

Seminar on results based approaches Blaenafon, Wales, 13th February 2018



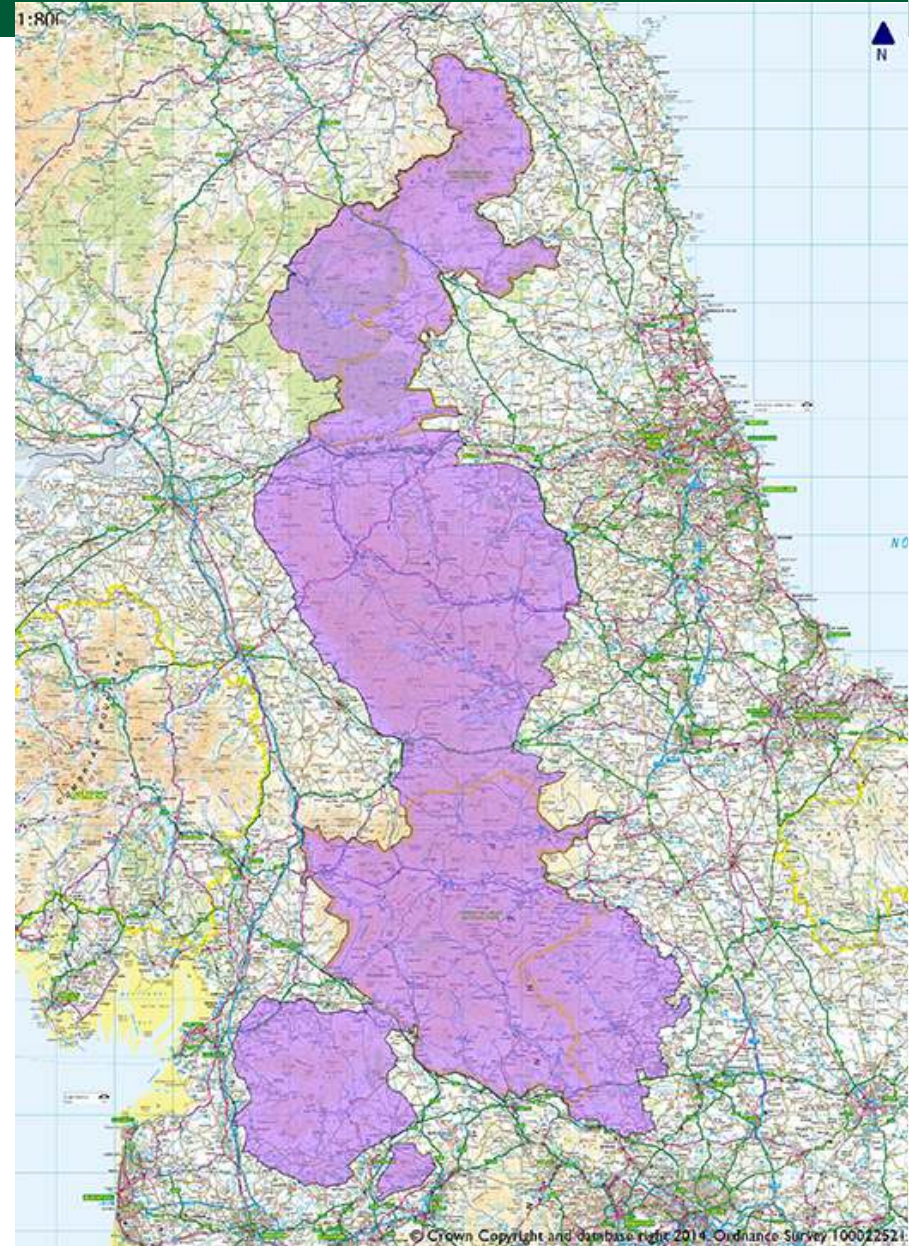
NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN Local Nature Partnership



Adrian Shepherd
Head of Land Management
Yorkshire Dales National Park
Authority

The 'Northern Upland Chain' LNP

- Set up 2012
- Partnership of public, private and voluntary sectors
- Focused on securing practical benefits for nature and for the natural economy of the uplands.



Common interests, shared priorities



High Nature Value Farming in the NUCLNP a national treasure



- The High Nature Value is a product of the farming system and the farmers
- Characterised by strong sense of place
- Often includes common land
- In Northern English uplands suckler cattle and hill sheep are a key component
- Products:
 - Food
 - Wildlife rich pastures and meadows
 - Designated Landscapes
 - Others – e.g. clean water
 - Carbon sequestration

High Nature Value Farming

- Low intensity
- High levels of biodiversity
- Range of other public benefits
- *“The farming of most value for biodiversity conservation across Europe is the low-intensity raising of livestock on unimproved vegetation that is grazed, browsed, or cut for hay”*
- **Low Economic Value farming?**
 - Marginal and difficult
 - Low farm incomes
 - Value to society is not well understood



High Nature value farming working group priorities achieved to date



- Undertake 4 pilot case studies through the NUCLNP
- Publish the final report and case studies;
- Provide input into the NELMS targeting consultation
- Lobby for higher BPS payments in the SDA
- Produce publicity material (summary report, stands for shows etc) to promote HNV farming within the LNP to a range of audiences;
- Identify an opportunity to get farmers together to celebrate and promote the value of HNV farming;
- Set up some informal events to build relationships between farmers across the LNP as a first step towards a more formal 'Farmer Forum';

High Nature Value farming in the Northern Upland Chain
A European Forum on Nature Conservation and
Pastoralism report for
the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership



NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN
Local Nature Partnership



High Nature Value Farming in the NORTHERN UPLAND CHAIN

Yorkshire Dales National Park • North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty • Yorkshire Dales National Park • Yorkshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



What is High Nature Value Farming?

Sit in a flower-rich meadow in the Yorkshire Dales or walk across a North Pennines moor with the curlews calling and you get a very different picture from the one often associated with modern, intensive farming.

High Nature Value farming describes low intensity farming systems that are particularly valuable for wildlife, the environment and people. But low intensity does not mean low-maintenance – managing livestock, meadows, and thousands of miles of dry-stone walls is time-consuming, expensive, and requires high levels of skill and knowledge.



Why it matters

The Northern Upland Chain runs from the southern tip of Nidderdale to the Scottish border in the Northumberland National Park. Much of this stunningly beautiful area of hills and dales may look wild but it has been managed by generations of farmers.

More than any other part of England, the area is dominated by semi-natural wildlife habitats. Over 100,000 hectares have been designated as of national and international importance, including:

- huge areas of blanket bog and heather moorland
- most of the UK's upland hay meadows, and most of England's limestone pavement
- iconic species like red squirrel, curlew, yellow-wagtail, other rare orchids, and most of England's remaining black grouse population.



The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership was established in 2012, and includes over 50 organisations. It covers four nationally-designated landscapes: Northumberland National Park, North Pennines AONB, Yorkshire Dales National Park, and Nidderdale AONB.

Local farming systems use traditional livestock breeds like Cheviot and Swaledale sheep, which have adapted to cope with the harsh conditions. These form the backbone of the national sheep industry, accounting for 20% of British ewes.

HNV farming and land management in the Northern Upland Chain also:

- helps to regulate the flow of many major rivers, minimising flood peaks
- conserves vast areas of peat and other soils that store huge amounts of carbon
- maintains over 300,000 hectares of land that is accessible to the public for recreation
- manages the beautiful landscapes that support a multi-million pound tourism industry.





The challenges

Farming in these uplands is difficult, with long, cold winters, high rainfall and a short growing season. The systems that make best use of the land are relatively low productivity and labour intensive. In other words, farming here costs more and produces less.

Many of the benefits that HNV farming provides are generally not rewarded by the market. The numbers of traditional hill sheep breeds are in decline, and their market value is falling as producers switch to larger, cross-bred sheep.

HNV farmers tend to have low incomes, and a high turnover - a situation that is high risk but low reward. Many do not make the equivalent of the minimum wage on the hours they work. As a result, HNV farming does not provide the capital needed to invest in improving farm efficiency or adapting to the restrictions required by environmental support schemes. This issue is most acute for tenant farmers.



The beauty of the landscapes maintained by HNV farming makes them very attractive places to live - driving up house prices to levels where farmers cannot afford to retire. Their children move away to find housing, and the poor access to local services can make families reluctant to move back.

Large amounts of public money are channelled to farmers in the Northern Upland Chain. Without these payments these types of farm would have largely disappeared. However, the current system fails to get the best outcomes for the farmers or the environment.



A call for action

HNV farming remains the best and only realistic way of maintaining some of this country's most valuable landscapes - but things could be so much better.

The Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership has been collaborating with groups of local farmers to explore ways of securing a more robust economic future and delivering more environmental benefits.

We are now calling on the Government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, environmental agencies and the farming community to work together to support HNV farming here, including taking action to:

- Ensure that the new national Countryside Stewardship scheme targets support to HNV farmers in the Northern Upland Chain;
- Provide a stronger voice for HNV farmers in developing policy;
- Raise awareness of HNV farming and the fantastic food it produces;

- Develop tailored programmes of support, advice and capital investment that are more easily accessible to upland farm businesses;
- Introduce a more collaborative approach to the delivery of agri-environment schemes, using the skills and knowledge of HNV farmers to deliver environmental outcomes in a way that allows the whole farm to work and make sense as a system;
- Rapidly develop new payment mechanisms to enable the market to reward HNV farmers for the many public benefits they provide; and,
- Further reform the Common Agricultural Policy so that payment rates reflect the real cost to HNV farmers of maintaining some of our most important natural assets.

Get involved

To find out more visit our website at nucinp.org.uk



High Nature farming working group initiatives



- Piloted a whole farm plan LEP funded project to deliver integrated business and environmental plans the Dales & Moors Farm Innovation Programme
- Took a group of HNV farmers and advisers to Ireland to visit the EFNCP RBAPS in the Burren and the Shannon Callows & hosted a return trip to the NUCLNP by EFNCP RBAPS staff
- Applied with NE for a RBAPS pilot in England, Arable in East Anglia and upland grassland in the Yorkshire Dales within the NUCLNP. If successful this pilot would be mainstreamed as a trialled RBAPS into the next RDP.
- Working with farmers & EFNCP to design a RBAPS for the NUCLNP & contribute to post Brexit Agricultural policy – the Northern Hill Farming panel was formed.

Payment by Results Scheme

Wensleydale



SPECIES RICH GRASSLANDS

UPLAND GRASSLAND FOR BREEDING WADERS



- One of only 3 EU-level pilots funded through the Directorate General Environment Biodiversity programme
- Managed by Natural England in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (NUCLNP)
- National pilot operating in 2 areas to test the concept:
 - Wensleydale (grassland)
 - Norfolk/Suffolk (pollinators & winter bird food)
- 3 year project between Jan 2016 and Dec 2018
- €714,000 budget (€500,000 EU grant, €214,000 partner contribution)
- 34 x 2 year agreements

Previous schemes

Farmers paid for following a set of management prescriptions – strict mowing dates, limits for grazing and inputs

Results based schemes

Farmers are paid for **a desired result** - species-rich meadows, and good quality breeding wader and chick feeding habitat

Project development – farmer involvement

Farmer visit to Ireland



5 farmer meetings across LNP:

1. Bring everyone up to the same level of understanding of the results based payment approach
2. Agree what poor and excellent habitat looks like and the management requirements needed.
3. Agree the type of results that we are looking for to maintain and improve the habitats and agree how they can be verified by the farmer and/or adviser.
4. Decide upon the addition of payment for actions



Wensleydale pilot area

Pilot Results-Based Payment Approaches for Agri-Environment Schemes in Arable and Upland Grassland Systems in England - site locations.

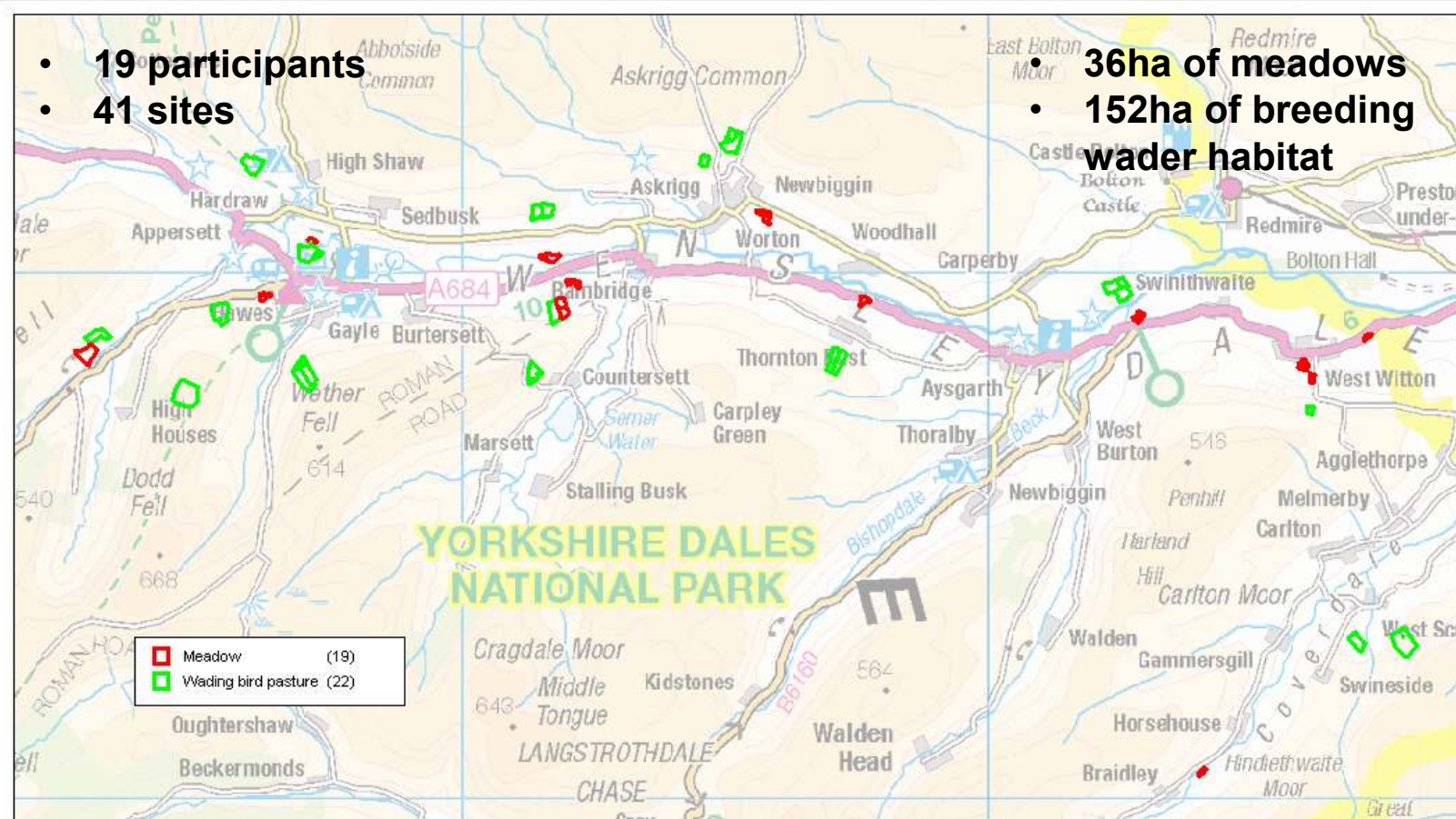
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Compiled on 9 January 2017



- 19 participants
- 41 sites

- 36ha of meadows
- 152ha of breeding wader habitat



Upland grassland for breeding waders

Objective: To provide suitable feeding, nesting and chick rearing habitat for breeding waders (lapwing, curlew, snipe and redshank)


A single self assessment in May/June undertaken by the farmer, looking specifically at 5 key habitat features needed to meet the objective:

1. Vegetation height
2. Rush cover
3. Scale of wet features
4. Quality of wet features
5. Damaging operations



Scoring Criteria


Vegetation height

Mixed sward height where between 25 - 75% of the field is short and the rest varied, tussocks frequently seen and well distributed	10	
Over 75% long. Short swards confined to very small parts of fields (eg gateways, sup feed sites only) Tussocks indistinguishable from other tall vegetation	5	
Over 75% short with little to no variation in height. Tussocks rare or absent	5	
No difference in height – either all short, or all long, with no variation	1	


Rush cover

Tier	1	2	3	4	5	10	
Total points	<9 points	10-19 points	20 – 29 points	30 – 39 points	40 points	5	
						1	

Score

Field	Grant £/ha	35	69	104	139	174	scattered across the	10	
field									
							Damp areas are contained to approximately 10% of the field, eg springs, remainder of field is dry	5	
							Damp areas are rarely seen	1	

Quality of wet features

Wet features contain a mix of shallow pools and wet vegetation, gently sloping edges, 50% of the edge is mud with less than 25% rush or tall vegetation	10	
A number of wet features on the site but not meeting all criteria above	5	
Steep sided, no muddy edge, dense rush cover, inaccessible to birds	1	

Objective: To undertake sustainable agricultural management to produce good quality herb rich hay

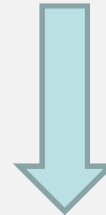
A single self assessment in July undertaken by the farmer, looking specifically at 2 key habitat features needed to meet the objective:

1. Range of positive and negative plant species
2. Impact of damaging activities

Assessment of range of species undertaken by following a set line through the meadow, with the farmer stopping 10 times to ID plant species



- Score of 146 = £260/ha

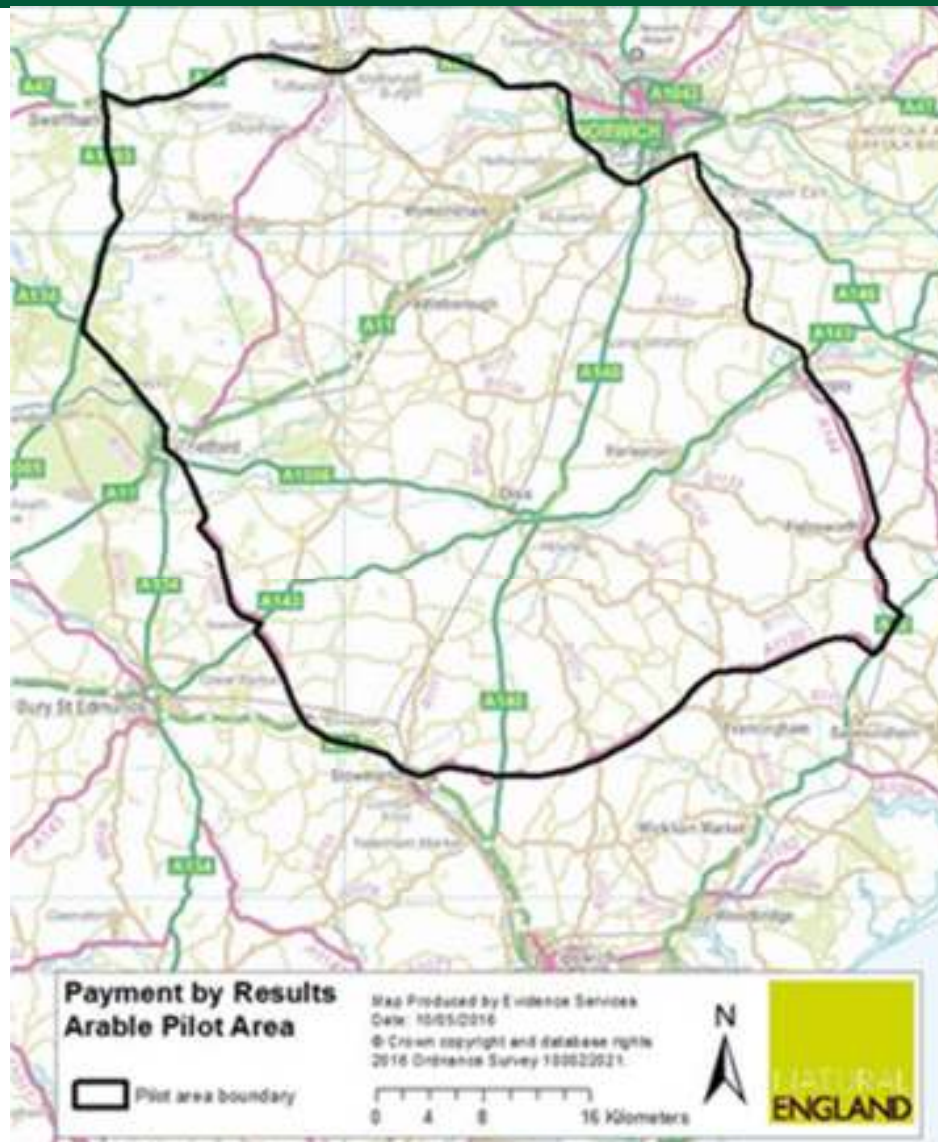


Score / Total points	1 40 -79 points	2 80-119 points	3 120-159 points	4 160-199 points	5 200+ points
£/ha	112	186	260	334	371

[illegible]

Arable pilot – Norfolk and Suffolk

- 15 participants
- 25ha winter bird food
- 17ha pollen & nectar mix



Selecting arable indicators

Winter bird food

<i>Quality:</i>	Seed heads of specific crops e.g. wheat, linseed
<i>Quantity:</i>	Minimum number (thresholds) to qualify as present
<i>Time period:</i>	Must be retained until end of winter (well after assessment date)



Pollen & nectar mix

<i>Quality:</i>	Presence of sown species (actual species are not specified)
<i>Quantity:</i>	Minimum number (threshold) to count as present (Years 1&2) % cover of sown species (Yr2 only)

Only positive indicators, no negative (i.e. what we don't want to see)



- Training & guidance – fitting this to farmers needs:
 - hay meadow restoration techniques
 - plant identification
 - wading bird habitat management
 - peer to peer learning
- Attitudinal Survey
- Field assessments
- Regular whole group meetings



- Farmers are more interested in improving the habitat
- Meadows are being looked over frequently for new species.
- Farmers have undertaken work off their own back to improve the habitats – rush control and scrape creation, seed addition
- The training and guidance has been really successful
- Farmers are taking more care to avoid damaging operations
- On the whole the scoring system appears robust
- For the delivery organisation:
 - Shift from paperwork to fieldwork
 - More cost effective?



- Scoring methodology for breeding waders aimed at suite of waders which can disadvantage sites where only 1 species is present – eg Lapwing.
- Breeding wader scores have shown the most variance which was unexpected.
- The dry spring made the wader score difficult to complete.
- Hay meadow score sheet includes soft brome as a negative species – unfair to expect this to be controlled by the farmer.
- Doesn't include scoring for other biodiversity or landscape features eg historic, or for water quality.

- 1 more agreement year
- Control site assessment year 2 versus RBAPs site assessments
- Survey of farmers thoughts on the process
- Costings of approach
- Scaling up to whole farm, multiple habitats / species / features
- Stand alone scheme or hybrid agr-environment scheme
- Final report back to the EU and Defra





Payments For Outcomes





Introduction



Problem: 2017

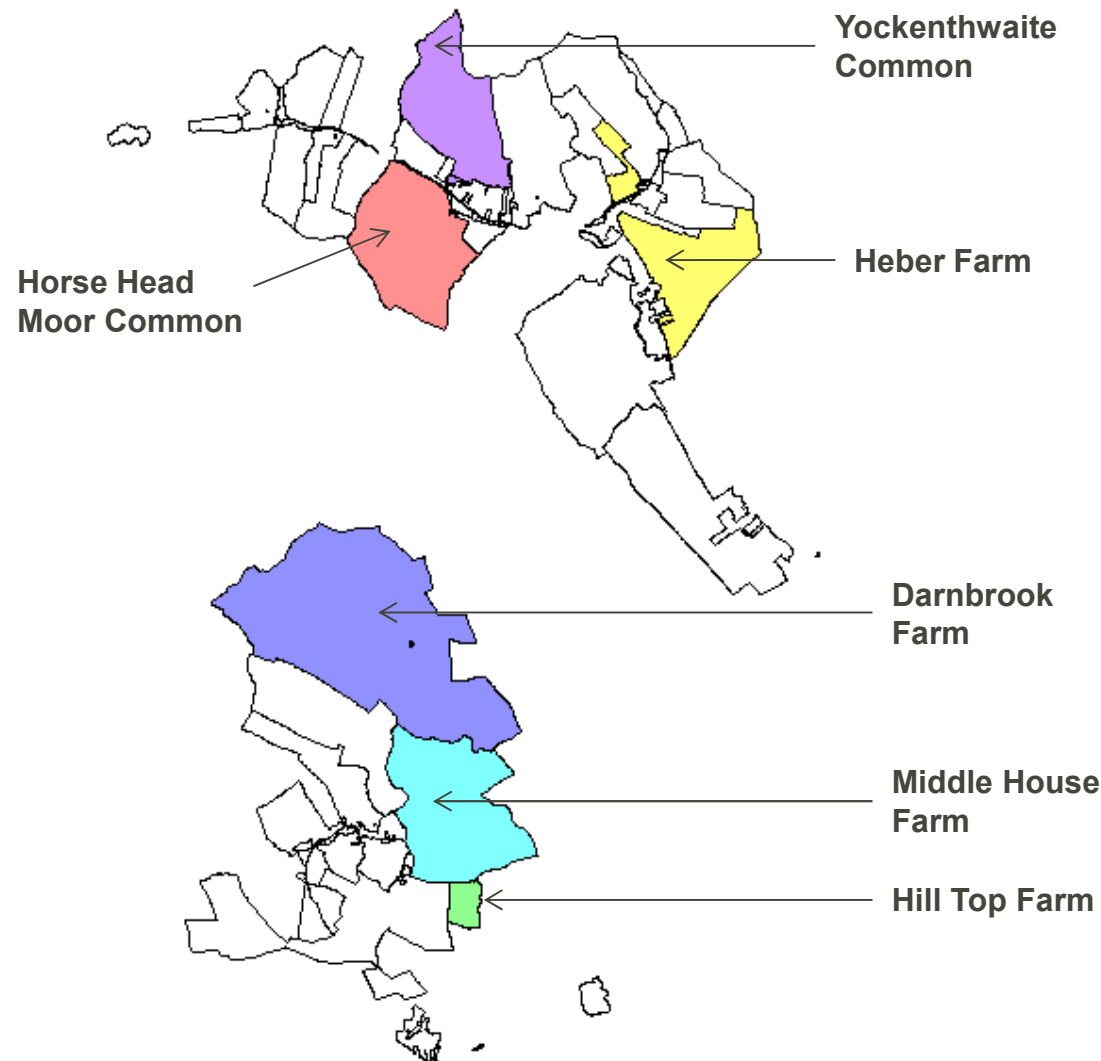
- 4 tenants
- Highly designated land
- Priority habitats
- HLS due to finish
- Pre-CS
- Up to 11 months gap
- Potential decline

Opportunity:

- Trial a better way of working



PFO 2017 trial - How is it different?



- NGO trial
- Whole farm approach
- Multiple habitats
- In partnership with YDNPA



Overview

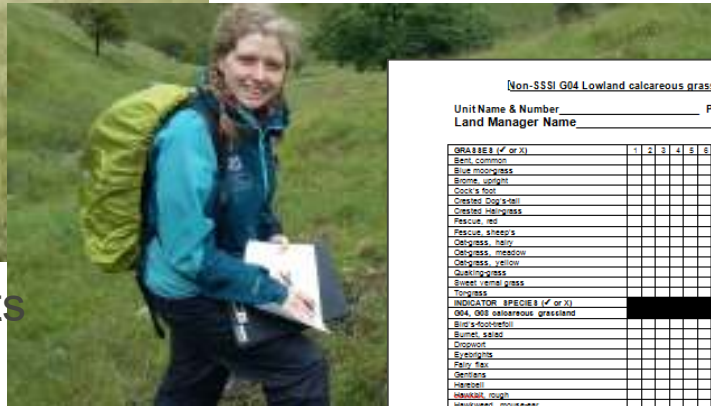


- 6 Agreements
- 12 Assessment types (incl. 9 Habitats)
- 2004 Hectares
- 163 Fixed Quadrats (SR Sampling)
- 4 Levels of monitoring
- 5 Farmers, 1 Ecologist, 6 Rangers, & 6 Volunteers (to date)



Hill Top





2. Verification

3. Traditional scheme condition assessments (HLS/BEHTA)

4. Compare, calibrate, improve farmer assessment methods



Attitudinal survey - Farmers



- Relationship with Trust already good but got even better in PFO (from 80% to 85%)
- A better way of working? Potentially 75%, Yes 25%
- Habitat skills increased from 35% to 55%
- Species skills increased from 32% to 60%
- Interest in environmental management increased from 80% to 85%
- Assessments were user friendly Av. 9 out of 10
- Future training: On-site and local site visits were first choice



Farmer quotes

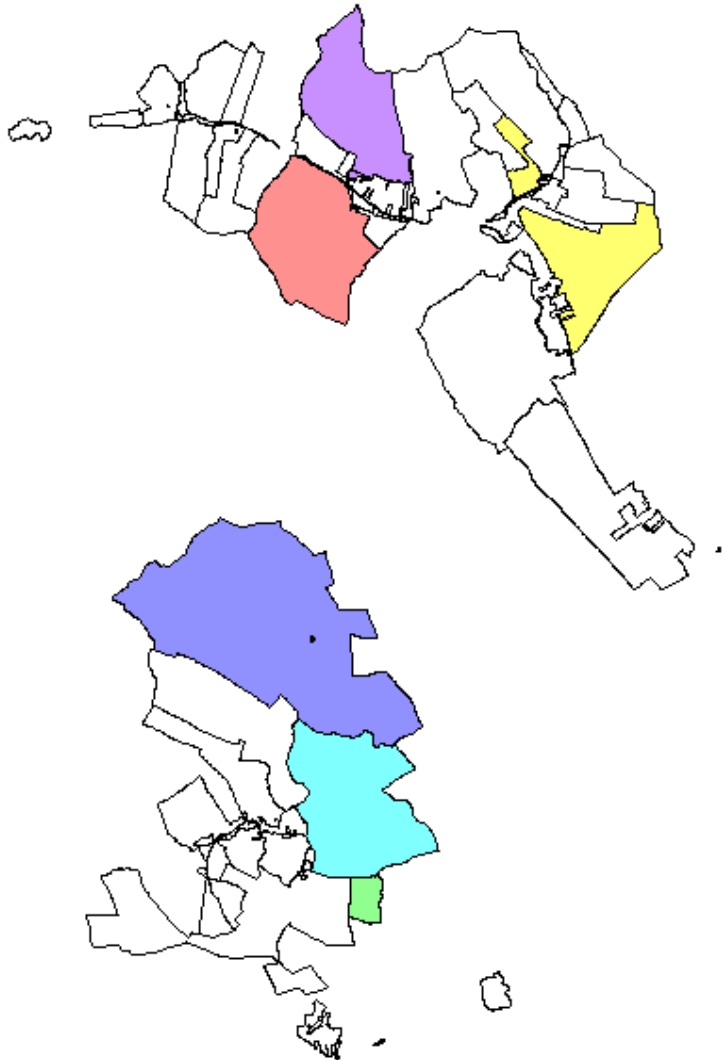
‘The very early indications to me are that this more cooperative approach has the potential to completely change working relationships between tenants and the Trust, for the better.’

‘It was very useful and interesting for me to do the survey with a ranger/ecologist, Roisin in my case. It would have been a pointless exercise on my own, the expert knowledge and help was invaluable’

‘Ongoing guidance and monitoring to show how a change of management can impact on the ecology would be useful’



The next step



5 Farms (3116Ha)

Themes

- Pollinators (3 yr whole farm)
- Soil Health (5 yr in by)
- NFM (research)
- Priority habitats (outside of CS)

Partners

- YDNPA
- BugLife
- Leeds Uni

A scenic view of a hillside with a stone wall and a herd of cattle. The hillside is covered in green grass and has a stone wall running across it. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry grass with several black and white cattle grazing. A person is standing in the middle of the field, looking at the cattle. The background shows a valley with more hills and a small town in the distance.

Paying for 'results' in Agri Environment Schemes - can we meet the needs of both farmers and society?

Neil Heseltine
Hill Top Farm
Malham

@hilltopfarmgirl

Hill Top Farm



@hilltopfarmgirl

HILL TOP FARM

- 1100 acres, split between Malhamdale and Littondale;
- 800 acres rented from private landlords;
- 100 acres rented from National Trust;
- Introduced 19 Belted Galloway heifers and a bull in 2003
- All Less Favoured Area (LFA);
- All limestone permanent pasture;
- All under HLS/ELS schemes until April 2017;
- Sheep numbers peaked at 800 and down to 400 by 2012



HILL TOP FARM

SHEEP

- Higher output
- High feed costs
- Labour intensive
- Environmental Impact
- Marketed as a commodity
- Regular worming/vaccination programme

CATTLE

- Lower output
- No purchased feeds
- Minimal intervention
- Increased biodiversity
- Marketed as a premium product
- Zero routine treatments
- Conservation grazing tools

HILL TOP FARM

CURRENT COSTINGS

	SHEEP		CATTLE	
	2012	2016	2012	2016
	£	£	£	£
• Sales	59,318	32,081	17,828	21,310
• Labour	12,000	750	1,755	1,260
• Feed	15,178	3,724	270	500
• Haulage	320	0	668	0
• Other costs	11,202	2,600	3,675	1,318
• Livestock purchases	18,900	7,042	220	3,040
• Vets costs	1,240	186	117	117
• Total	58,840	14,302	6,588	6,265
• Contribution	478	17,779	11,240	15,045

GREAT CLOSE MIRE



@hilltopfarmgirl

FLEXIBILITY

- MINDSET – where are we now?
 - All eligible
 - Results will vary
 - No long term commitment at the outset
- CHOICES - which direction do we want to take?
 - An environmental level that's comfortable
 - Change management?
 - Improve results?

The farmer takes the initiative

JUSTIFICATION

Farming Industry

- Farming techniques
- Farm payments
- Government

- All coming under greater scrutiny

Payment by Results

- Encourages sustainable farming techniques
- Farmers only get paid for delivering results
- Both of which give Government far greater justification to taxpayers

SUMMARY

- Provides long term justification
- Engages farmers at whatever level they feel comfortable with
- Provides fair reward for a variety of products
- Then we have a scheme that meets the needs of farmers and society

FINALE

- Contributes to the wider rural community
- Makes farming and rural life a more attractive proposition to young people