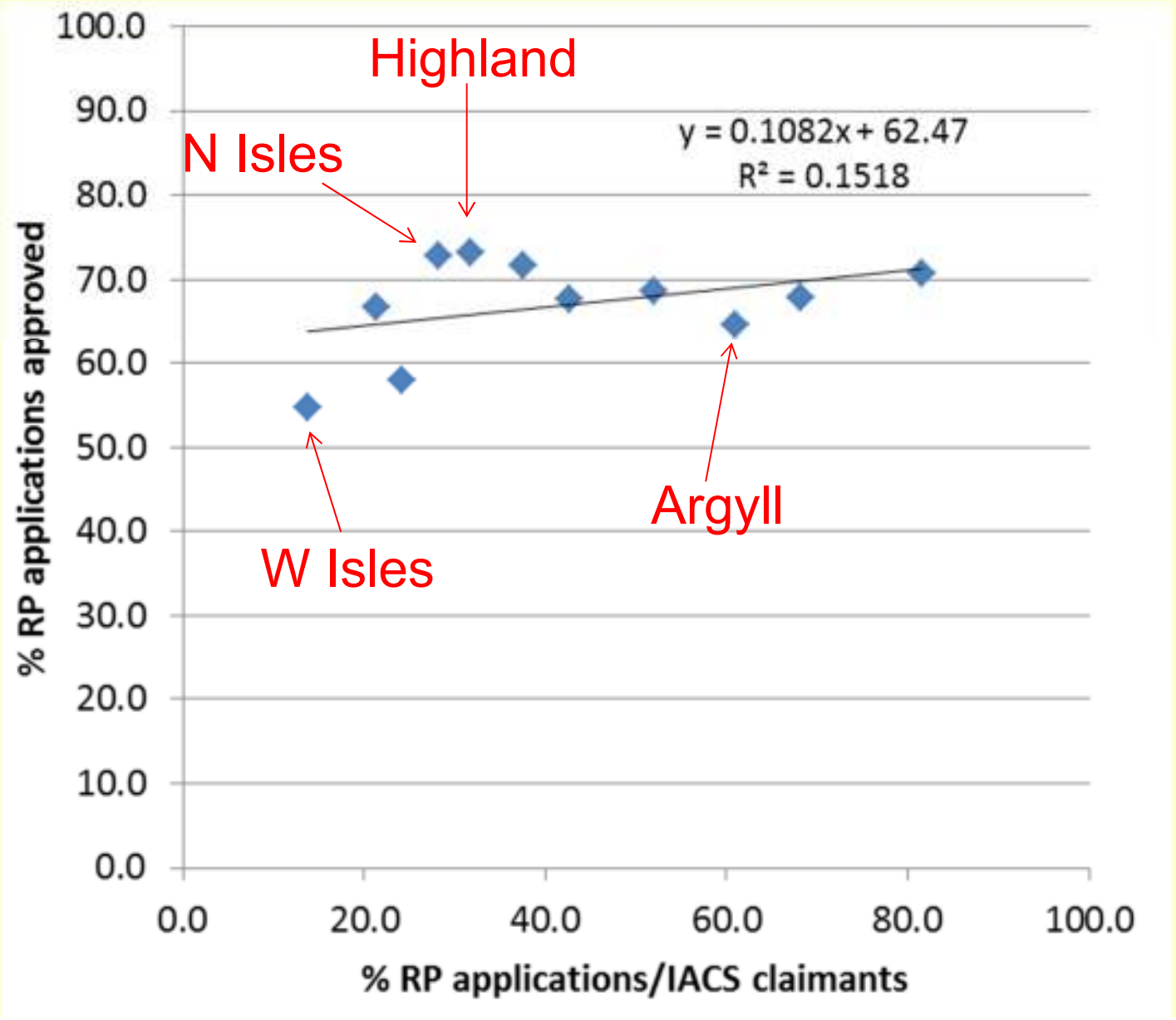
Source: Grazings clerks sample

Is there a regional variation in advisory service engagement?




Potential clients per advisor FTE
1400
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
Balivanich
Campbeltown
Inverness
Kirkwall
Lerwick
Oban
Portree
Stornoway
Thurso
Average CC
Rest of Scot
SAC advisory office area

‘Nothing succeeds like success’ or ‘Recipe for a vicious spiral’…..?



Lack of coherent policy?

- Prima facie case that common grazings are somehow disadvantaged in RD policy
- Suggests lack of coherent, ‘joined-up’, policy making
- RDP process is one case which is meant to be explicitly ‘joined-up’ through the programming approach (though direct payments will also be so from 2014)
- SRDP 2007-13 contains ***no*** references to common grazings in the main text
- SRDP 2014-20 needs to change this:
  - in the analysis
  - in the measures
  - in the monitoring and evaluation