



# High Nature Value Farming in the Northern Upland Chain – time for action

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EUROPEAN FORUM ON  
NATURE CONSERVATION  
AND PASTORALISM







# What is High Nature Value farmland?

Image © 2008 Bluesky

© 2008 Tele Atlas

Streaming 100%

© 2007 Google

Eye alt 888 m

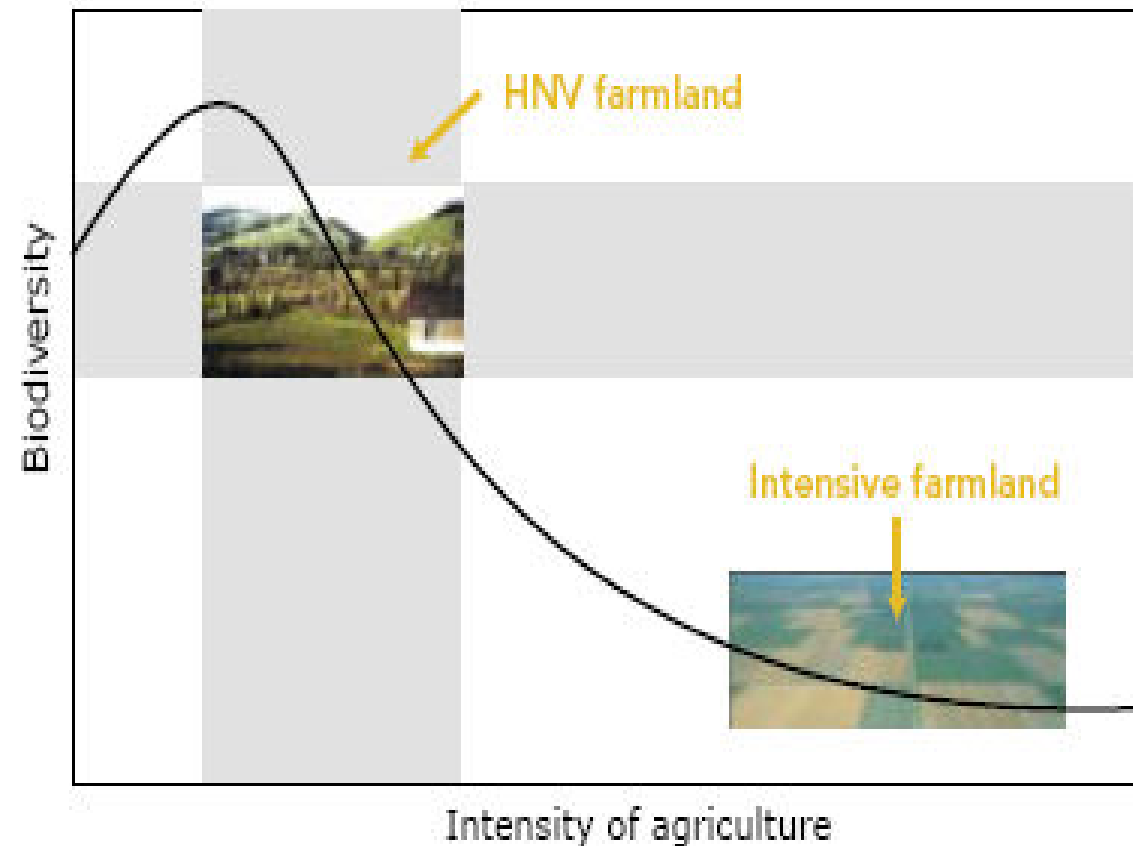
## **What is HNV farming?**

- Farming that creates conditions of high biodiversity (diversity of wild fauna and flora);
- and/or maintains particular wildlife species of conservation concern (threatened species).
- This “nature value” results from particular farming characteristics.





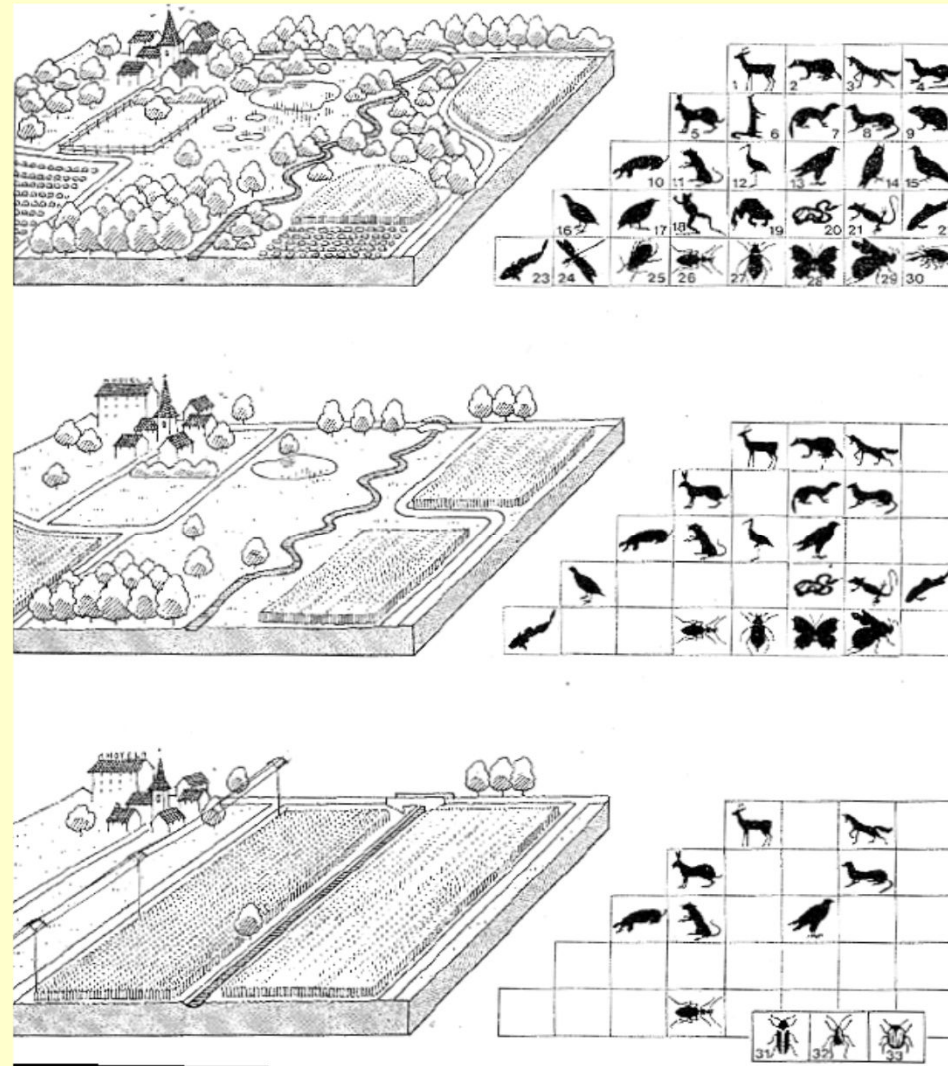
Figure 2 General relationship between agricultural intensity and biodiversity



**Source:** after Hoogeveen *et al.*, 2001 (see Appendix B for further explanation).

**Photos:** Peter Veen (left); Vincent Wigbels (right).

# Landscape diversity and species richness



Peeters A., 2006. Processus écologiques et agricoles dans une diversité de situations, synthèse scientifique. Présentation au colloque Action publique, Agriculture et biodiversité, Rennes 23-25 octobre 2006





**Not farming**

**HNV  
Farming**

**Not HNV**

# Key characteristics of HNV farming.

## Low-intensity in terms of:

- Livestock / ha
- Nitrogen / ha
- Biocides / ha



### Type 1

#### % land under semi-natural vegetation:

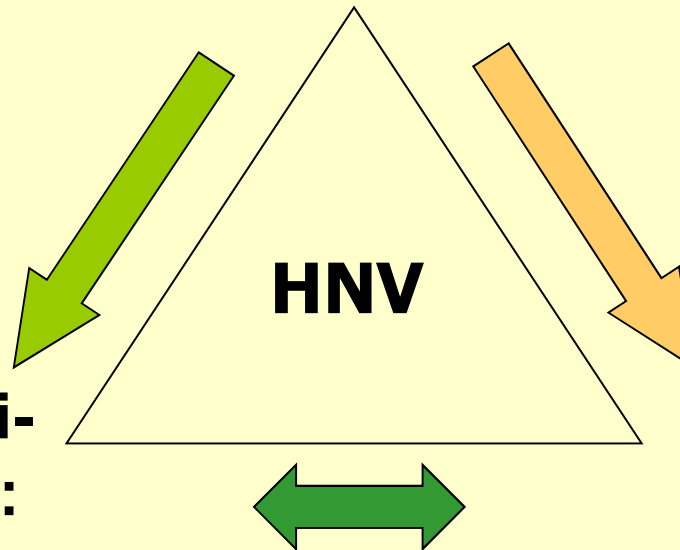
- Grass, scrub
- Trees
- Field margins



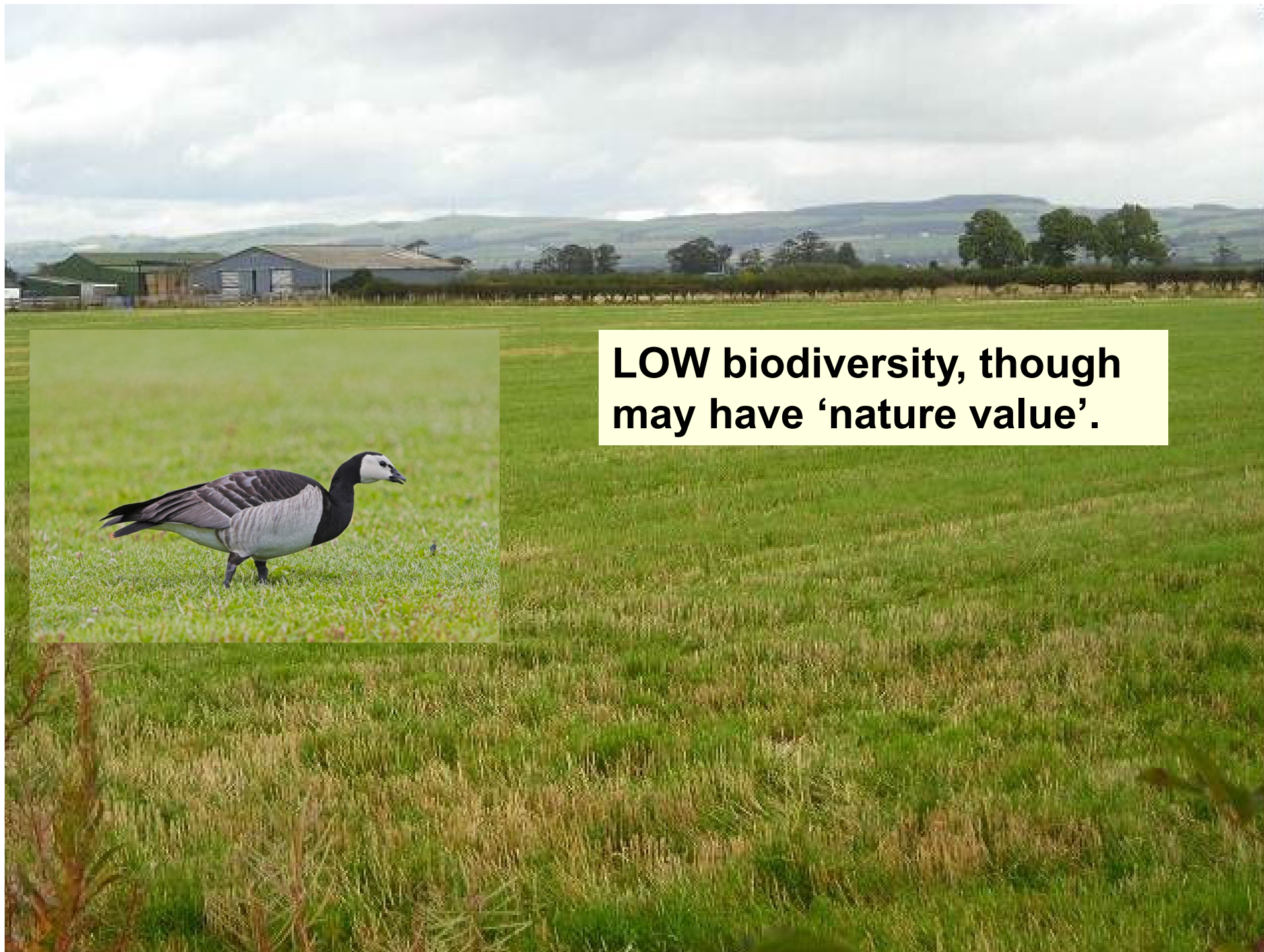
### Type 2

#### Diversity of land cover:

- Crops
- Fallows
- Grass, scrub
- Trees
- Water bodies

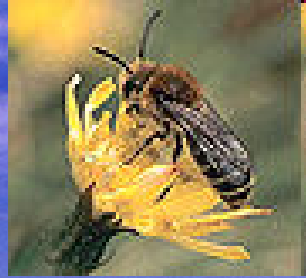






**LOW biodiversity, though  
may have 'nature value'.**





## HNV farming characteristics:

### ➤ *The type of land cover:*

- Mainly semi-natural pasture or meadows
- Or a mosaic of semi-natural pasture with crops

### ➤ *The way the land cover is used for production:*

- Low intensity use of land, livestock, machinery, chemical inputs and purchased feeds
- May be high intensity use of labour





Usually economically small and socio-economically vulnerable



FIELD DATA SHEET FOR ALL PERMANENT LAND

Please use BLOCK LETTERS and BLACK INK throughout. Enter only factual data on this FDS. All other text should be entered in the appropriate country's form.

Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Field Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Reference Number: \_\_\_\_\_

PERMANENT LAND

1/1 This only  
1/2 All other

Must be: ☐ 1/1 ☐ 1/2

BASIC INFORMATION										LAND QUALITY		LAND CLIMATE		OTHER LAND ON THE FIELDS		LAND MANAGEMENT	
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The area information on this sheet is for use only for completing the application form. It is not to be used for any other purpose.

Please check the pre-printed information in columns B-G and in Columns 1 and 2. You must enter the information in pre-printed information and any other information in the appropriate country's form. Do not enter any other information in the appropriate country's form.

Completing this form using the following instructions:

- Complete your data automatically.
- Transfer your data information to your field and LAMING form.
- Review the information on your field and LAMING form.
- Give you an instant receipt.

For further information visit [www.seerad.gov.uk](http://www.seerad.gov.uk) or phone 0844 951 7992

SEERAD

You must sign and date each Field Data Sheet that you complete.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

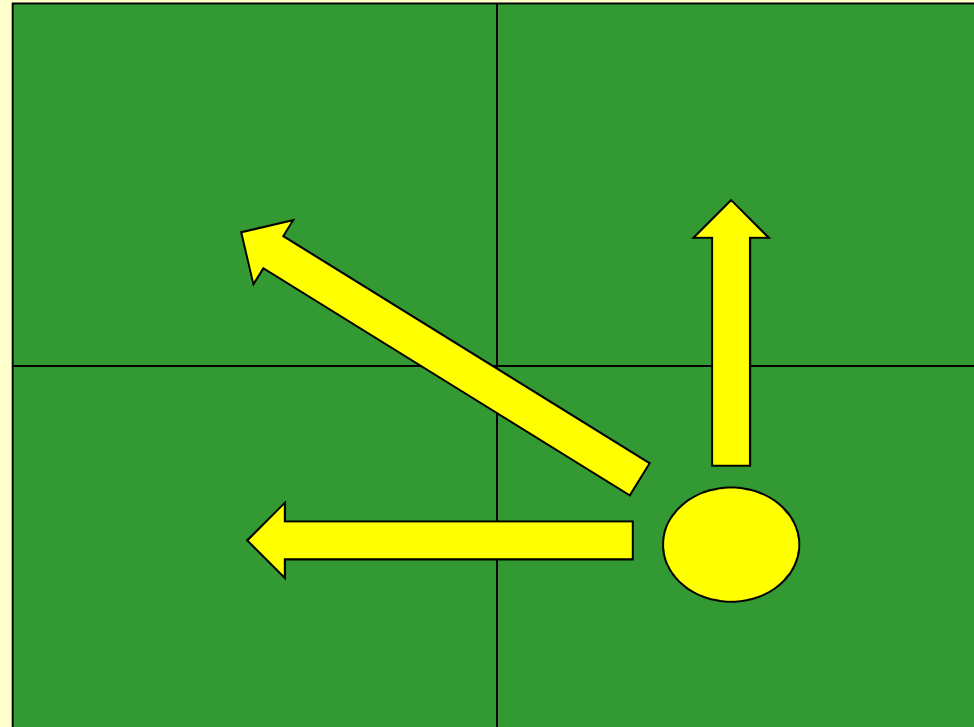
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ICS 05 2008

Can we for the first time since modern agricultural advances have farming systems which are both *profitable* and *HNV*?

High profitability

Low profitability



Low nature value

High nature value





**The Northern Upland Chain is almost all  
High Nature Value farmland**



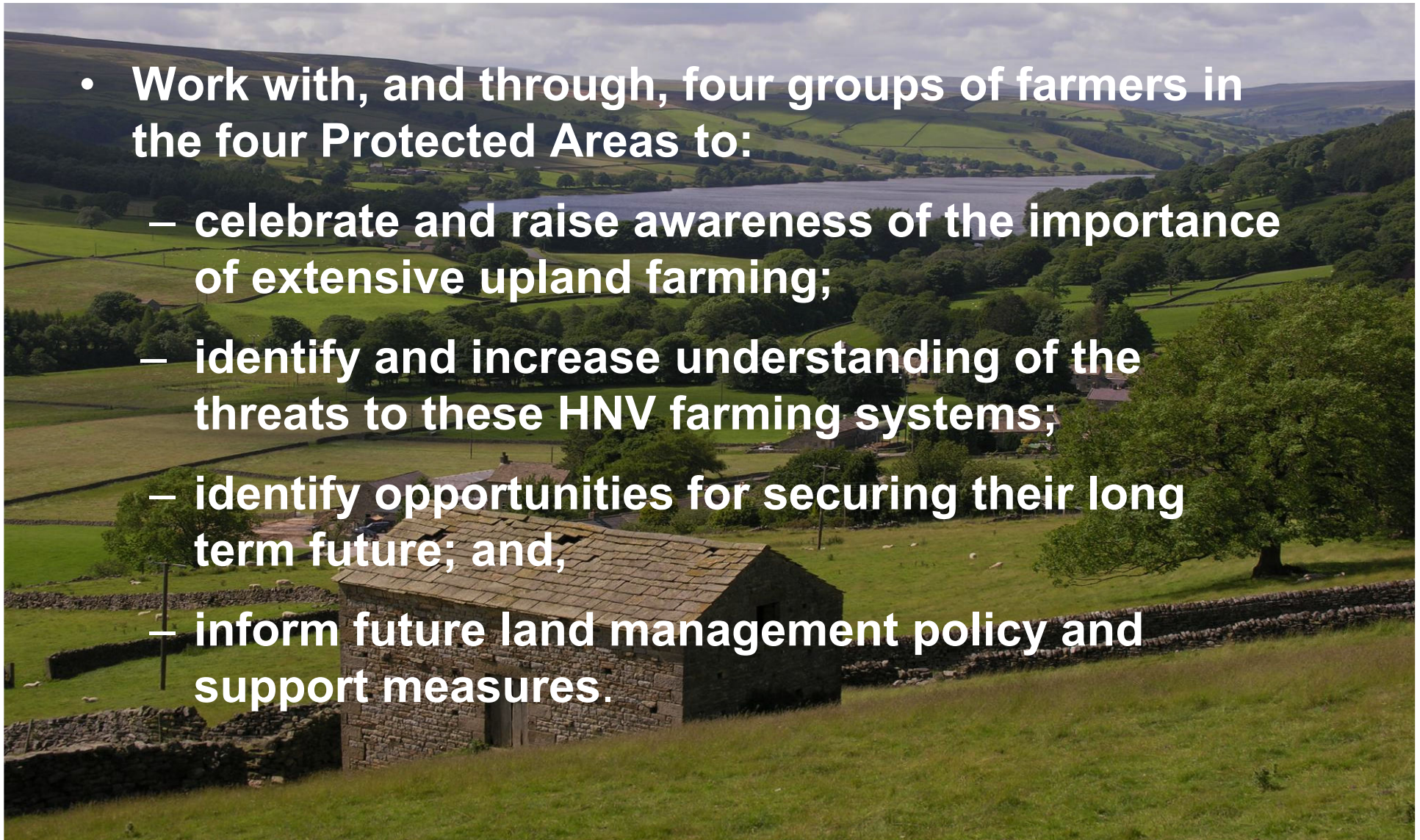


**Provides a whole range of other ecosystem services**



# Project objectives

- Work with, and through, four groups of farmers in the four Protected Areas to:
  - celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of extensive upland farming;
  - identify and increase understanding of the threats to these HNV farming systems;
  - identify opportunities for securing their long term future; and,
  - inform future land management policy and support measures.



# Process

- 4 pilot areas of different sizes
- Different approaches – but all with farmers at their heart
- Detailed analysis of:
  - Nature value;
  - Land management practices
  - Farm economies
  - Farmer views on key issues and opportunities
- Report for each area




# **Final stage...bringing it all together**

- Include recommendations for trialling potential new approaches
- Produce a concise and accessible summary report

**Low productivity, very seasonal, low profit,  
low return to labour**



A photograph of an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark suit, leaning over a red wooden fence. He is holding a small white bottle with a yellow cap and feeding a small lamb. The lamb has white wool and a black face. The background is a red wooden fence.

**It's being ACTIVE that  
costs money in the  
uplands!**





**Decoupled payments not linked to active farming are real problem**






**Driven to look for profit by other means –  
policy is still driving intensification**



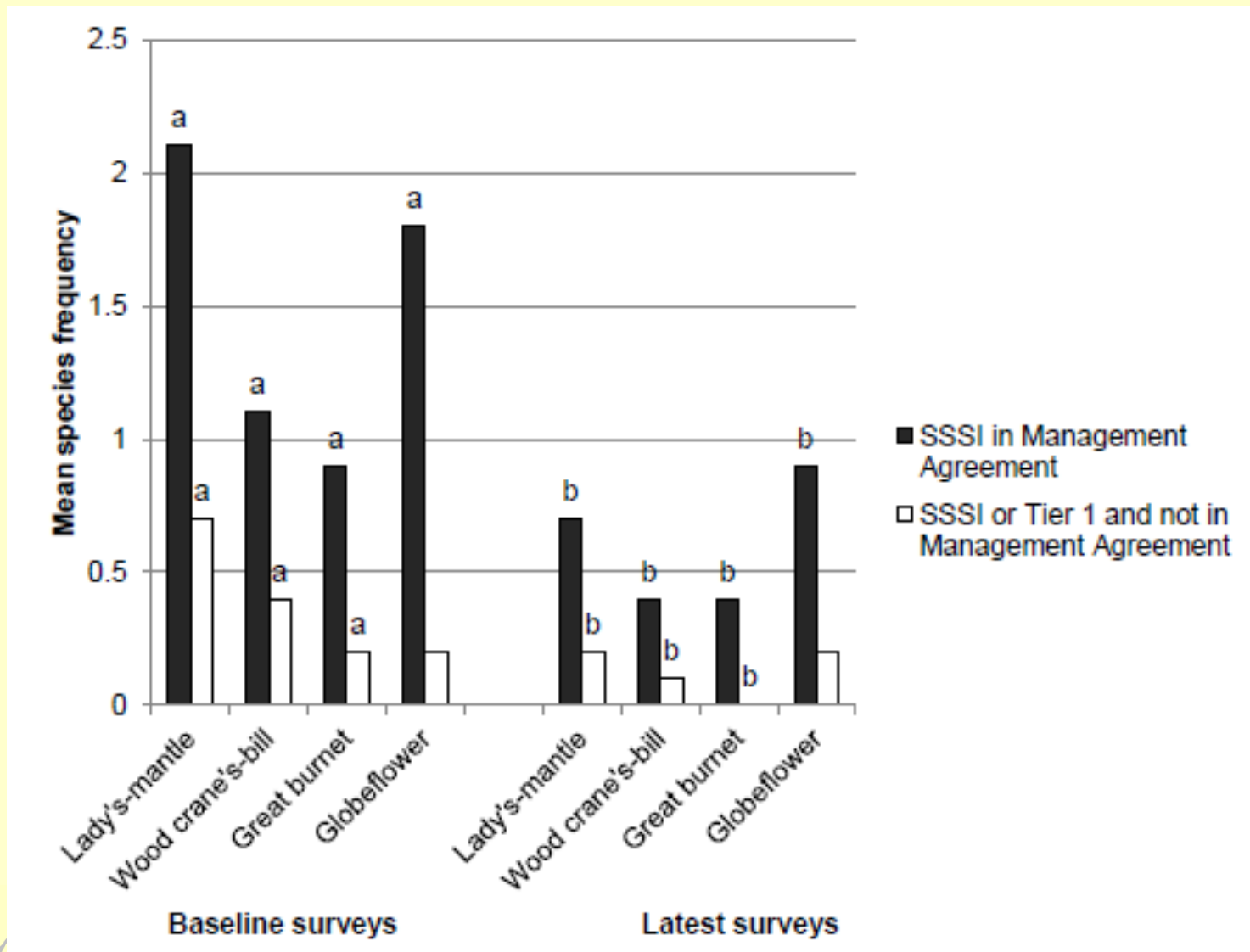




**Schemes encourage lower production,  
but are the farms viable and farmers  
getting reasonable return for their work?**



# Meadow ecological quality dropping



(Starr-Kedde, 2013)



# Understanding between conservationists and HNV farmers could be better

- Lack of understanding of hill farming, its economics and of the connections within the system
- Lack of understanding of the legal duties and obligations on government on the part of farmers
- Sometimes agreements seem based on unbalanced power relationships



# Impediments to new entrants to HNV farming

- Economics of the system and of renting land
- Economics of retiring from farming
- Patchy training opportunities
- Lack of infrastructure, e.g. broadband, for young families living in the uplands





# Other weaknesses of HNV farming

- Poorly understood by general public (and not just by walkers...)
- Difficulties of collaborating for mutual benefit
- Difficulties of liaising with others as a group
- Patchy independent advice delivery
- Planning system
- Walling



## **Project is asking two questions:**

- ***What practical steps should be taken to make HNV farming in the Northern Uplands more efficient & profitable?***
- ***How can the influence of HNV farming and farmers in (from?) the Northern Uplands be increased?***



# Practical needs:

- *The economics of HNV farming:*
  - Better understanding of farm economics and variability in it, best practice with livestock
  - Reforming both Direct Payments and Agri-environment
  - Make it viable both to start farming and to retire
  - Encourage efficiency through collaboration
- *Treat environment as part of a farming system:*
  - Mentality of agri-environment delivery
  - Support for appropriate investments in holdings
- *Long-term approach to farm advice*
- *Know what you want to achieve and monitor progress locally, as you go, using appropriate indicators in 'real' test areas*





## Extending influence – messages to project:

- *Product is good & meets demand (backed by science)*
- *Current CAP*
- *Prepare for next CAP*
- *Farmers **want** to discuss key issues with Natural England and together to come to solutions*
- *Farmers want an **active** role in designing and delivering schemes*
- *There should be proper payment for ecosystem services*



# Extending influence – key audiences:

- *Government*
  - Civil servants and politicians
- *Consumer (the public)*
  - Of food
  - Of the public goods
  - funding for collaboration, and working to next CAP
- *Schools (pupils and teachers)*
  - Get onto influential panels



## **Extending influence – need for a farmers' forum (Northern Upland Federation?):**

- *Need a group of farmers working together*
- *Need to collaborate with similar areas in long term relationship*
- *Need to get start-up funding for collaboration*
- *If constituted properly, could apply for CAP funding to achieve some of its objectives...*
- *Timescale – need to get working now and be at full capacity by time next CAP discussions start*

