



HNV farming initiative – Summary of the situation and suggestions for action

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



An elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark patterned jacket and dark trousers, is leaning over a red wooden fence. He is holding a small white bottle with a blue label and feeding a small lamb. The lamb has white wool and a black face with white markings. The background is a red wooden fence.

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



**Decoupled payments distort power balance
where renting involved**

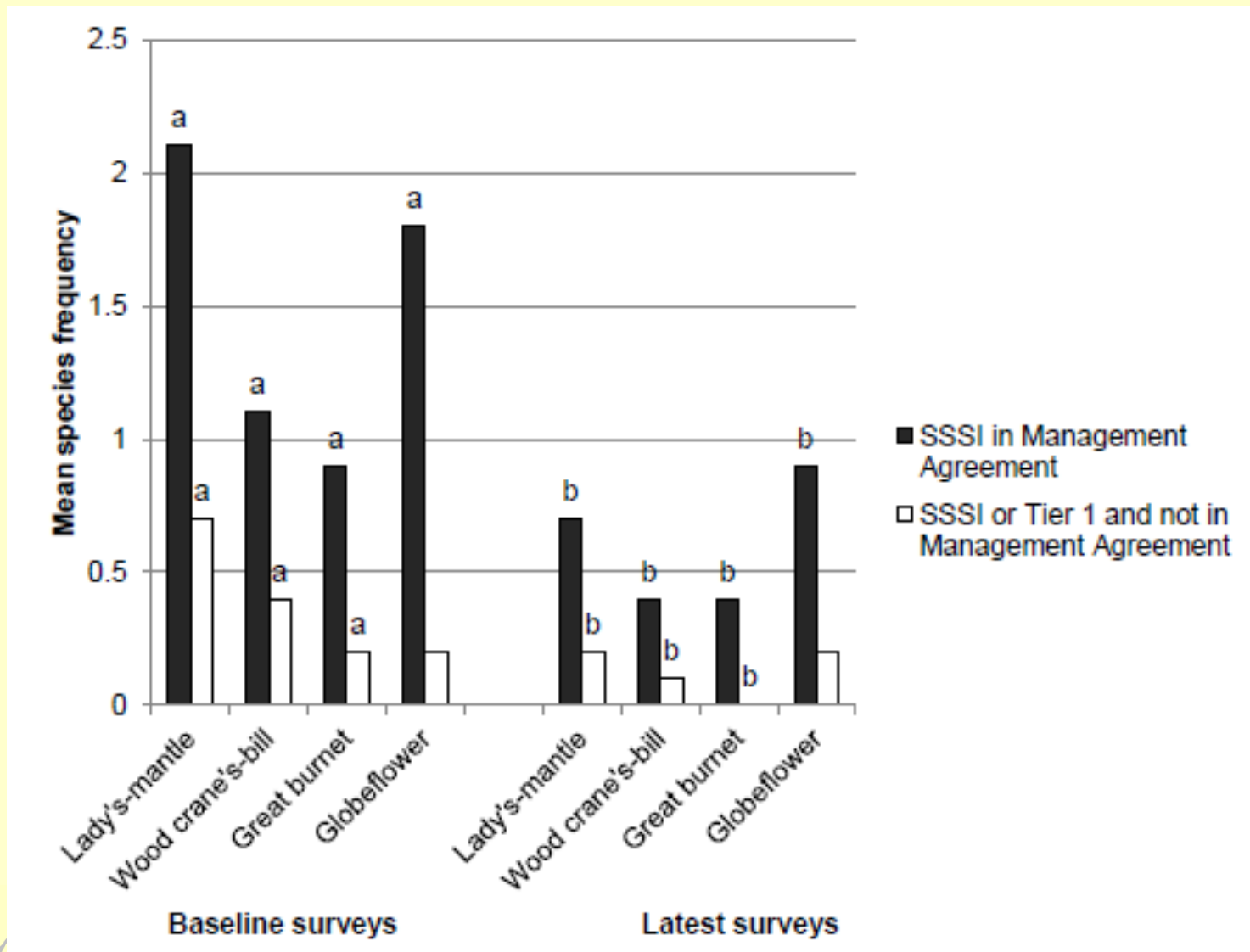


Driven to look for profit
by other means –
policy is still driving
intensification



**Encouragement for producing less, but
are the farms viable and farmers getting
reasonable return for their work?**

Meadow ecological quality dropping



(Starr-Kedde, 2013)

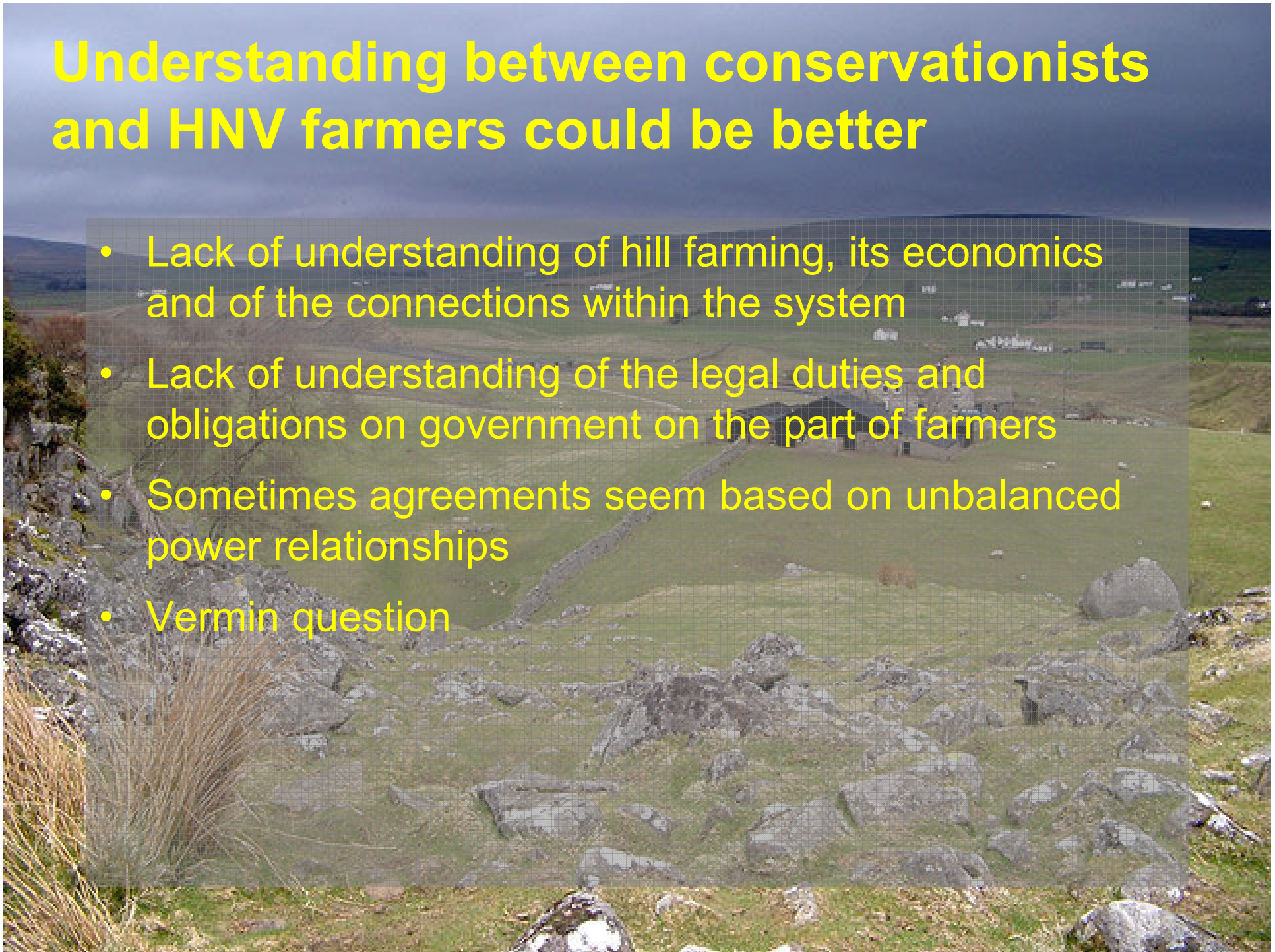


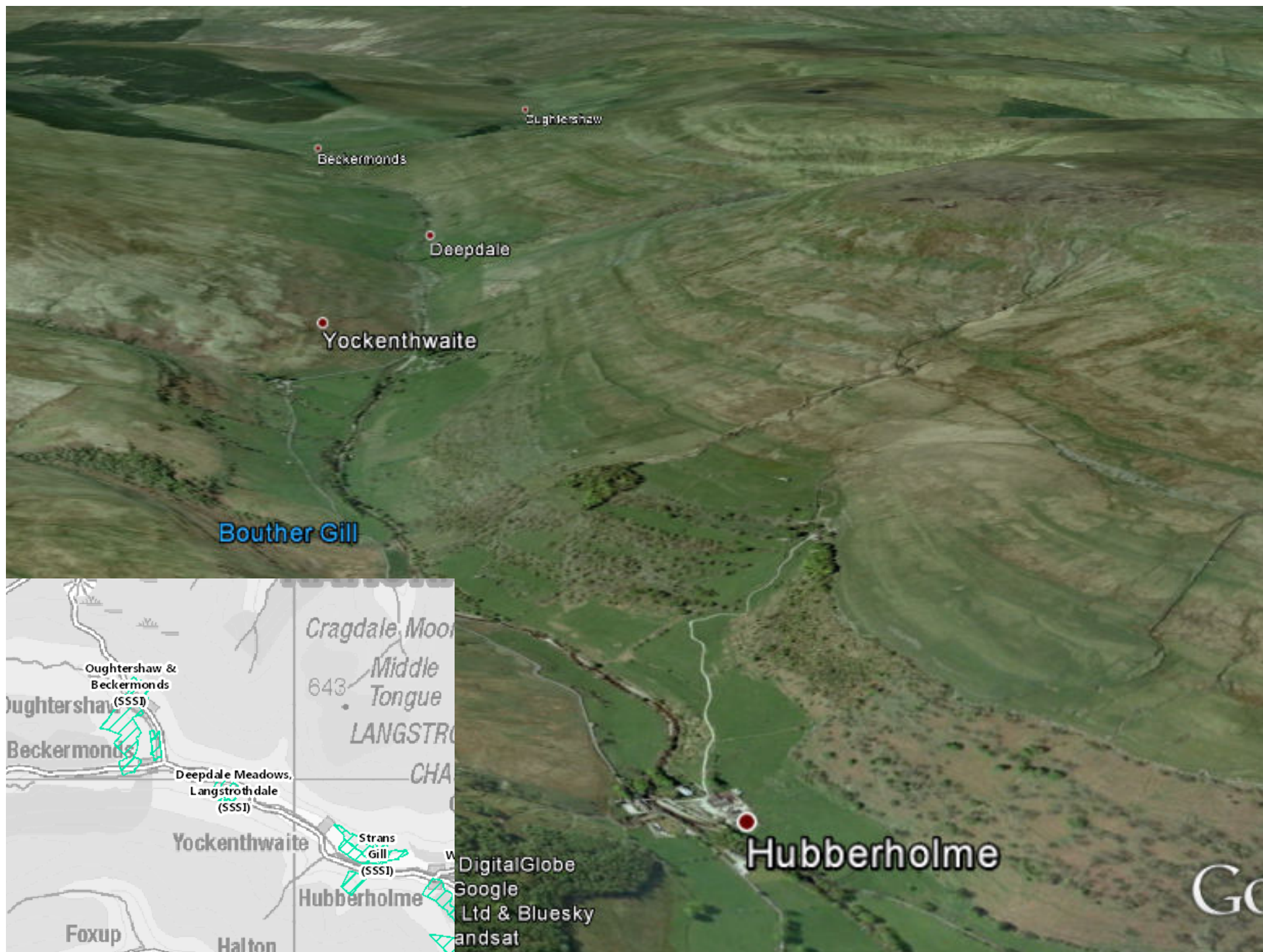
Meadow agricultural quality dropping



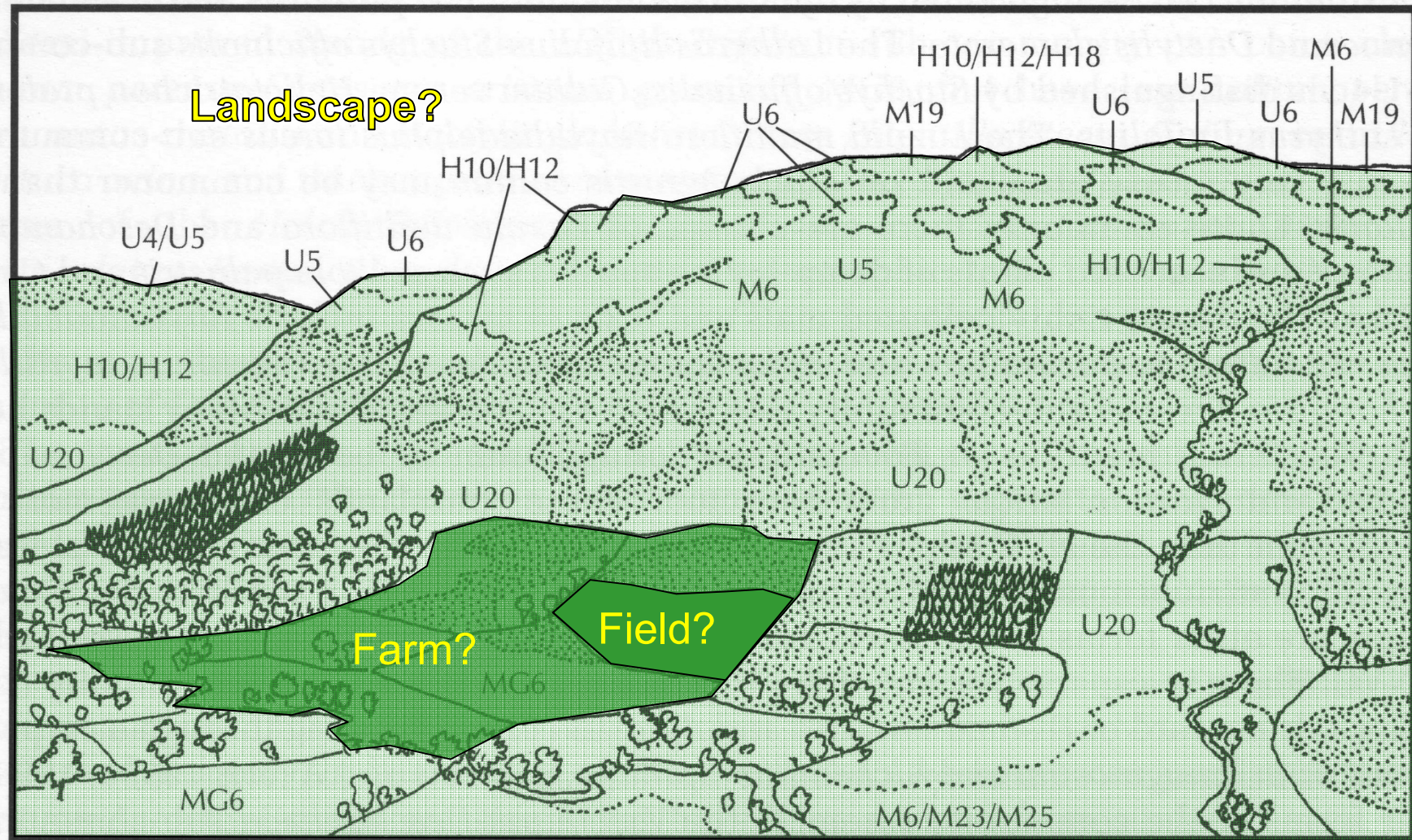
Understanding between conservationists and HNV farmers could be better

- 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
- Vermin question





At which scale should support work?



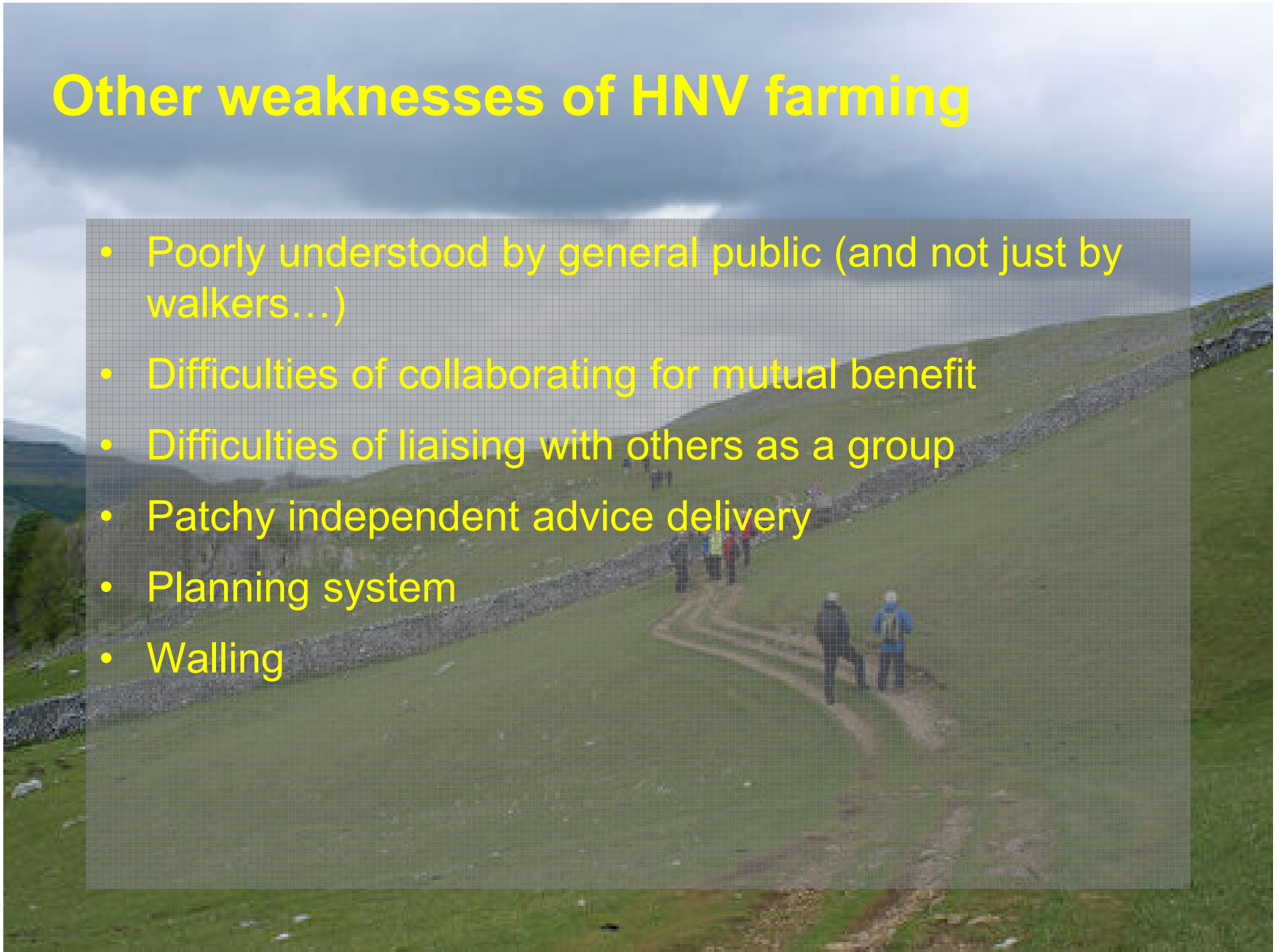
Impediments to new entrants to HNV farming

- 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

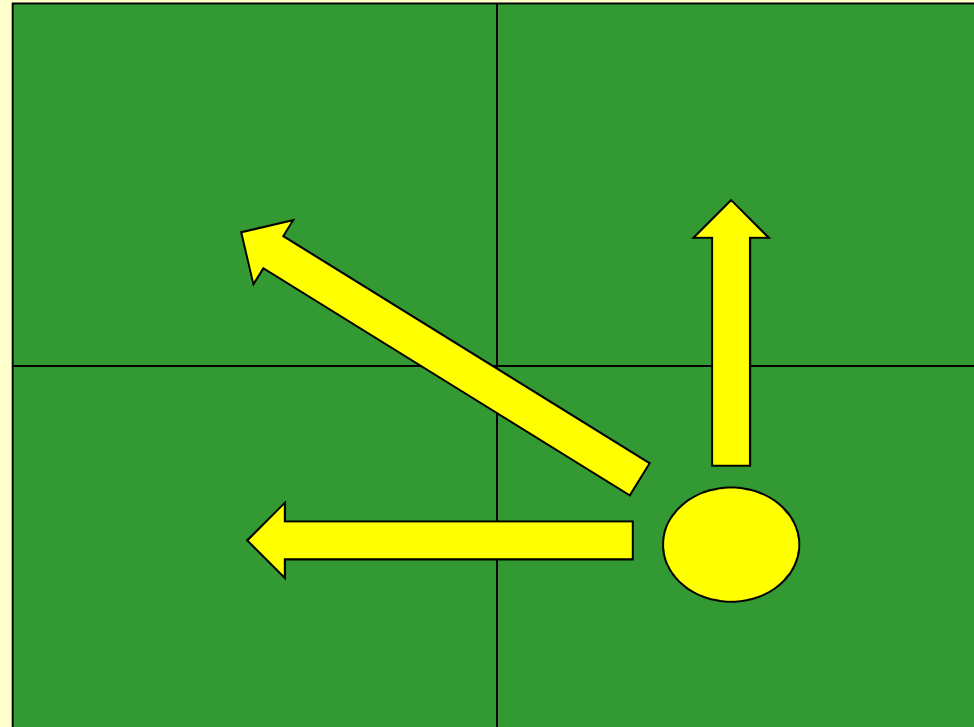
- Poorly understood by general public (and not just by walkers...)
- Difficulties of collaborating for mutual benefit
- Difficulties of liaising with others as a group
- Patchy independent advice delivery
- Planning system
- Walling



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



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 steps – farm economics:

- *Better understanding of farm economics and variability in it, best practice with livestock*
- *Agri-env:*
 - Proper reward, incl all farmer's costs
 - Make cattle and walling more viable
- *Direct support to active farmers*
- *Make it viable both to start farming and to retire*
 - Succession planning
 - Longer-term tenancies (perhaps with tax incentives)
 - Partnership farms
 - Retirement incentives
- *Encourage efficiency through collaboration*

Practical steps – treating the environment as part of a system:

- *More joined up thinking (environment in a context..), based on understanding and trust*
- *Agri-env:*
 - More flexibility in AE prescriptions where they shown not to have worked
 - Delivery of mutually-agreed outcomes
 - Need to pilot some new approaches
- *Appropriate investments in holdings (and % which reflects tenancies), e.g. manure storage*
- *Long-term approach to the advisory system for upland farmers*

Extending influence – messages to project:

- *Product is good & meets demand (backed by science)*
- *Current CAP:*
 - Make effort on moorland basic payment rate by 21st March deadline; N Upland partnership should put in a letter
 - NELMS consultation...
- *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*
- *Monitoring based on indicators – need local initiative*

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

- *Need a group of farmers working together*
 - To discuss and agree key issues
 - Maybe to deliver schemes?
- *Need to collaborate with similar areas in long term relationship*
 - In England (a national uplands federation?)
 - Transnationally
- *Need to get start-up funding for collaboration*
- *Timescale – need to get working now and be at full capacity by time next CAP discussions start*