

Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum

Hard Times



A research report into hill farming and farming families in the Peak District

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farming families in the Peak District

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Kate Bellis

Foreword

The Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum was established in 1992 to raise awareness of the problems of living on a low income in a rural area. At that time the myth of the countryside idyll was widespread. Living in the countryside was the urban dweller's dream. In the countryside there was space to be yourself, to have freedom to live your life without the constraints of close neighbours, busy roads, fighting to get to work. Nobody spoke of the downsides of isolation, inadequate services, having to walk a mile to your nearest bus stop (if there were any buses), no shops or health centre nearby. What was worse was that funding from central government was based on the same myth. Providing services in the countryside just had to be cheaper and everybody was healthier, of course. The past 10 years have dispelled that myth. The health pattern in the countryside is acknowledged to be the same as in the town¹. One in four people live below the poverty line just as in urban areas. Scattered populations and long distances between service deliverer and user means that access to essential services is more difficult and more costly.

However, one myth still persists, even after the foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001. The myth that all farmers are rich and greedy, living off European grants paid for by the hard pressed taxpayer, despoiling the countryside and whinging on and on because life can be a bit hard. How can they justify complaining when they live in beautiful countryside and expect money for 'setting aside a field' and doing nothing with it? Over the past 10 years, the Forum has done research into transport, health and social care, and living on low income. But local people kept telling us that, if we were concerned about poverty, we needed to look at farming and how what was happening in farming was affecting the quality of life of farming families. The need for this was reinforced by the fact that Oxfam was willing to pay for the research to be done. This report is the result of that research. It was started at the beginning of 2001, but because of foot and mouth disease had to be put on hold until it was possible to go on to local farms, and there was no danger that the preoccupation with the disease would overwhelm the findings. Some restrictions resulting from foot and mouth were however still in place when we continued the research.

1. Tideswell Health Survey, Farm Out Health Project, High Peak and Dales PCT, 2002.



Kate Bellis

Executive summary

The Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum set up a Farming Working Group in the autumn of 2000 to investigate the effects of decreasing incomes on Peak District hill farmers and their families, and to find realistic solutions. A research project was drawn up that consisted of two main parts. The first was to establish the views of farmers themselves through Participatory Appraisal and interviews for 12 case studies. The second was to look at official data and literature. Taking account of the two parts of the research, the Working Group then looked at long-term structural policies and short-term measures necessary to bring about change.

THE MAIN FINDINGS

→ **Farm incomes in the Peak District National Park have fallen by 75% over the last 10 years. Incomes in 2002 were a quarter of what they were in 1992. The potential return from the market place has ceased to match the investment of time and capital.**

→ **Without subsidies, only dairy farms in the Peak District would achieve a positive income, an average of just £4,622 per annum, with no allowance for paying farmer and family. Small beef and sheep farm income would be -£2,320, larger farms -£3,380 per annum.**

'I don't know whether I'm a subsidy fan but if they got rid of them here and they got rid of them throughout Europe, then we are all on an even keel and can start playing the game equally. But regards us being a dairy farm, if we just got a decent price that would make all the difference. Because nobody minds hard work or anything, but you can't go on working and getting nothing at the end of the day.'

→ **The cost of land, of machinery and other inputs mean that small farmers cannot easily expand, and benefit from economies of scale. The farmers themselves suggest the advantages of smaller holdings are of benefit to the environment and good maintenance of the landscape. They acknowledge the need for greater marketing power.**

'I would like farmers not to get no bigger because some of the big farms are rough and maintenance isn't done right, whereas the smaller farmers do care for it and look after it and try and get everything right, keep it well maintained. Where these lads keep taking more and more on.'

→ **Farmers feel that bureaucratic authority over their work is tightening, while they themselves lack control over their livelihoods. Their own experience and skills are dismissed as irrelevant. Reasons for their hardship lie beyond their control – depressed euro/strong pound, cheap imports, health scares, high input costs such as utilities, equipment replacement and rent, rates and land values. At the same time, there is increasing regulation over their farm processes – Environmental Impact Assessment, Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, movement records, health and animal welfare standards and inspections, subsidy forms, etc.**

→ **Small hill farmers have little chance to have their voices heard in the policymaking processes. The status of the farmer has been eroded in the economy, with a disproportionate influence of larger interests. Farmers are aware of public perceptions of farmers as 'grain barons' or 'peasants'.**

'Well obviously [...younger farmers] have no chance of getting in really at the moment, you just need so much money to get started, what with machinery and stock and the price of land you just can't really get in, most farms are being made bigger and bigger ...'

→ **Farmers feel that there is not a level playing field. Other countries are perceived to have different standards, over animal welfare, organic certification, veterinary practices, abattoir licences, which disadvantage UK farmers.**

'I think the price of our product is pathetic. I mean I think we were getting the same price for our milk today as we were in 1980 or 81. That's what I least like about it.'

→ **Prospects for diversification were seen to be hampered by bureaucracy imposing obstacles to change. The excessive costs due to new legislation had resulted in abattoir closures, limiting possibilities for direct selling and causing an animal welfare problem**

CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABOVE

→ **Farming as at present will not be sustainable in the Peak District. Hill farms cannot hold any competitive advantage in commodity food production. The responses of the case studies imply that the respondents are 'doing the wrong thing very well' and that they will either have to adapt from food production to landscape management (though how they will do this is not clear), or 'spend the (capital value of the) farm.'**

→ **The figures from the financial survey combined with the impact of modulation on direct subsidies indicate urgency in making change if farmers are to survive.**

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE

→ **Opening up the market to local produce through co-operative marketing, local procurement of food by statutory agencies and finding ways to improve the farmers position in the food chain.**

→ **The need for policy makers to listen to the voice of the hill farmers. The formation of a local hill farmers' network, which could input into a national network of hill and small/family farms, would enable them to have a strong and united voice with policy makers.**

'That's what I least like, the feeling that you can't do. You can see something that is right and wants doing but you can't do it because there's so many rules and regulations.'

→ **Funding for training schemes that increase agricultural administrative and secretarial skills available in the area.**

→ **Encourage understanding of farming and food production.**

→ **Looking at the appropriateness of legislation in relation to small- and medium-sized abattoirs, and the requirements of the Meat Hygiene Service.**

'There are more standers and watchers than doers I think it's very vital somehow or other we get these small slaughter houses back and try and reduce the number of people standing and watching'

→ **Examination of standards of production to find out if UK farmers are being unnecessarily disadvantaged. Transparency of labelling to show origin of produce, instead of where processed as at present.**

'In France if you've got a weed problem in an organic field, you can spray it. The year you spray it is non-organic but the year after you are back in organic again, whereas in this country, it takes three years to go back in again. So, the standards are ever so different and they put us at a disadvantage as usual.'

→ **Skills and experience of hill farmer to be recognised through enabling input into formulation and implementation of policy and legislation that affects their lives and livelihoods.**

'... they think we're thick. ... We're in a world now, we've got a government They're not going to think, 'oh there's a farmer living up in the Peak District, let's do such and such a thing, while there are homeless families in Toxteth or wherever.'

Chapter 1



Kate Bellis

Background to research

Hill farmers in the Peak District have been particularly severely affected by the decline in agriculture in Britain over the past decade. All farms, both hill and lowland, large and small have been affected. But an area such as the Peak District is particularly vulnerable, as most farms are small, family, hill farms, where farming is restricted to predominately livestock. The shorter summer reduces the growing season, which means that feeding is more expensive than on lowland farms. The hill and upland farms also benefit the least from the European Common Agricultural Policy.

The incomes of hill and upland farmers have dropped dramatically since the beginning of the 1990s, to approximately a quarter of what they were ten years ago, and show no sign of an upturn. Farming has become an area of hidden deprivation and hardship.

The Farming Working Group of the Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum (PDRDF) was set up in the autumn of 2000 to examine ways to establish how the local farming community was being affected and look at ways to overcome the problems being experienced. An outline for a research project was drawn up.

THE RESEARCH

Because of foot and mouth disease, Bakewell agricultural show took place without livestock in the summer of 2001. The Amethyst Project of the PDRDF did a survey asking local people at the show to give their views on farming today in the Peak District. Their answers formed the starting point for two surveys¹ at the Agriculture Business Centre Bakewell conducted with Oxfam using Participatory Appraisal (PA)². The purpose of the surveys were to obtain a quick, overall view from the farming community of the main issues affecting farming in the area. Most foot and mouth restrictions were still in place. The first survey took place mid-November 2001 when there was a 'virtual market' organised by the auctioneers for buying and selling livestock through video. On the same day there was also a Farmers' Gathering organised by Derbyshire Rural Community Council (DRCC). The second survey was at the Christmas livestock market and buffet organised by the auctioneers and when DRCC had a Farming Reminiscence evening.

In order to make sure we focused on the local perception of farming, we trained a team of interviewers from local farming backgrounds. The interview schedule³ for the case studies reflected the issues raised from the PA sessions. Twelve farmers were selected for the interviews to reflect a cross section of the farming community.

1. See Appendix 1.

2. Participatory appraisal is an action research process that provides an opportunity to gather community views about the strengths and weaknesses of an area in a short space of time, and to develop locally owned solutions to the problems highlighted. In Bakewell the appraisal was used to find out the main problems affecting farming families in the Peak District and what they saw as possible solutions.

3. See Appendix 2.

The farms in the case studies were on land between about 150 and 636 metres above sea level. Ten of them were within the Peak District National Park and two just outside the borders of the Park. Eligibility for government schemes varies according to the farm and geographical area, the main schemes particular to the area were: Hill Farming Allowance, Rural Enterprise scheme, Countryside Stewardship/Environmental Sensitive Area scheme, Organic farming scheme.

We then commissioned Chris Higgins of AcresBrook Consulting, to summarise the interviews and look at the implications of what the farmers were saying (Chapter 2–Part 1).

Professor Martin Seabrook of Nottingham University kindly agreed to write a chapter looking at data and literature, including government/EU policy, relevant to the area. This part was completed before foot and mouth put a stop to our work and had to be updated before publication to give the latest available statistics (Chapter 2–Part 2). There was therefore an unintended but interesting comparison with before and after foot and mouth.

These two chapters covering the case studies and the statistics give a comparison between what statistics reveal and what the farmers and their families actually felt about their way of life, the problems they were facing and the possibilities available to overcome them. Chris Higgins and Martin Seabrook collaborated to draw together their conclusions from the research (Chapter 2–Part 3). The Farming Working Group then looked at the research and conclusions, and drew up their recommendations based on the findings and their own experiences in the area (Chapter 3).

The Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food⁴ took place during the course of the research and the Government published its response to the Commission's recommendations⁵. The Report of the Task Force for the Hills was published. The Review of the European Common Agricultural Policy was also taking place, as well as other international trade discussions.

RESEARCH PROJECT: AIMS

To determine the effects of the crisis in farming on the farmers and their families, on their quality of life and to seek possible solutions to the problems, the project would:

- Provide evidence of the situation for farming in the area.
- Identify long-term structural policies and short term measures necessary to bring about change.
- Disseminate the information obtained in the form of a report in order to raise awareness of the situation affecting farmers and their families and bring about necessary change.

To do this the research consisted of:

- A literature review of computerised data, articles and reports on farming in the Peak District. Collection of statistics.
- A cross section of opinions from farmers collected by Participatory Appraisal. This formed the basis for:
- Case studies of farmers – collected locally, using interviewers with a local, farming background.
- Conclusions from the research and recommendations.

4. Report of the Policy Commission on the Future of Food and Farming, January 2002.

5. Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food: Facing the Future. The Stationery Office, Norwich, UK, December 2002.

Chapter 2



Kate Bellis

Research : Case Studies and Data

Part 1 : Farming in the Peak District – Twelve Case Studies *Chris Higgins, AcreBrooks Consulting*

INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a commentary on perceptions of contemporary farming from within. It is an analysis of the views of a sample of those whose day to day lives revolve about the activity of farming in the Peak District. The attitudes and some physical parameters of a sample of 12 case study farms, selected to represent the breadth of farming businesses within the Peaks, were collected by interview. Interviewers were selected from the locality, trained in interview techniques, and commissioned to document responses to a number of prescribed questions on audiotape⁶. The questions themselves were identified through a random selection of farmers attending Bakewell Market⁷. Taped interviews were transcribed to paper and submitted for analysis.

The product of the interviews is given on page 13 as ‘A caricature of Peak District farming from the case studies’. This is drawn from an amalgam of responses, highlighting predominant attitudes of the sample population. The ‘Parameters of the Average’, on page 11, explores the physical dimensions of the sample population. Detailed analysis of the responses to individual questions can be found on pages

The ‘Implications of the Analysis to the Evolution of Farming in the Peak District’, page 29, draws together the responses to individual questions in the context of changing agricultural policy to highlight the broad needs of the study population.

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

The research findings are based on semi-structured interviews with the twelve case study farms. These farms were selected from a pool of farms within the Peak District and known to the members of the Farming Working Group of the Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum. The criteria for selection included desire to involve a variety of farm types encompassing the breadth

6. See Appendix 2.

7. See Appendix 1.

of farming in the Peaks. As such, the sample includes owner occupied farms, tenanted farms, geographically isolated holdings, an organic farm, conventional farms, dairy farms, single species beef and sheep farms plus mixed beef and sheep farms, diverse acreages and age groups, and various employment or alternative business commitments. The case studies research was essentially qualitative and did not envisage statistical analysis and, indeed, sampling procedure and size of the sample render statistical analysis inappropriate. The ‘mean’ would be meaningless.

The structure of this chapter is devised to extract detail from the interviews and identify themes in order to address the first aim of the research project: to provide evidence of the situation of farming in the Peak District; to shed light on the second: to identify long term structural policies and short term measures to overcome the problems being experienced; and conform to the requirements of the third: to disseminate the information obtained in a form of a report in order to raise awareness of the situation affecting farmers and their families and bring about necessary change.

INTERVIEW FOCUS

Interviews were designed to elicit open ended observations from the individual farmer, but with specific questions put to the case study farmers to define details and attitudes around the issues below:

1. The Nature and Parameters of the Farm
2. The Principle Source of Enjoyment and Discontent in Farming
3. Perceived Routes to Improved Farm Income
4. Impact of Increased Bureaucracy
5. Impact of Market Closures
6. Impact of Abattoir Closures
7. Perception of ‘Standards’ application Internationally
8. Farm Diversification
9. Co-operation
10. Reflections on the Outbreak of Foot & Mouth Disease
11. The ‘Right to Roam’
12. Farming and Future Generations
13. Stress
14. Social Isolation
15. Confidence in Continued Farming
16. Routes to Influence Policy
17. Hours Worked
18. Off-Farm Employment
19. Age of Respondent

PARAMETERS OF THE AVERAGE

The sample suggests a younger than might have been expected group of farmers, operating from a base of mixed land tenure in which there is likely to be an element of owner occupancy. It describes a person who accepts long hours of work in order to pursue an occupation where satisfaction is bound up in the physical nature of the work and dissatisfaction originates from the intrusion of bureaucracy into both independence and the time available to ‘farm’. There was a universal expectation to be farming in 10 years time, although with caveats expressed by some of the respondents. Physical parameters of sample farms are given in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Characteristics of Case Study Farms

Case Study Sample Farm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Farmed Area Over 150 acre		x	x	x						x	x	
Farmed Area Under 150 acres	x					x	x	x	x	x		
Dairy Farm	x	x	x				x					
Beef and/or Sheep Farm				x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
All Land Tenanted			x	x		x	x					
Element of Owner Occupancy	x	x			x			x	x	x	x	x
Existing Aspect of Farm Diversification					x	x	x	x			x	
Off-Site Employment	x	x				x	x	x		x	x	x
Under 44 years old	x						x				x	
45–64 years old		x	x	x	x	x		x		x		x
65+ years old									x			
Hours Worked per Week 50–79 hours					x	x	x	x	x			
Hours Worked per Week 80+ hours	x	x	x	x					x	x	x	x

The measure of farmed area splits the sample population into two with 50% managing under 150 acres and 50% managing in excess of 150 acres. If land tenure is superimposed on scale then 50% of wholly tenanted farms in the sample were under 150 acres. Hence, 50% of farms with an element of owner occupancy were under 150 acres.

There are no common themes around dairy farming. Four of the case studies involved milk production. Two of these farms were wholly tenanted. Two of them extended to less than 150 acres. Three of the four dairy farms involved off-site employment, with one also including on-site farm diversification.

Of the eight farms that involved an element of owner occupancy, only one business did not involve either off-site employment or an aspect of farm diversification. The wholly tenanted businesses were split evenly with respect to the presence of additional income streams. Two of the wholly tenanted farms included both off-site employment and on-site diversification, while the other two farms in this bracket indulged in neither. These characteristics suggest that the sample population encompasses most of the permutations to be encountered in the Peak District and is, as such, defined by the two parameters of grassland farming and location, with the former a reflection of the latter.

A CARICATURE OF PEAK DISTRICT HILL FARMING FROM THE CASE STUDIES

To the extent that the below implies an 'average', it falls foul of the observations over the application of statistics. However, it boasts no mathematic pretence. The dimensions have been woven from common themes, but not necessarily universally shared attitudes.

Farmer: In late forties, married with children

Holdings: Ownership of some of the land farmed, but area extended through grazing licences, Farm Business Tenancies and gentleman's agreements.

Stock: Cattle and sheep, with neighbouring farms dairy and/or cattle/sheep.

Hours worked: 80 hours per week, plus hours worked by family.

Job: Valued for independence to make and implement decisions, and for working with nature to develop and improve stock and landscape.

Income: This has been falling over the past few years and hours demanded by increased bureaucracy put pressure on business and family.

Paperwork: Not an issue in itself, but the time taken to complete it gets in the way of the job. Constant changes in paperwork causes worries about making errors. There is frustration because new ideas do not appear to be thought through in practice but are forced on farmers by politicians leaving the farmer to take responsibility.

BSE and Foot & Mouth Disease are accepted as things that happen in farming and have to be coped with. Whether it was, or still is, necessary to suffer compliance with a series of impractical regulations was questioned.

Possibilities to improve income: Forms of diversification often tried, but set-up seems to cost a fortune, with problems about saturation in locality, and restrictions from official red tape. Off farm work considered the best way to keep an income coming in.

Co-operation: a good idea on paper, but not on the side of a hill.

Geographical isolation: Farmer's choice, and not considered a problem. This choice stems from valuing independence. The change of nature involved in co-operative working would be very difficult.

Markets: Have a social function. Some are disappearing. The upgraded facilities at Bakewell meant it was not a practical problem locally. Knowing the value of stock would be difficult without finished livestock auctions. Direct sales to slaughterhouses take the transparency out of the market.

Abattoirs: Local abattoirs have closed because of a tide of regulation. There were no problems at present, but is a geographical, financial and animal welfare issue. No one wants to transport animals all around the country to slaughter.

Stress: Two main sources.

1. Economics do not stack up. The price received for produce is an insult. This is blamed on the monopoly position of buyers serving their shareholders and that the rest of the EU does not appear to have to jump through the same hoops as UK farmers. The result is lower income and higher costs.

Farmers do not think they could survive at present without subsidies, but if they were abolished then as long as everyone competes on equal terms no doubt they would manage. It is incomprehensible that produce should be imported that does not conform to UK quality standards.

2. Feeling of being treated like idiots, not people trying to run a business. Demands imposed stop farmers doing a proper job. Because of the price received for produce farmers cannot afford to employ labour and are trapped in a vicious spiral taking them down under a mountain of paper while they can see the job fall to pieces.

Confidence in continuing farming: Expectations are to be still farming in 10 years time. Anyone coming into the business would need to be very clear about the hours, commitment, lack of appreciation and lack of financial reward.

ISSUE SPECIFIC RESPONSES



(PDRDF)

“I like rearing my own, seeing how they develop and trying to improve the herd all of the time.”

“What bothers me is, even if we can make ends meet, we’re not putting one penny piece back into the business.”

1. The Principle Source of Enjoyment and Discontent in Farming

Sources of enjoyment were seen to be bound up in the physical work itself, operating with nature and independence. ‘Calving cows’. ‘The variety, I think and the outdoor life. Other than that it hasn’t really got a lot going for it financially. It’s a way of life.’ ‘The fact that you’re your own boss and you’ve got the freedom to do what you want and when you want. Make a good job of what you are doing really’. Perhaps the single response that encapsulates all the dimensions to individual replies is,

‘I’ve never known anything but farming. I’ve never, well only briefly, worked for anyone else. I like being my own boss. I like working outside. I like working with stock, particularly dairy cows. I like rearing my own, seeing how they develop and trying to improve the herd all of the time. We also have sheep and I like sheep, unlike the person who works for me. My wife likes sheep as well, so we tend to do the sheep. As I say, I’ve never known any other job except agriculture right from the moment I left school. I don’t originally come from a farming family. My father didn’t farm but most of his relations did. So that’s it really, but to-day it isn’t as much fun as it was. One is struggling all the time to make ends meet and I mean I’ve never had to struggle to make ends meet as much as I am at the moment. What bothers me is, even if we can make ends meet, we’re not putting one penny piece back into the business. The buildings aren’t being improved and there’s no new machinery coming onto the place because the money isn’t there to buy it.’

In some responses, where these routes to satisfaction were articulated, the evolved degree of value was questioned.

‘I’m struggling to think quite honestly. Well, I like sheep, but I don’t like as many as I’ve got. It’s only because of the restrictions last year, which have overflowed, well, I mean it’s been two years now that I’ve not been able to get rid of all of them.’

‘Not a lot at the moment. Normally springtime, watching things grow, nice warm sunny days after a long cold winter. That’s about it really.’

‘... you aren’t even your own boss anymore. In my opinion, you are governed by what other people want you to do.’

Some of the responses above imply that dissatisfaction equates with frustration stemming from obstacles to the sources of satisfaction. These might be summed up as: lack of time, lack of money and intrusion. Responses to the specific question ‘What is the thing that you like least about farming today?’ tended to revolve about bureaucracy as political interference and administrative demands. Falling commodity prices and the time demands imposed by falling commodity prices and increased administrative demands, preventing the opportunity to ‘do a good job’, lay at the core of sources of discontent.

‘I think the price of our product is pathetic. I mean I think we were getting the same price for our milk today as we were in 1980 or 81. That’s what I least like about it. I also dislike the incredible amount of paperwork we have to deal with, even just to take a load of calves to Bakewell market. I mean it takes me about half an hour to do the paperwork just to take two or three calves. It takes just as long to take one calf. Increased bureaucracy. Increased paperwork. A lot of busybodies nosing into your business, mainly government agencies. They want to make sure your milk is up to a certain standard. I understand it’s got to be the proper standard. It doesn’t take that amount of bureaucracy to see that it is.’

'Not enough money, that's the worst thing. You've never got enough money. We're always scratting for money and that's the problem, when Monday morning's looking around your pockets for the kids' dinner money. Feeling down the sofa when you want an extra two pounds for something they are doing in cooking. That's the part I don't like.'

2. Perceived Route to Improved Farm Incomes

Commodity price was the focus of response to this issue, with a recognition of inflated costs of production.

'... our inputs are expensive in this country and you pay a lot for water, electricity and council tax So all the overheads are high, labour's very expensive, so I just don't think we can compete with imports from European countries, where cost of living is lower and labour is much cheaper.'

Responses commented not only on the relationship between the UK and the EU in terms of cost and commodity prices but also in terms of support mechanisms plus comments on the relationship between the UK and the global market in terms of commodity prices.

'A level playing field in Europe for one thing.' 'Because they get a lot more subsidy than we do. I don't know whether I'm a subsidy fan but if they got rid of them here and they got rid of them throughout Europe, then we are all on an even keel and can start playing the game equally. But regards us being a dairy farm, if we just got a decent price that would make all the difference. Because nobody minds hard work or anything, but you can't go on working and getting nothing at the end of the day.'

'I think the whole trouble starts with meat coming in from abroad, importing, not just meat that is dodgy, all meat. It's obvious that it's cutting the country's income down isn't it. I'm sure it could be altered in one fell swoop. I know it's easier said than done. You can't. You are in the world and that's it but that's the problem. I think the whole problems start there. Too much meat in the country isn't there?'

The position and influence of the farmer in the food chain was highlighted in some responses to this question.

'Instead of them trying to meet their oh we've got shares to hand out, company cars and this, that, and the other It's a lot to do with the supermarkets and I don't think the Government's really interested at all about helping you on that.'

'... I think what we've got to try to do as farmers is increase the amount of added value beyond the cow for ourselves, not rely on other people to do it for us.'

'... a lot more lobbying I would say by the NFU and others as to the plight of farmers and the fact that we are getting the same amount for milk that we were twenty years ago. I don't know how much more people are paying for their milk than they were twenty years ago.'

Other responses addressing routes to improved farm income included the marketing of quality produce and additional enterprises.

'I think all you can do is market things at its best. You can have a terrific effect on the end price by the time of year you're marketing. If everything holds up, if you don't get a BSE crisis or scrapie sheep, well foot and mouth obviously, I think your time of marketing can be terrific on your income. I think you need to spend a lot of time getting that right.'

'Diversify and try and earn a bit of money elsewhere.'

“I think what we've got to try to do as farmers is increase the amount of added value beyond the cow for ourselves, not rely on other people to do it for us.”

3. Impact of Increased Bureaucracy

The response to this issue was variable. There was a universal recognition of the time demand imposed by paperwork and the knock on effects to the management of the farm. Some took a positive view of paperwork.



(PDRDF)

'I think now, if anything, we're getting more things more papered up. It's almost easier once you're into it. These licences with foot and mouth have been a bit of a bind but, I mean, they're necessary and that's that. I do think some sections of the farm would be under papered, not over, especially if you're buying in stock. It's a lot more organisation about it now than it ever had without paper. We've a few regulations we could do without and a few bits of paper but I think, on the whole, it's not too bad. There's plenty of it but I think most of it is aimed fairly well.'

'There's certainly a lot more paperwork but a lot of it is related to money coming from subsidies and from quotas and things so therefore I don't mind doing it really. It's part of the income. If we didn't have that paperwork coming in there wouldn't be any subsidies and we wouldn't be here. It's as simple as that. There's no way we could farm without it.'

Others were less enamoured, finding it hard to justify the additional pressures that administrative demands impose. Those pressures were seen to revolve about the actual time demand, detracting from the perceived view of 'farming' and source of satisfaction, and the insecurity engendered by uncertainty over whether process and timing of the system conformed to the requirements of external agencies.

'... because, when you've worked outside all day, it's just too much to come in and start doing paperwork and, if you leave it for one, you know, like you take something to market and you think, well I'll do it tomorrow, you've forgot. The animal has gone out of your sight and you've forgotten it. I don't say forgotten it but you are quite likely to put it off to another day and then, you know, you are in a mess. It's got to be done within, well basically, it's really got to be done before the animal goes. I know it should be but sometimes you are just too busy to do it and, same as you know, you don't want a lot of form filling in. You feel as though you are not doing what you want on farming. That's what I don't like. What I like least, you're sort of governed on what you can and what you can't do. It's not like, you know, you see an animal ready for the market. You want to take it to the market – you don't want to be thinking oh, has it got this and has it got the other and is it this age and all that, don't you?'

'That's what I least like, the feeling that you can't do. You can see something that is right and wants doing but you can't do it because there's so many rules and regulations.'

4. Impact of Market Closures

Market closures to date, although a source of regret for some, were not viewed to be an immediate problem in the Peak District. Although Ashbourne and Hope markets had shut, respondents valued the upgraded facilities offered by Bakewell market. There was a feeling there had been a negative social impact with market closures and that further market closures in the area could precipitate practical problems. The issues around market closures were seen to lie in animal welfare issues in other parts of the country where long distances could be involved and in the difficulty valuing animals without markets.

'Well Ashbourne market's gone and that's sad because it was, as well as being a handy place to just nip down with half a dozen lambs or anything, it was a social thing. You just don't see people the same as you used to. The

"If we didn't have that paperwork coming in there wouldn't be any subsidies and we wouldn't be here. It's as simple as that."



Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell (PDRDF)

town is not the same as it was. You go in now on a Thursday and the old farmers have still come down, but they do their shopping and then they've got nowhere to go, so it's made the town feel very different to what it was when it was a livestock market.'

'Well, the markets we usually use haven't closed. Well, Ashbourne has but we always use Bakewell and Uttoxeter a lot, so it hasn't really affected us. I hope to God no more get shut because you won't know what the value of stock is or anything. You know, you've got to have a market to know a value and take your risk. I mean, if you went and sold something next week and then sold something privately, you've got a guide line as to know what you're selling it at, so they must not shut any more.'

5. Impact of Small Abattoir Closures

The majority of respondents viewed the closure of small abattoirs as a practical problem, an animal welfare problem and an unnecessary problem.

'There are more standers and watchers than doers. ... I think it's a complete waste of money and that's what's killed the local slaughterhouses. The bureaucracy having to have all these people and I know the Bakewell one had to close down because it simply couldn't afford the bureaucrats. ... I think it's very vital somehow or other we get these small slaughter houses back and try and reduce the number of people standing and watching. ... I've been going a minimum of thirty miles. ... Last week I was taking them up to north of Sheffield. I can't remember the name of the place, I mean almost as far as Barnsley.'

'... local, that's the point. This is, as I say, thirty miles away that we were going to. Obviously, there's one at Harpur Hill but it's only for cull cows, so I would say that is about the nearest to us, about thirty miles to take them to. The animal doesn't want to be travelling that far does it?'

'It would be lovely to have it within two or three miles, but twelve miles I think is quite reasonable. When you get to fifty miles or so it's more of an issue. Our problem, which is a separate organic problem, is that we can use our abattoir for our own stock which we wish to use to sell directly but for stock we are selling on through organic wholesalers, we're selling through the supermarkets and the multiples. Then they specify abattoirs that they are happy to use and they are not happy to use our local one or any near this area. So, some of our organic stock is having to travel a hundred miles or more. It's the supermarkets directly. They specify they only want to deal with one or two big abattoirs. Likewise, those abattoirs are for individual commercial companies so they want to keep as much of the trade, custom, from the supermarkets as they can, so they are also trying to dictate that all the stock comes to them from very large areas.'

6. Perception of Standards Application Internationally

Respondents launched a vigorous defence of British Quality Standards combined with a grudge-laden disbelief over translation of those standards into the market place.

'Well, I think they ought to stop importing anything that doesn't comply to the same standards as what we're producing. I mean, we are importing from countries with Foot & Mouth. We have done right through the Foot & Mouth crisis. I know that because my son travels the world. He lives in America and he travels the world and I know from him the truth of what's happening, where Foot & Mouth is and the fact that Foot & Mouth has been vaccinated for in the Argentine, and we're importing that meat and yet we couldn't vaccinate.'



(PDRDF)

“I think it's very vital somehow or other we get these small slaughter houses back”

“ ... some of our organic stock is having to travel a hundred miles or more. It's the supermarkets directly. They specify they only want to deal with one or two big abattoirs.”

'Well, such as pigs. I've never liked crates. I've never kept hens in batteries. I don't think that's a bad thing to do away with but you're producing at a different level. You've got more expense and I think it has damaged our competitiveness.'

'...In France if you've got a weed problem in an organic field, you can spray it. The year you spray it is non-organic but the year after you are back in organic again, whereas in this country, it takes three years to go back in again. So, the standards are ever so different and they put us at a disadvantage as usual.'

"... the standards are ever so different and they put us at a disadvantage as usual."

Respondents considered both apparently legitimate and illegitimate imports of meat, scenarios in which they felt beleaguered by government, press and lack of consumer awareness.

'Stop importing rubbish. I think if the government put some money into Customs & Excise and just watched what was coming in and where it was coming from. I mean how can they lay down the law to us if we've got to have all this, that and the other standard when there's stuff coming in (without)? What we produce here and all the paperwork that goes with it, traceability and that? They've got to stop stuff coming in at Customs definitely and they've got to channel some money into that, I think.'

'They need to enforce and stick to the rules. Some of these bureaucrats here are standing around at Bakewell market seeing if vehicle trailers are clean. They want to get over there and start checking up on some of theirs. I mean every week in the Farmers papers you see ... imported beef ... spinal chord attached. Every week, France, Holland, wherever, Germany, they just don't bother. It wants to be on the front page of the Sun, not in the Farmers Weekly, doesn't it?'

7. Farm Diversification

The phrase 'Farm Diversification' has been a useful strapline in that it has provoked thought and elicited opinions. Its success in these dimensions is marred in its potential application by the narrow definition that it has assumed. Popular perception seems to define 'Farm Diversification' as a move into holiday accommodation, food processing or retailing, rather than a broader analysis of the individual business to spawn a bespoke avenue to alternative income generation. It is also the case that the subject is viewed as an isolated and additional time encumbrance to subsidise continuity of existing activity rather than a questioning of the existing activity in the context of the mesh of resources and aspirations of the family. Within this framework, some take a positive view of the concept, while others reject the notion for its interference with the source of satisfaction – 'farming'.

'Well, the farm is still making money, but it's not making enough money to employ labour to do things as we would like to do them. Diversification is sort of making money at the moment, but as more and more farmers diversify obviously there will be less and less people to go round the cottages and bed and breakfasts and we can see the cottage side of things and the bed and breakfast side of things going the same way as the farming.'

'Well if they made a forty-eight hour day I might just be able to do something else. Instead of a twenty-four hour day. You're working a minimum of fourteen hours every single day. ... how can you be diversifying, going making a pot of yoghurt somewhere? Are they going to stop everybody from breeding? We all want children, and what's going to happen to them? You've got to look after them. I mean I go to work, I work outside and I do the business, I do all the paperwork, so you just have not got time



(PDRDF)

“You’re working a minimum of fourteen hours every single day. ... how can you be diversifying, going making a pot of yoghurt somewhere?”

to diversify. If you’re doing the job properly nobody should have time. ... Most things that folk have diversified into they like over subscribe. ... Living where we live diversification is holiday cottages. A lot of them, (I’ve nothing against them, nothing against them at all) But I’ve spoken to people who find they’re not getting the bookings because they’ve saturated themselves round here. Everyone who’s got a something or other is converting. I mean I don’t blame anyone for doing it, but, it’s like anything it saturates itself then somebody will move onto something else.’

‘Well I think if I wanted to do something different I’d do it all out. I mean diversification does help in some cases but I think it weakens things tremendously. You can lose your aim. You know I’ve got a friend with a farm shop and it has improved what she makes at the end of that beast of lamb or whatever, but the amount of hours she puts in, she isn’t farming the same now. So does she want to be a shopkeeper or does she want to do farming? I think with holiday lets and so on I think we’re self defeating it, we make more holiday lets and kids are pushed out as want live in area. So I don’t think diversification is the be all and end all if we could get farming healthier and less diversification it’d be a damn sight better.’

There was also a perception of bureaucracy imposing obstacles to change, hampering the prospect of diversification.

‘We used to have a five van caravan site and had to stop that because the rates people wanted more money in rates than what we actually got for having the vans on.’⁸

‘I mean they wouldn’t like us to put up a quad bike circuit here because we’re in a conservation area or they wouldn’t let us camp round here, so what can we do?’

Of those that had developed diversification incomes, 75% had focused their efforts on provision of accommodation. The only other focus of endeavour was agricultural contracting.

8. Co-operation

Co-operation tended to be viewed as a positive concept, for someone else, at least, and valued for the potential to exercise power in the market place or to ease time pressures, cost effectively, in production. However, reflection on the nature of farmers and farming did not inspire confidence in respondents that co-operation was an achievable, if desirable, goal.

‘...we are already co-operating with our neighbours with machinery and labour, we help each other out as a lot of farmers round here do, and the Chatsworth estate have been having this study into whether we’ve all the Chatsworth dairy farmers tenants can form together to co-operate with this new venture. And if that happens I would very much like to be a part of it, obviously it depends on what it is all going to cost and whether the costs are going to be justified by the extra money we’ll get for our produce. I do think this is very much rural co-operation, fortunately I have got one or two neighbours who I am willing to co-operate with but not as much as I would like to, we are beginning to do a lot more of that as I say helping with machinery and labour.’

‘... I don’t know, they’re sort of people who stick together but don’t If we all stuck together we could have a bit more power than people think, but obviously they don’t. ... At the end of the day farming is a business and if Joe Bloggs up the road says ‘Don’t do this’ and you know by your figures you’ve got to send your milk or whatever It’s coming down to that individual business again. Having said that, we should all stick together more and co-operate and do more things together.’



(PDRDF)

8. A 50% reduction in rates can now be obtained, depending on assessment, through Farm Diversification Relief, introduced in 2002.

'... but you're asking for a miracle. We all look over the fence and criticise neighbours don't we and think, old Fred's doing well out of that and so on. Yes but we're all lousy at co-operating. We're all a bit keen on that last quid sometimes and we don't all realise as everyone's got to make a living sometimes. And to co-operate everybody's got to have an interest haven't they and a living out of it and we don't always get that co-operation, not always that trust, I don't know why. I think that's because farmers are independent. ... I'm not saying it won't work but I'm saying, it is a lot of work and sticking to it you know. It's got be money led and there's got to be a clause in it, there's got to be plenty of carrot but there's also got to be plenty of stick to make them stay the course in any sort of co-operative.'

"I think the hill farmer always has been the sort of person to work in isolation simply because of geography"

'I think the hill farmer always has been the sort of person to work in isolation simply because of geography I've got to travel more than a mile to go to my nearest neighbour. As the crow flies, she's only, what, she's only from here to the corner of that building over there. I've got to go all the way out of my place ... and then come back right round. It could be more than a mile You don't see neighbours. You don't have contact with them simply because each farm is so isolated and the roads all sort of go off in different directions. You occasionally see your neighbours at the gate when you're going through the gate sometimes. It's not conducive to getting together to sort things out on a business basis. ... I was hoping that the village hall might be a focus for people to get together. It doesn't work. The only people that use the village hall are people aren't farming basically. Those who've just moved up there to live there. So how you persuade people I don't know. I think we've got to do it. I think we've got to make an effort.'

9. Reflections on the Outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease

There was a universal criticism of timing, bureaucracy and administration. Some offered explanations revolving about the scale of the task and manpower constraints. Others took a view that apparent ineptitude was designed to mask another agenda.



(PDRDF)

'Well it could have been handled a lot better, it was four or five days on before they did anything about it, I'm afraid, ever since moving stock from end of the country to the other because of dealers. Its just a pity they didn't get on it two or three days earlier would have made a big difference.'

' I don't think we were quick enough and I think we're short of manpower. We had a letter in April about TB, it's within two miles of us they want to test everything in the area. We've rung our vet because of taking stock to other end of farm. He says you'll be lucky if you're tested this side of Christmas. Because there isn't the vets, I think that was one of the main things with foot and mouth. You know, I'm not saying it was all wrong, no, because a crisis is a damn crisis so you know, the best man ten year since won't be the best man today. But I do think they could have been a bit quicker on the vets side. They were too long in getting them killed and I think that is a lack of manpower. But having said that it takes an horrendous amount of man power when you're in it.'

'We should have frozen the movements from day one instead of letting any further movements take place and they should have had the army in, in the first week when they realised what they were up against but we are talking bureaucracy again. I mean everybody else did their share but they didn't you see. So they got rid of the ministry and brought DEFRA in thinking they were covering it all up I suppose. The amount of animals they slaughtered needlessly because they didn't act at the beginning. To tell you the truth, I believe it was brought about on purpose to get rid of the sheep in the hills, that's what I think.'

“We should have frozen the movements from day one instead of letting any further movements take place.”

‘Somebody at the top who knew what they were doing for a start. ...The people they should have listened to like Fred Brown, who is the world foot and mouth expert recognised world wide. He used to be the director of Pirbright. Now he’s in America, but there’s loads of stuff on the internet. The advice is there and they did not use it. They didn’t go to the people who knew what they were talking about because they didn’t want to go down that route. They didn’t want vaccination, which is what Fred Brown was advocating right from the beginning. They were determined, I think, I can only see it this way, they were determined to slaughter as much stock as they possibly could. So they didn’t want the answers.’

‘My personal opinion of foot and mouth is if it did naturally happen or naturally occur the Government made a field day of it. It is proven now that lots and lots of animals were slaughtered and had no need to have been. I know people were probably paid for them but you’d only be paid for them if you went to market. It’s not like you’ve been paid for them and then replaced again sort of thing. I think there’s more things like that to come. Because I think that there’s some red tape somewhere and they’re not going to happy until they’ve got rid of agriculture in this country and turned it into a theme park. That’s my personal opinion. It wasn’t intended to be handled any better in my opinion.’

10. The ‘Right to Roam’

It needs to be recognised that any immediate ramifications of the ‘Right to Roam’ will be governed by location and, as such, will not impact equally on all respondents. This will have influenced individual responses that ranged from indifference to concern based around a number of issues.

‘They’ve been roaming round for years so its not going to make much difference is it? The best one we had was several years ago where they built themselves a barbecue in the middle of the hay field that was ready for baling.’

Some responses expressed concern over practical, physical issues.

‘I think the worse thing is though, they’re going to be clambering over and leaving gates open and we’ll have stock everywhere.’

‘... building walls building stone stiles in walls. We’re always replacing these they’re certainly not designed for hundreds of people a day to go over.’

Allied to this concern was the potential inflation in maintenance costs, for which respondents did not recognise any financial support.

‘...nobody’s talking about paying to keep stiles and footpaths and gates and things up for the public, people seem to be, there’s going to be nothing in it for us. I think if you’re going to stick your neck out we ought to be paid to let people walk up and down. ... nobody in the government as far as I’m concerned has ever mentioned paying farmers for the upkeep and maintenance of the paths, or for the inconvenience of having people.’

To some the notion invited further intrusion, and uninformed intrusion into lifestyle, eroding territory, encouraging complications around misunderstanding and heightening a sense of vulnerability.

‘...and I still worry, I now worry about the concept that an English man’s home is his castle. It doesn’t seem to be that any more. It seems to be everybody else’s castle as far as I can see... we have a footpath going straight through the farmyard, People aren’t generally bad but I’ve caught people going over the fence into the garden and when you challenge them they seem to think they have a right to do it.’

“They’ve been roaming round for years so its not going to make much difference is it? The best one we had was several years ago where they built themselves a barbecue in the middle of the hay field that was ready for baling.”

“... they don’t seem to realise if you’ve seven hundred ewes ... a certain percentage dies ... I don’t think the public’s generally aware of the downside of farming.”

‘...I can’t see much harm in anybody looking over your fence but you know they don’t seem to realise if you’ve seven hundred ewes and you run them till they’re seven or eight crop (had lambs over seven or eight seasons) a certain percentage dies and that sort of thing, we get all these problems with this Right To Roam. Or a lame cow or something like that, I don’t think the public’s generally aware of the downside of farming. I think we need to do more at that if we’re going to let them roam everywhere.’

The Act was viewed as further evidence of erosion of status amongst Farmers.

‘...I think they are more for these walkers, and they’ve got this impression that walkers bring in more income than agriculture so I think agriculture’ll, I don’t know how to put it, I don’t think they’re bothered about farming they’ll just let it happen. Because he was on the radio the other day, him from the Peak Park, and he said ... agriculture were bringing very little into the countryside. ‘

Several respondents expressed concern over public liability.

‘The thing that worries me on this right to roam is the insurance point of it really, because we’ve got some places where they can roam and its all on very big dale sides, its very dangerous, we don’t go on ourselves.’

‘... they say you are all covered but I can’t see that because nowadays everybody is suing everybody and they are putting this right to roam on dangerous areas and if anybody breaks a leg or kills themselves then I think it will come back to the farmer, I think that’s going to ruin us.’

11. Farming and Future Generations

Respondents valued their own past experience of farming, the tradition of farming in their families and a desire to continue to tend the landscape developing the products of previous generations. However, they stressed a need for economic improvement if there were to be a prospect for future generations to farm. Equally, a positive perception of farmers by the rest of society would be valued.

‘Well, I’d like at least one of them to farm because my family have been farmers, I should think since the year dot. I should think since farmers ever were, my family have farmed. All right, the younger brothers and sisters have always had other jobs, but they’ve nearly all lived on smallholdings and if they haven’t had a farm they’ve always been involved in some small way with farming. They’ve always had a couple of cows and things and I think it’s just a way of life that’s really valuable ... I think they need to see that, firstly, that there’s at least some remuneration in it. That at least if it’s not a way to get rich quick then at least it’s not a drain for money, which is what it is now and I think they need to feel that they’ve got some kind of respect and that they have a useful part to play in the community, whereas I think at the moment farmers feel like they’re the dregs, don’t we, because we can’t do anything right, you know. We get criticised for taking subsidies, but you can’t keep going without them and people that had their livestock culled got criticised for accepting too much money for that.’

‘I think if there was more money, it’s a very hard life with very little reward, very little financially, I don’t know it’s a very difficult question. I’ve got three children none of whom are interested in going into the farm. They fortunately all went to university, one’s a medical student, the other two have got very good jobs, earning far more than they would dream of ever, ever getting in this business. I think a few years ago farming was seen as the ultimate occupation wasn’t it? It seems to have lost that because it seems to be being



Kate Bellis

“Well, I’d like at least one of them to farm because my family have been farmers, I should think since the year dot.”

sidelined all the time. I know you can tell by the agricultural colleges, I know the one I went to has closed down now, ... college in Bedfordshire, a lot of these colleges have to keep going by other courses like the equestrian, outside, home economics the question is not straight ... I don't know, better prices and more healthy agriculture. At the moment you can see, I mean I can understand why my children weren't interested in coming into it, although they all love coming home, they love coming to the farm. They do help if they're coming home at weekend, especially the youngest one she helps with the sheep. It's not their chosen occupation. I rather hoped one of them would come to it. Frankly the way it is now you rather think they're better off out of it. It's a terrible thing to say but it's true.'

In conjunction with the diminished returns from farming, the capital cost of entry to farming was cited as an obstacle to new entrants with inflation in property prices reflecting the changing nature of the village population.

“ ... my children weren't interested in coming into it, although they all love coming home, they love coming to the farm.”

'I don't think there is a lack of young people wanting to take up farming. ... in the five to twenty year old bracket. I mean five to twenty, what they do is once they've had a go and realise that there's not a lot of money that the parents are earning then they become despondent and disillusioned. It's so hard for them to start farming on their own that's where people come into the area and snap up houses, small farms I mean we haven't got anywhere in the village where our children could live We couldn't afford to buy and they couldn't afford to buy, so they'll never come back to village life.'

“ I mean we haven't got anywhere in the village where our children could live We couldn't afford to buy and they couldn't afford to buy, so they'll never come back to village life.”

Also, the expansion of existing farms, in a quest to achieve economies of scale, was recognised to limit entrance opportunities but this process was seen to mirror the processes taking place in the rest of the economy.

'Well obviously they have no chance of getting in really at the moment, you just need so much money to get started, what with machinery and stock and the price of land you just can't really get in, most farms are being made bigger and bigger It's the same with everything, little corner shops have all gone, little butchers are going fast, little filling stations have gone Yes when you look round it's the same everywhere.'

12. Stress

Stress was seen to be a personal and individual response to circumstance, but 'money' was highlighted as the predominant factor precipitating stress. While money is clearly a day to day issue for some, the lack of purchasing power to buy time to pursue 'farming' at a sustainable pace was the core issue. The perception of 'farming' embodied in respondents has been frustrated by falling commodity prices and inflating costs hampering the ability to meet idealised standards and pursue the activities that have offered the source of satisfaction. This scenario has been compounded by 'events' that have thrown plans and introduced what appears to be, if the phrase will stand scrutiny, 'consistent uncertainty' to an industry with foundations laid over fifty years ago, biological factors apart, on the rock of 'consistently predictable odds'. Superimposed on this, has been a 'Quality Assurance' framework that, either in itself or in its delivery, attacks the self-esteem and confidence of the individual.

'I don't honestly know. It depends on each farmer really, some farmers make their own stress.'

'... when I first went onto anti-depressants, we were struggling at the time, absolutely struggling, and it boils down to finance, then the pressures of everything else build up. But yes a decent price, it goes back to the original thing, a decent price would take the stress of the finance off. I don't think

“You’re not treated as a sensible and responsible adult by a lot of the people you deal with and this is very frustrating.”

any farmer is frightened of work they just get on with it and do it, because they are doing what they enjoy but everything is against them. So I think it’s down to value for money again.’

‘... I think some of the political decisions cause me more stress than the work. You know, as I said, marketing, you can have something just right and they come with some unfounded scare by some professor and you lose thousands overnight. I think that’s more stressful and the fact that we can’t get enough planning into farming now. You know you can sell eighteen month old beast now for less than you sold a ten day old Holstein bull calf when exports were on. Well if that doesn’t create a bit of aggro somewhere, what does? ‘

‘ Paperwork? Wiped out with a stroke. A lot more co-operation with the powers that be as well. You’re treated like a naughty school boy who’s come to the headmaster instead of being treated like someone whose trying to run a business and has got the responsibility of animals and a piece of countryside. You’re not treated as a sensible and responsible adult by a lot of the people you deal with and this is very frustrating.’

‘...all mither of things. I mean everything you get now from the ministry like you have to fill up. You know they treat us like criminals don’t they? They state this like do this out wrong and it can be up to £5,000 fine.’

13. Social Isolation

Respondents commented on geographical isolation, a locational parameter that they accepted as part of their chosen occupation. While accepting their own situation, they tended to sympathise with individuals operating under a degree of geographical isolation more extreme than their own circumstance.

‘...they’re used to it. Somebody come from London down there they’d go from social isolation, but it’s what we’ve always been used to. I don’t find that a problem, no.’

‘Well we are quite lucky here living more or less in a village and near a main road. I think it must be really awkward living in the hills, living a long way from villages. We are very lucky just here.’

Some moved from a starting point of geographical isolation to people contact. While individuals might not view their own degree of geographical isolation as an issue, people contact was considered to be important.

‘...we’re not being isolated here but those up in the Peaks, some of those places way out you feel, especially in the winter you feel desperately isolated. I’m sure it’s a good thing to talk about it.’

‘I don’t go to as many farmers meetings as I should, but it’s amazing when you do everyone’s got the same problems, we all worry about precisely the same things. I had to go to one last week on cow ..., everybody finished up talking about the current situation.’

‘No, we sell straw as well as contracting so we’ve always got customers here or we are delivering to customers, so we see quite a lot of people. That is a problem up in the hills, some people look forward to market for a day out. We are not quite as dependent on that.’

The nature of contact with others was brought into focus by respondents who valued, what seems to be, a diminishing number of opportunities to relate to like-minded, empathetic or, at least, sympathetic people.



Kate Bellis

“That is a problem up in the hills, some people look forward to market for a day out.”

'...The other person we talk to an awful lot is the bank manager, without him at the moment, we really would be struggling. I do get the impression the bank manager actually understands our predicament.'

The single response that encapsulates the range of interpretations is given below.

“... there are very few people in the village who can relate to what we do. ... Their work experiences and life experiences are so different from ours. They think you're either mad or quaint.”

'Well, I think it's not just the distance, I mean obviously the distance counts because you can't just walk out your front door and lean over the gate and talk to somebody because our nearest neighbours are over a quarter of a mile away, but it's the fact there are very few people in the village who can relate to what we do. ...In fact there is no one with children the same age as my children who've got a vaguely agricultural background because most of the families with children are all incomers and they've either made a mint on these British Rail sell-outs and things like that or they've got big jobs in Derby or Birmingham or Manchester and big incomes. In some cases two incomes and I think some of the people who live in the village are on a different planet from what we are. ...I mean it's a ten-minute walk to get to anybody, but if you meet people down at the post box or in the pub they don't relate to what you are doing. They are on a different planet. Their work experiences and life experiences are so different from ours. They think you're either mad or quaint.'

14. Confidence in Continued Farming

Interviewers asked respondents to look 10 years into the future and question whether they would still be farming. Despite the foregoing, the answer was 'yes'. Although one respondent made the observation that 'they will always need food', the detail suggested that this positive response was fuelled by hope rather than belief. The desire to continue with farming reflected, in some instances, commitment to the next generation, commitment to past personal endeavour and the endeavours of previous generations, an inability to envisage any other location or lifestyle or a recognition of being 'trapped'. Responses suggested a framework of victimisation and oppression in which they perceived themselves to have little control over future development but one in which innate resilience would carry them through. Much of this framework is summed up in the duet of despair and defiance voiced by one husband and wife team responding to the question, 'Do you think that you will still be farming in ten years time?'

Mr *'Farming or drawing social.'*

Mrs *'If they keep putting you under pressure you'll sit at home with your feet up, won't you?'*

Mr *'I don't know because Farmers Guardian last week it said the end of small farms by 2010.'*

Mrs *'It comes to what I said earlier on, it's planned out for us somewhere. Somewhere it is planned out what is happening to this country, agriculture wise. We don't know what that is, we've had Foot & Mouth thrown at us and BSE, we had all the change of the milking producers, you know, buyers and so on, what's round the corner next? But as regards what we're doing, because we love it, yes we will be in it, we are either going to be penniless and have to get out.'*

Mr *'It looks as though farms are going to get larger, bigger dairy herds.'*

Mrs *'Then you see we've got the battle with our landlords then, they think there's nothing nicer, which there isn't, than a nice pointed up cow shed, it looks lovely, but they won't let you use them any more, will they? They*

“If we carry on like now, no bank’s going to give us a mortgage to buy anywhere to live. So what do we do? We’re in a trap.”

would be quite happy for us to barrow out with a barrow and spade every day in little sheds. They’re all for conservation, I’m not saying there’s anything wrong with it, but nobody else is allowing you to do it now, your buyer isn’t, you haven’t got the time in the day now then you’ve got pressures again. We might not be here, but where do we go because we haven’t got nowhere else to go if they chuck us out of here.’

Mr *‘The only way family farms will survive is because they do their own labour. Where these big men have to employ these. There is that way, but I think most family farms farm.’*

Mrs *‘Yes but in those 10 years what is going to happen to us? If we carry on like now, no bank’s going to give us a mortgage to buy anywhere to live. So what do we do? We’re in a trap.’*

Mr *‘You can only do all this work and get no reward for so long can’t you?’*

Mrs *‘I’m glad to hear it, I thought he would be farming till he was about seventy.’*

Mr *‘Like this milk price drop today we’ve had of three pence, I think that’s another thing. You’ve got to find that from somewhere.’*

“Hopefully these family farmers, they’ve got a bit of a backbone, they’ll survive.”

Mrs *‘On our quota’s that’s disappearing to £12,000 more a year, Well you have got to find that from somewhere. You aren’t going to say, ‘right you’re all on rations cows’. Or ‘you can’t have any bedding, lie in your own shit’. I mean where is that twelve grand going to come from for example? And that’s just us, what about people with bigger amounts? I think there’s something else coming up for us. They’re going to put that much pressure on us until we all commit suicide, we’re all anti-depressants, or we’re all knocking on someone’s door for somewhere to live if they’re like us.’*

Mr *‘Hopefully these family farmers, they’ve got a bit of a backbone, they’ll survive.’*

Most succinctly:

‘You see this is the trouble with farmers. They’ve got this suicidal urge to farm. If we were sane we would have said, ‘sod it’ by now wouldn’t we and be doing something else? I think the government know that they’ve got us because they know that you’ve been brought up doing it.’

15. Routes to Influence Policy

Attitudes expressed under the headings of ‘Social Isolation’ and ‘Confidence in Continued Farming’ underpinned the focused response to the question, ‘Do you think farmers can influence policy?’ Responses recognised the eclectic nature of the phrase ‘farmer’ encompassing: large; small; hill; lowland; specialist; mixed; arable; horticultural; livestock and so on, acknowledging the difficulty presented in giving emphasis to all. Time pressures were identified on smaller farmers limiting the scope to engage in activity that would promote their cause, leaving the balance of lobbying power in the hands of the larger farmer. Lobbying power itself was brought into question with the dispersed nature of the industry, the minority status of farmers in the larger economy and the disparity of aspiration between respondents and the members of the broader economy. Lobbying was still considered to be important with practicalities that demand an organisation that can offer representation in a framework that recognises the inevitable process of change.

‘Its very hard, everybody works so many hours nobody can get together. You go and have your say but nothing gets done, its not like a society where people can stop working and go and do something about it, the work still has

to be done. There's nobody in government that's rural mannered so whatever is said the people that hear it don't understand, that's how I see it anyway.'

'I think the NFU should fight for these things for us, they are the best people to do it for us really, acting for us, we pay our subscription that's what they are there to do. Some don't agree but there's not much chance of doing it on our own, so leave them to it and hopefully they can fight for us.'

"Its very hard, everybody works so many hours nobody can get together. You go and have your say but nothing gets done"

'... the farming industry is very, very diverse. It's one industry from the cereal barons to the big poultry and pig to the small family beef and sheep users you've got at least three and it looks as if the horticultural industry has three or four separate industries within farming They do the best they can, but they're never going to be able to represent the best interests of every party. No one would expect them to. Overall they do what they can and they do do a lot. Now as to whether it is the best is debatable. The policies of farming is developing and changing all the time. In fact today you probably know it has been announced that subsidies are being completely re-vamped. Subsidies ... Oh, I think they will. But that is the direction it is going. Green Grants have been coming in steadily over the last ten years.'

'We were only saying yesterday they don't have farmers on the Peak Board, they think we're thick. ... We're in a world now we've got a government. ... They're not going to think, 'oh there's a farmer living up in the Peak District let's do such and such a thing', while there are homeless families in Toxteth or where ever.'

The National Farmers Union were seen to have had an historically valuable role in the promotion of farmers' interests although, notwithstanding the above, the value of the Union to day was questioned. The erosion of farmer status in the economy as a whole and the disproportionate influence of larger interests were seen to have stifled the role of the NFU. Scale was not the only issue. Interests outside the mainstream established approach to farming, eg 'organic', were seen to be scorned.

"They're not going to think, 'oh there's a farmer living up in the Peak District let's do such and such a thing', while there are homeless families in Toxteth or where ever."

'Well, I think the NFU are a waste of space where farmers like us are concerned because they speak for the big boys and they don't understand or back organics at all.'

'I'm a great supporter of the NFU ... I've been a member since nineteen sixty ... but they don't seem to have the clout that they did have or perhaps they do but they're not being listened to like they used to be. ... I get the impression that they are not as powerful as they were.'

Recognising this framework, some advocated allegiance to specialist or, apparently, more radical organisations.

'I think the Family Farmers Association, Small Holders Association, and the Tenant Farmers probably speak up for more people like us ...'

'I don't know, but I do know a lot of farmers have come out of the NFU because they've given up on them. So I don't know if that's an answer. Whether we need another farmer's union or whether the 'Farm', what do you call it, the one's who initiated the demonstrations. I can't remember the group.'

Other avenues of influence identified, councillors and members of Parliament, inspired little confidence.

'A lot of councillors aren't interested in farming for a start. They've got some very warped views on what affects farmers.'

'The MP that we've got is a bit of a waste of time anyway. I've tried him, he's useless, he's not on this planet.'



Farmers market, Buxton. (PDRDF)

16. Additional Observations

The scope for additional comment, beyond the focused questions, tended to prompt responses that expanded on earlier observations. The physical and financial distance between the farmer and consumer was highlighted, with issues raised over food miles and the perception of supermarket control over producer practices and consumer expectation. There was a perception that consumers needed to be educated in terms of the role of the farmer in food production and management of the landscape with a belief expressed that small farmers look after landscapes and that an erosion of numbers of farmers would leave a landscape bereft of care. Allied to this was a concern over the lack of opportunity for young farmers to make a start. The increasing intrusion of paperwork was cited and imports from non EU countries carried blame for the economic framework in which respondents operated.

'... as long as we make a slight improvement somewhere we'll carry on. But I don't think there's any big runs for any big deals on it. I think we're too far from our customer, and we are becoming more aware of that, we need to work on that.'

"... we're too far from our customer, and we are becoming more aware of that, we need to work on that."

'You should be able to grow and sell vegetables fresh. The supermarkets started that off, I think, because they wanted everything uniform. So you've got to spray it, to my mind, until it's not fit to eat. You know this is what they say. You know it isn't what the customer wants it's what the supermarkets are telling the customer they want. Most customers if you really talk to them, if they really had the chance to buy stuff fresh if there's a bit of a blemish once they've tasted fresh stuff and they realise how much nicer it is and how much more flavour there is in it they would buy that if they could. But who has the opportunity? The supermarkets have wiped it away for fresh produce.'

"... once they've tasted fresh stuff and they realise how much nicer it is and how much more flavour there is in it they would buy that if they could. But who has the opportunity?"

'I would like farmers not to get no bigger because some of the big farms are rough and maintenance isn't done right, whereas the smaller farmers do care for it and look after it and try and get everything right, keep it well maintained. Where these lads keep taking more and more on.'

'All this paperwork that's involved with everything. It's the same with any job, isn't it now? Paperwork. It's taken the pleasure out of the job hasn't it? I mean you've got to be like a high-speed office worker towards your work. I can't.'

'Yes, it (NFU) will hold a bit of, surely its got a bit of clout hasn't it? It should have, so I should think if you had any problem you know, I mean the odd scuffles we have had with MAFF and what it used to be they'd always help you and sort it out to the best of their ability like. But as for making things change, rules change its very hard isn't it. It'd be no good ringing DEFRA up and saying you were fed up with this 20 day standstill thing, because they'd say well tough isn't it.'

"There's only me farming what would be three farms at one time plus."

'The only comment I can make is if they don't get farming more viable we'll have a lot less farmers and a lot less nice countryside around us as farmer's can't afford to maintain the countryside in the same condition. There's more and more weeds on this farm now than there has been in years. Less and less time spent on stone walls in the last few years. There's only me farming what would be three farms at one time plus.'

IMPLICATIONS OF THE CASE STUDY FINDINGS TO THE EVOLUTION OF FARMING IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

A self-portrait of the sample farms would encompass a balance of: oppression and optimism, put down and perseverance, frustration and fortitude and, perhaps most importantly, disbelief and defiance. The elements of disbelief can be gleaned from:

'The Argentine is riddled with Foot and Mouth. We bring in Argentinean beef. We don't need it.'; 'I think we were getting the same price for our milk to-day as we were in 1980 or 81.'; '... foot and mouth has been vaccinated for in Argentina and we're importing that and yet we couldn't vaccinate.' 'We've had calf passports that we've sent off but they've come back with the wrong mother on or something like that. You send it back and it will come back with the wrong calf on! It's not just doing it once and yet if you make a mistake or send in something wrong, you're penalised.'

Defiance can be measured, in the face of the above, by the universal expectation to be farming in 10 years time.



(PDRDF)

Current policy looks to put an unacceptable degree of direction change into the farm business. Agriculture is highly visible and has been benchmarked through the lives of the current generation. The visible benchmarks of clean level crops, rapid growth rates, high lambing percentages etc. could be relied upon when production equated with profit. In a changed climate, where that linkage has to be questioned, the activity of farming continues to be the source of satisfaction and the product visible to peers. A standard that measures production may leave investment of capital and time out of sync with the potential return from the market place and yet historically valuable indicators continue to drive the approach to farm management. Until either the functional linkage between production and profit is restored or the perception of that linkage is broken, stress will continue to be a defining characteristic of farming.

Farmers want to 'farm'. Profit may be a necessity but it is not the prime motivator. While the definition of sustainable, as in profitable, farming may have changed – in terms of the balance of time, the role of production and the emphasis of support measures – that changed definition has failed to gain acceptance. *'... and the last thing you want to do when you come in at night, and I'm pretty exhausted as I'm sure all of us are, is to sit down and wade through paperwork. That's not my idea of how to relax after a hard day's work,'* suggests that the parameters of the current framework are viewed as an additional time encumbrance, rather than an integral part of the job of 'farming'. Here is a group of people who acknowledge themselves to constitute only a small proportion of the total population. However, they also recognise that they are remnants of a fondly remembered local community. That local community is now being displaced by the burgeoning of a commuter society that has led to villages that are not only depopulated by day, but peopled by individuals with different time, financial and social aspirations and achievements.

Independence and self-esteem have been eroded by the imposition of 'Quality Assurance' measures and the forced acceptance of an operational framework that highlights responsibility without authority. Feelings of social isolation within the locality are compounded by a perceived lack of voice at a national level. Some would consider development of other income streams, if those avenues could be located within the mesh of resources available, and a generally positive view of co-operation as a concept was countered by an equally general lack of confidence in its application.

The implications of this analysis suggest that, while short, medium and long-term measures need to be identified, the focus needs to be:

- **Support measures** that enable the farmer to recognise, objectively, and to come to terms with their existing position in relation to family, community, national and global goals.
- **Adaptation measures** that provide the means to develop an integrated vision of sustainable personal and community development.
- **Implementation measures** to ensure the achievement of a developed vision.



Kate Bellis

Landscape is habitat. The economic use of that landscape will underpin the social sustainability of communities. Financial investment may be necessary, but the practicality of implementation of a socially sustainable community, maintaining the existing number of farmers, as landscape managers, will require a shared vision with each contributing to an integrated market encompassing local, static and visiting, transient consumers together with access to expanded support for environmental management.

Responses from the study population suggest that 'co-operation' is viewed as a positive thing, for someone else at least. Implementation will revolve about mindset and structure. A single farmer cannot hope to supply food to the local school. Continuity of supply would not be achievable. A group of farmers with staggered lambing dates might achieve the goal. The local school would not offer continuity of a market, by virtue of term dates. Perhaps the local tourist catering market is more active out of term time. A group of farmers might achieve something like a level market by supplying local schools and the local tourist catering market. Schools will not want potatoes delivered from the field. Potatoes involve staff costs in peeling, washing etc. and are likely to prefer to buy prewashed bags of potatoes. A group of farmers might justify investment in a small processing plant. Diversion of time, by some, into processing or marketing might generate contract employment for others in husbandry spreading their machinery and labour costs.

An integrated vision needs someone to integrate it and funds to enable it. That individual needs to be involved in all three stages and proactive in the last two stages. Likewise, a clear communication process needs to be established between farmers, the local community and officials to develop policies that circumvent the obstacles that appear to be strewn in the path of progress.

Part 2 : Farming Incomes in the Peak District National Park

Professor Martin Seabrook, University of Nottingham

STATUS OF DOCUMENT

This document has been compiled using the best possible accurate and reliable available statistics. However, its purpose is to form a basis of discussion, to highlight problem areas and to stimulate thought. It is not intended to provide definitive answers, in any case there are probably none!

CONSTRAINTS

1. Location of Peak District National Park across more than one economic region.

The most authoritative data set on farm incomes is the Farm Business Survey financed by the Government and the EU. This very accurate unbiased and independent survey is carried out by university departments. The Peak District National Park covers more than one university's area. Uniquely for this study the University of Nottingham's data for Peak District National Park farms in Derbyshire were amalgamated with data kindly provide by the University of Manchester with equivalent farms in Cheshire and Staffordshire. The two survey methodologies are identical. The complete data set provides a vivid insight into farming in the Peak District National Park.

2. Data on farm size and types

It is the author's view that it is currently not possible to obtain reliable data on the number and types of farms in the Peak District National Park. This is due to the limitation of the previously widely used source the government's June 4th Census data. Problems arise as this data is for 'holdings' and not 'farm businesses'. Many of the latter comprise two or more 'holdings'. Any figures may thus overestimate the number of farm businesses and underestimate the size of farms. Secondly, if a farmer fails to complete the census form, not an infrequent occurrence given the paper-work overload of farmers, the data set is merely 'updated'. This means the data set is dated.

RESULTS

1. Farm types

Cluster analysis of the farms surveyed show three significant types, See Table 1. This probably provides a reasonable picture of farming in the Park. The farms being recruited in the Farm Business Survey, as far as possible, on a random basis.

Table 1 **Farm typography**

	% of sample
Dairying	22
Beef and Sheep <100ha	26
Beef and Sheep >100ha	52

2. Farm incomes for the financial year ending April 2002

These are set out in the Table 2. Net Farm Income includes revenues into the farm minus all outgoings, this also includes payment for all resources used even when no financial transfer actually occurs, e.g. rental allocation for owner occupied farms. Full details of the methodology are dealt with in Seabrook (2002)⁸. Management and Investment Income includes an allowance for farmer's and spouse's unpaid labour. It is the income left as a reward for management and for a return on investment in the business.

Table 2 **Income levels for financial year ending April 2002**

Type	Area Average (ha)	Cows Average	Net Farm Income per ha	Man & Invest Income per ha
Dairying	93	88	£213	(£-18)
Beef and Sheep <100ha	58	-	£129	(£-127)
Beef and Sheep >100ha	158	-	£109	(£-38)

8. Seabrook M. F. *Farming in the East Midlands 2001-2002*, University of Nottingham Publication, ISBN 0 900573 55 9.

If these figures are incorporated into the three farm types and multiplied by average area then the average income for the farm type can be calculated. These are shown in Table 3, which also shows what that income level would have been without the current payment of direct production subsidies.

Table 3 **Net Farm Income with and without the removal of direct subsidies⁹**

Type	Total Net Farm Income	Total Net Farm Income without direct subsidies
Dairying	£19,840	£4,622
Beef & Sheep <100ha	£7,482	(£-2,320)
Beef & Sheep >100ha	£17,222	(£-3,380)

These figures do not include any off farm income or of course any aspect of the black or grey economy.

3. Farm incomes in an historical context.

Table 4 shows the income levels compared with previous situations.

Table 4 **Incomes over time¹⁰**

Type	Total Net Farm Income (2002)	Total Net Farm Income (2000)	Total Net Farm Income (1997)
Dairying	£19,840	(£-4,374)	£32,178
Beef & Sheep <100ha	£7,482	£3,422	£9,860
Beef & Sheep >100ha	£17,222	£9,680	£16,906

These figures are much in line with other statistics for a wider sample, which show in real terms that farms income are some 25% of their level 10 years ago.

Some of the key reasons for this fall in income for farming in the Peak District include:

- The strength of Sterling making exports expensive and imported food products cheaper. Food price is for many consumers the key aspect.
- The weakness of the Euro, in which many subsidies are calculated.
- The BSE crisis altering the demand pattern and hence prices for beef and other red meats.
- The additional costs of feeding animals that cannot be readily sold.
- The decline in ‘Sunday Lunch’ eating and the reduction in the demand for lamb.
- The continuing rise in the cost of farm inputs eg fuel, tractors, fertiliser etc.
- The fact that farms have in general terms for many sectors remained much the same size. Thus farmers have not been able to achieve economies of scale, so vital for economic efficiency.
- The relative high price of land making farm expansion difficult.
- Inability, through socialisation and relative isolation, of farmers
 - To adopt modern business practices.

9. Although there are no direct subsidies for milk production, dairy farms usually benefit from subsidies for beef products.

10. The apparent increase in income in 2002 was due to short-term increases in commodity and animal prices. The general conclusions are not changed by the 2003 figures.

- Co-operate with others in sharing machinery and equipment.
- Be market led, many still seeing themselves as food producers rather than food marketers. There are many small-scale sellers and a few large-scale buyers, ‘the strong big men can thrash the many weak men’.
- The change in the milk market significantly affecting milk prices.

4. Hours of work

Collecting data on work input is one thwärt with many epistemological problems. For most farmers home and work are the same place. The farm kitchen may be the farm office. Similarly there may be a tendency for work to fill the time available. Also many ‘social’ activities could be considered as work. For example, if a farmer goes to market with no cattle to buy or sell they may still see this as part of work. The consequences of the inter-weaving of work and home are that it is difficult for the farmer to relax away from business problems or to stand back and objectively appraise the business. Similarly many social events eg market, shows or sheep-dog trials involve interaction with farmers having similar problems, thus ‘doom and gloom’ can be perpetuated. Table 5 sets out some results from an unpublished study by Seabrook and Wilkinson.

Table 5 **Hours of ‘real’ work per farmer per week, averaged over time**

Type	Hours
Dairying	58
Beef & Sheep	56

These figures will undoubtedly seem low compared to some people’s perception. The reasons have been set out above.

POLICY CHANGES¹¹

1. Hill Farm Allowances (HFA)

These are designed to provide area payments to farmers to compensate for the difficulties of farming in less favoured areas. The Government states ‘provide a bedrock of support on which farmers can build businesses which will assure a viable and sustainable future’, but they crucially and significantly add ‘...by also using the various other schemes in the England Rural Development Programme. HFAs replace Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances (HLCA).

Provisional indications are that HFA will be approximately £13/ha for open moorland, £19/ha on other disadvantaged land and £34/ha on severely disadvantaged land. These will be reduced to 50% on larger farms (350ha to 700ha) and with no payment on holdings over 700ha. Extra money, up to 20%, is possible if certain environmental criteria are met. There are certain safety measures to ensure that where a holding loses out compared to HLCA then readjustment will take place over several years. However, the cost of new BSE controls and beef intervention buying may mean the EU will ‘run out of money’.

The crucial fact is farmers will lose some direct headage/area payments because of Modulation of CAP monies. Some £300m will be directed to the England Rural Development Programme (ERDP). This may be a growing trend. Thus farmers will need to look at ERDP for any real benefit to income, ie they will face reduced subsidy revenue as a result of modulation unless they can claw it back under ERDP.

11. The mid-term review of the Common Agricultural Policy may have profound effects on land use and the rural economy in the Peak District. At this stage, it is impossible to quantify the full effect of any changes. The ERDP agri-environmental schemes are also under review.

The government and EU are essentially moving from production subsidies to marketing and environmental issues/support.

2. England Rural Development Programme (ERDP)

The programme has two key themes of support for new initiatives, the schemes are set out with the budgeted spend for the next six years.

Individual Projects

Energy Crops Producer Groups	(£29m)
Rural Enterprise Schemes	(£152m)
Processing and Marketing grants	(£44m)
Vocational Training Scheme	(£22m)

Land based schemes

Energy Crops	(£29m)
Countrysides Stewardship	(£556m)
Environmental Sensitive Area Schemes	(£334m)
Organic Farming Scheme	(£139m)
Woodland Grant	(£139m)
Farm Woodland Premium Scheme	(£77m)
Hill Farm Allowances	(£239m)

While the amounts may look significant over the six-year period they amount on average to no more than £10,000 per farm! Unless the processing or marketing or other schemes are massively successful or there is a radical reduction in the number of farms then the impact has to be cosmetic.

The schemes have to be competed for regionally and it is not easy to see how farmers in Peak District will achieve a due share. For many of the schemes it is not easy to see how farmers in Peak District National Park will benefit. In essence things will get even more difficult.

3. England Rural Development Programme and the Peak District

While it is early days it is perhaps relevant to examine how the schemes might impact on farmer household incomes in the study area.

Energy Crops Producer Groups and Energy Crops

- Unlikely to be major benefits as topography, climate and location makes the area not well suited to growing energy crops.

Rural Enterprise Schemes

- Relaxation of planning laws may help, but other National Park regulations may limit expansion.
- A conflict between maintaining natural beauty and many consumers' demand for more constructed/built leisure facilities (eg theme parks) or activities potentially damaging areas eg mountain biking/motor cycle scrambling.

- Some potential for equitation, equestrian rides and accommodation (eg Bridle Rides type schemes using own horse and riding to different locations and accommodation each day).
- Other peri-urban locations may be more competitive for the limited funds for building conversions etc.
- Scope for B&B and farm shops may be limited.

Processing and Marketing grants

- Scheme will have to be innovative and fairly large scale for real benefits, there is a few (eg goats cheese) but will benefit a relatively small number.

Vocational Training Scheme

- Opportunities likely to be very limited.

Countrysides Stewardship/Environmental Sensitive Area Schemes

- Essentially parallel schemes, management agreements may give a reasonable return for some, but for some the amounts will not compensate for other reductions in income.

Organic Farming Scheme

- Potentially highly beneficial BUT farmers will have to learn to co-operate and market collectively and obey the rules of the 'co-operative'. This will require a major change of ethos.

Woodland Grant / Farm Woodland Premium Scheme

- In this area likely to have minor impact only.

Hill Farm Allowances

- Modulation will reduce the potential impact on incomes and will be unlikely to compensate for input price rises.

In summary, at this stage, the evidence suggests that the benefits will be very limited.

RURAL WHITE PAPER

The Rural White Paper embraces much of the material referred to and makes little other substantive effects. In essence it stresses the need to move to a Common Agricultural Policy that encourages farmers to be competitive and responsive to market signals. This with the intention of ensuring they have a reasonable living whilst following practices that enhance and conserve the landscape and wildlife. In addition it seeks to move environmental and social goals closer to the heart of agricultural policy alongside economic objectives.

In future 'farm income levels' will clearly incorporate 'off farm income'. The latter may be difficult for many to achieve in the Peak District.

ACTION

The Government is clearly eager to see increased efficiency on farms and will do its part to help. In essence its message is:

- modernise
- gain economies of scale by expanding farm size
- seek to manage more effectively
- farm in an environmentally sensitive way

Farmers will have to:

- Accept a loss of independence by amalgamation and co-operation. Sharing machinery and equipment and other ways of reducing costs are essential.
- Consider selling up and realising asset values.
- Accept the need to restructure.
- Adopt a new attitude to financial and business management.
- Restructure/Larger farms replace the least efficient farmers.
- Be more forward looking and competitive and flexible.
- Be more responsive to market signals.
- See economic advantage in positive attitude to environment, payment for environmental 'goods'.
- Seek non-agriculture income.
- Accept that the new schemes will eventually replace many of the old production subsidies, so farmers must respond and apply.
- Accept one may be in competition with one's neighbours, just as one petrol station is with another.

None of this is easy!

Part 3 : Conclusions of Chris Higgins and Martin Seabrook

Farmers have an immediate and direct measure of their own performance and income, together with experience of trends to that income over time. Government sponsored research to establish that detail for groups of farms, defined by location, farm type, size etc. has been conducted annually for 50 years. Both individual businesses and policy makers are aware of the trading economics of a decision to 'farm'.

This document has reported those financial implications as Net Farm Income, for the farm types represented by the survey population in 2002. The implication is a range of Net Farm Income from £7,482 for beef and sheep farms below 100ha to £19,840 for Dairy farms. These figures, in real terms, are acknowledged to stand at around 25% of their level 10 years ago. In actual terms, one respondent reflected that: *'... I think we were getting the same price for our milk to-day as we were in 1980 or 81.'* This would be coupled with inflated input costs and erosion of the barren cow and calf trade through the impact of BSE control measures.

Net Farm Income makes no allowance for the unpaid labour of farmer and spouse. The majority, 67%, of the case study farmers estimated their weekly workload to be in excess of 80 hours. The remaining 33% estimated weekly hours to lie between 50 and 79 hours. Recognising the interwoven nature of work and social life with a dwelling that tends to be the office, independent research has suggested that 'real' work per farmer, averaged over time, is 58 hours per week for dairying and 56 hours per week for beef and sheep farms. Deduction of the value of farmer and spouse unpaid labour from the Net Farm Income yields a Management and Investment Income ranging from (−£7,336) for the smaller beef and sheep farms to (−£1,674) for dairy farms. As such, the survey population would experience a negative return on capital, a position that cannot be economically sustainable.

The Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food presented its report, the Curry Report, to government in January 2002. That report detailed a vision for a sustainable rural economy and proffered a series of recommendations towards realisation of that vision. The report stated that *‘Government must assist by providing the right policy framework but the future of the English farming and food industry will be decided on the ground.’*;



Kate Bellis

The government response to the Curry Report was published in December 2002, addressing 105 recommendations. *‘Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food: Facing the Future’*, an outline of strategy to achieve the response to the Curry Report, was published at the same time with a summary leaflet sent to all farmers. All of these documents recognise ‘change’. The strategy envisages regional and local interpretation and implementation to embrace the broad rural economy. Where farming and food is concerned, the government

‘... want to see a world class, profitable sector, competing with the best in the world within the framework of sustainable development.’

Three strategic outcomes have been identified:

- Economic sustainability;
- Environmental sustainability, and
- Social sustainability.

Economic sustainability highlights a market focus to the efficient production of both food and non-food crops from competitive farm businesses, a more efficient food chain and a reduction to the financial burden on the rest of the economy.

Environmental sustainability focuses on a better use of natural resources, with improvement of landscape and biodiversity and reduced environmental cost.

Social sustainability is concerned with better public health, higher animal health and more cohesive and productive rural communities.

If the government has put a policy framework in place but *‘... the future of the English farming and food industry will be decided on the ground’*, the responses of the case study population suggest that these decisions will be a long time in the making. The urgency is clear from financial survey data and the impact of modulation on direct subsidies. Removal of direct subsidies to a beef and sheep farm of less than 100ha would yield a Net Farm Income of (–£2,320), equating to a Management and Investment Income of (–£17,168). As the existing support mechanism is eroded, the Mid-Term Review of the Common Agricultural Policy is likely to put alternative mechanisms in place. However, these changed mechanisms will have changed emphasis with changed implications for the focus of time and capital and changed requirements for access and compliance. The role of farming is being redefined and the practitioners will need to both recognise and accept a changed definition.

The management of any business has to address the two questions of ‘What?’ and ‘How?’. What are you doing and how well are you doing it? The goal, in the context of efficient, competitive, environmentally positive and socially sustainable farming, must be to do ‘the right thing well’. Hill farms cannot hold any competitive advantage in commodity food production. They may have competitive advantage in other areas. Within this framework, registering the responses of the case study population, the implication is that the goal, and achievement, of respondents is to do ‘the wrong thing very well’. ‘The right thing’ is recognised, in principle at

least, but, equally, the fear of 'doing it badly', through inexperience, is recognised. This observation permeates not only the strategic decisions over whether to move into tourism, value adding, retailing etc. but the tactical aspects of administration and bureaucracy management.

Responses from the case study population suggest a clear definition of farming as food production with associated landscape management. Many will need to reconsider priorities, in line with the *Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food*, to landscape management with associated food production in order to access future support mechanisms and release the earning potential of time. The route to successful realisation of the earning potential of time will demand a broader definition of 'diversification' and a clear and realistic understanding of personal objectives to develop bespoke avenues to income generation that capitalise on the unique resources of the business.

As a trading activity, farming tends to demand a substantial capital base. Some may choose not to redefine 'farming' and, hence, the focus of their day to day activity, preferring to 'spend the farm', over a number of years, rather than adapt to a changed business climate. If this is the choice, it needs to be recognised and understood.

The response of the case study population suggested a determination to hold on to an established definition of 'farming' and a focus of activity conforming to that definition. Not all will hold the capital reserves to support this position and others may adopt a more business like attitude to investment and leave the industry. Movement will create opportunity, allowing expansion and the development of collaborative initiatives.

In the words of one case study respondent, '*... farmers have a suicidal urge to farm.*' In this context, farming is an activity. It is not necessarily a business. This becomes an issue of time management to allow continuation of that activity, at a realistic pace, with income generation from time released. The time intrusion of administration and fear of bureaucracy are resented and the sources of stress. Individuals will need to realign their definition of 'farming', use of time and mesh of resources if they are to reduce stress and develop a sustainable future.

Chapter 3



Kate Bellis

Final conclusions and recommendations

Farming Working Group Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum

As the title states, this research has concentrated on hill farming in the Peak District. The majority of the area covered by the research is in the National Park. There are therefore some issues that are very specific to the area, but most of the points raised will be relevant to any hill-farming district in the United Kingdom and also to many small and family farmers.

Although figures show that farmers make up only 7% of the population of the Peak District National Park,¹² it is the farmers who are responsible for the major asset of the area – its landscape. The prosperity of the community has intrinsically been tied up with farming. How farmers go about their work affects the viability of the whole area. Priorities are changing. However, the local landscape and the community that lives here and maintains it still remain of prime importance. Would the Peak District be the same if the farmers gave up farming and went, for example, into another land-based industry in the area, such as quarrying?

The previous chapters have shown that Government schemes and EU Common Agricultural Policy now reach beyond the rural as synonymous with agriculture. Yet the research statistics reveal that the Peak District farmers will not be major beneficiaries of even those schemes where the purpose is to contribute to the countryside as an amenity. The value of the landscape to a community has little significance on a farm's balance sheet, except perhaps as subsidies applied for. Maintenance and time costs to farmers are not usually identified. The many people who come walking in the Peak District do so free of any charges.

It is, however, on the balance sheet that the value of a farm is assessed. It is how this assessment is made that needs to be examined. Should a

12. Source: National Statistics website: www.statistics.gov.uk. Crown copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO.

farm be assessed purely as a business, perhaps owned by an investment company, or in the wider context of contributing to the well being of the local community, and the health of the whole nation and environment?

Rural communities gain economic benefit from the surrounding countryside in terms of house and land values, but the land management costs are borne by the farmers and high house prices have a negative impact on the poorer members of the community. Both the economic product and the wider social and environmental impact are essential elements in assessment. The weighting of each element and how the balance affects our lives are critical. In the opinion of the Farming Working Group at present the weight is too much on the economically measurable product.

That emphasis forms the basis on which decisions are taken by policy makers and by which success of a policy is judged. (After all the 'success' of a nation is measured by its gross domestic product. Health and well-being come much lower on the list, and the beauty and accessibility of its landscape not at all.) Any recommendations put forward in this report will be considered unsatisfactory in resolving the problems in the Peak District, if the weighting of criteria used to judge success does not include the criteria people themselves use to judge the value of their own lives and their capabilities in the community. The figures clearly show that by the benchmark of the return on management and investment capital, farming in the Peak District is unsustainable. This report may help to open up the debate on whether that should be the most important factor in assessing sustainability of farming.

There were two strands to the research. One concentrating on the perception of the farmers to farming in the Peak District and the other on statistics and the picture of farming created by them. It is the statistical picture that affects the view of policy makers. The Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum, in particular, was looking at farming from the point of view of the whole rural community. The members of the working group looked at the research from the perspective of their own experience of farming and the area, and the wider external context.

There are many people in the area working hard and successfully on local and national initiatives to improve the lives of the farming community and its relationship with the general public. That the recommendations mention some of these initiatives does not mean we have overlooked the fact that they exist here, but rather that their continuation is crucial, and may currently be rather precarious due to short term funding and lack of support.¹³

Martin Seabrook and Chris Higgins conclude that there is an urgent need for change, but that there are those for whom the amount of change required will be unacceptable. There needs to be greater understanding of why this may be so. It is also not only the farmers that have to be part of that change, but the consumers and food retailers as well. Our recommendations cover both support and advice measures as well as ways in which the policy framework can be looked at in order to make it more helpful to small and hill farmers. If the government has said that '*... the future of the English farming and food industry will be decided on the ground*'¹⁴ it makes sense that hill farmers have a part in deciding the details of the policy framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Assessment of Farming

Recommendation

The first recommendation must be that the criteria used to assess the value of farming in the Peak District should take into consideration, as far as possible, all related outcomes as well as economic outputs.

13. See Appendix 3 for list of organisations.

14. *Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food: Facing the Future*. The Stationery Office, Norwich, UK, December 2002.

2. Farm Incomes

The very low income of hill farmers is demonstrated both by the statistics and what the farmers are saying. Examination of the impact of the current policy framework on hill and small farmers, with effective input by the farmers themselves would resolve some of the problems (see below). The farmers and the Farming Working Group would question whether economies of size, in terms of larger holdings, is the right answer for the Peak District. Smaller units were seen as more suitable for hill farming, the landscape and the environment. Co-operative working would be a more appropriate and acceptable option, particularly in marketing. There are however a lot of problems that need to be resolved, not least the obvious difference in approaches to farming. The difference one of our working group describes as between smart farming and slow farming, farming as a job you get up and do or as a way of life that takes up your waking hours – or as Chris Higgins puts it ‘a business or an activity’.

Recommendations

Examination of negative aspects of policy framework on/by hill farmers.

Continuation of, initially free, flexibly delivered on-farm business advice.

Encouragement for farmers to be more pro-active in seeking business advice, ie. before problems occur rather than after.

Research into the potential for co-operative working in the Peak District, including enabling farmers to explore possibilities and talk through difficulties, as well as looking at successful co-operative working both in the UK and Europe.

National Park status indicates the future is in landscape maintenance. Grants must be tied to landscape management, rewarding current sustainable management providing accessible countryside NOT just giving money to those demonstrating bad practice for them to make change.

Good environmental practice needs rewarding.

3. Input into policy – The Right to Roam Legislation

The Right to Roam legislation demonstrated what happens when top down policy making hits the grass roots. It has led to numerous appeals that would have been unnecessary if consultation with effected parties had taken place prior to proposals being drawn up. The result is alienation of the farming community, an increased credibility gap regarding policy makers, and a demonstration of how disconnected farmers are from policy making that directly affects their lives and livelihood. Farmers were not against the right to roam, but felt that neither the impact on their working life nor the value of their (non-economic) contribution to society had been taken into account.

Recommendations

Formation of a local hill farmers’ association able to give a voice to grass roots farming experience and needs.

Formation of a national hill and small farmers network that co-ordinates the views of area based groups and gives hill/small farmers a strong, united and effective voice with policy makers.

Any new legislation to be looked at by representatives of all those effected by it before implementation proposals drawn up.

Open up dialogue at grass roots level with policy makers on existing legislation, particularly quality assurance framework.

4. Farm diversification

The problems with diversification often stem from the pressures that arise when people work beyond their effective capacity. It is difficult to stand back and assess the situation when working between 58 and 80 hours a week. Policy makers may see this as an ‘unwillingness’ on the part of the farmer. From the low income, and for the average to be as low as it is there must be a fair number on negative income already, many farmers see the cost and risk involved in diversification as making it an unacceptable gamble.

Recommendations

Appropriate free support and advice.

Work with farmers to find innovative and suitable ways to diversify.

Exchange of ideas with other areas of hill farming.

Further funding for initiatives such as Peak District Foods for Tourism and East Midlands Food and Farming.

Encourage/continue dialogue between farmers and other countryside users such as the Ramblers Association, YHA, etc.

5. Uneven playing field

In all interviews, surveys and conversations with the farming community, the farmers felt that they were competing in an unfair market where they are constantly inspected and targeted for enforcement of demanding standards. If food safety is a priority for policymakers, why do they over-regulate higher quality UK food creating further demand for lower quality less regulated imports? Farmers were keen to defend British quality standards, but lack of consumer awareness of higher standards and the push of the desire for cheap food made competition in the marketplace very difficult. It is impossible to tell the difference between packages of meat on the supermarket shelf. Transparency of labelling has been on policy agendas for a long time, but nothing has been resolved. Hill farms cannot compete with the developing world on commodity price, but where they can compete is in quality and that quality needs to be identified. Currently the farmer carries the cost of verification and quality labelling.

Recommendations

Transparency of labelling in supermarkets and retail outlets, which gives a clear statement of country of origin where produce was grown, not where processed or packaged, as at present.

Promotion of public understanding of British standards of food production.

A ‘Licence to Farm’ for farmers that would be a guarantee of quality and that would overcome the cost and time involved in individual product inspection/verification and labelling borne by farmers.

Redress the balance between the high level of inspection on farms and related businesses, such as abattoirs, and the level of inspection of imported produce at ports and air terminals so that all food on sale is guaranteed safe to eat.

Access to local abattoirs, see below.

6. Marketing

The conclusion from the data was the need for farming to have a stronger market led approach. Therefore it is necessary for local farmers and policy makers to work toward opening up that market for their produce.

Recommendations

Open up market through:

- **Co-operative working, to reduce overheads and improve marketing skills. This would require initial funding to explore groups/initiatives/possibilities.**
- **Local procurement – work with local statutory agencies to examine purchasing policies with regard to fresh, local produce, and reducing transportation.¹⁵**
- **Examine ways to encourage and enable local restaurants and retail shops to purchase locally produced food.¹⁶**

Investigate possibilities for individual farmers or groups of farmers to have more power in food chain.

Find ways to develop potential of possible niche markets. One example would be to work with the Soil Association to find ways forward regarding cost and help with good practice for organic farmers/co-operatives.

7. Closure of small abattoirs

Farmers were concerned at the closure of small, local abattoirs and there have since been more local closures due to new EU legislation and rising costs, such as health and safety inspection, vets fees, waste removal costs, licences fees, etc. The result is that smaller farmers no longer have the facilities to have their own stock slaughtered for direct sales and they have to sell to agents of the large retailers and processors. Farmers are therefore unable to take advantage of selling a quality product as recommended from the data. In many European countries the home government rather than the individual farmer pays the costs resulting from recent legislation on waste and disposal of dead animals. Recent proposals by UK government to pay a portion of the costs were rejected by farmers as inadequate, and giving the advantage to European farmers.

15. Kevin Morgan & Adrian Morley
Re-localising the Food Chain: the role
of creative public procurement, 2003,
University of Cardiff (unpublished).

16. Such as the Peak District
environmental quality mark.

Recommendations

Problems with new legislation needs to be looked at by local/national policy makers with hill farmers and abattoir owners/past owners, with a view to finding ways to make small and medium abattoirs viable. Legislation aimed at large slaughterhouses impacts unfairly on smaller enterprises.

There needs to be a balance between the services local abattoirs can offer to farmers and in terms of animal welfare with what large centralised slaughterhouses offer in terms of higher mechanisation, more appropriate to current regulations.

Look at feasibility of mobile abattoirs.

8. Bureaucracy

There was no consensus with regard to bureaucracy. For some it was an opportunity to make an assessment of their business; for others an unwelcome chore at the end of the day. As Chris Higgins says, it is part of the job and needs allotted time and cannot be dismissed as an intrusive add-on.

Recommendations

Funded on-farm secretarial support – with free initial sessions – to enable understanding of paperwork and use of computers and computer programmes.

Freelance farm secretaries can also pass on local knowledge of appropriate grant schemes and how they affect individual farms. To increase agricultural administration and secretarial expertise available in the area support is needed for the provision and publicising of relevant training schemes.¹⁷

Continuation of low cost/free agricultural computer training.

9. Stress

The number of organisations specifically targeting rural stress demonstrates that the problems of stress in the farming community are being recognised. Not least among the farming community itself. As with anyone on low income, the inability to make choices undermines self-esteem and confidence, and limits the possibilities for making necessary changes. The recommendations regarding business advice and support is relevant to combating stress. But it must be accepted that for those with neither time nor financial resources to spare that support must initially be free to users and the delivery flexible. Lack of acknowledgement of the farmers skills and experience by policy makers and lack of understanding by the local community/consumers were mentioned by a number of farmers.

17. See Appendix 3.

Recommendation

Relevant farm related support and advice.

The value of farmers' skills and experience needs to be recognised, particularly if viable and effective policy is to be made. Channels of communication with policy makers to be opened as above.

10. Isolation

Isolation was not seen as a geographical problem, but an increasing lack of understanding by neighbours and local community. Isolation is a common feature of poverty, both rural and urban. Visible inequalities in smaller rural communities can make poverty particularly isolating for farmers.

Recommendations

Encourage understanding of farming and food production through on-farm visits from schools, local groups, groups from surrounding cities. (Current scheme is limited and does not encourage significant investment.¹⁸)

Explore initiatives that enable people to volunteer to work on farms, such as World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. www.woof.org.

18. Countryside Stewardship Educational Access.

Thriving butchers...



(PDRDF)

J. Heathcotes, a family run butcher's shop, was listed in the *Guardian* as one of the best in the Midlands, and has for three generations sold locally produced meat, slaughtered in their own abattoir. In June 2003, extra capital outlay and increased costs of £700 a week, due to recent legislation, resulted in their abattoir being closed. Such legislation, appropriate mainly to the large, conveyor belt slaughterhouses, has made many small and medium sized abattoirs unviable. Cost was not the only problem, the requirement to have a vet and meat inspector from the Meat Hygiene Service full-time on the premises resulted in the stressful situation of three, skilled slaughtermen working under constant surveillance. Over 40 local farmers now either have additional time and transportation costs or have to sell at market where the distinctive local, quality label is lost. This is one example of the constant erosion of skills and infrastructure, often due to inappropriate interpretation of legislation, undermining the ability of the hill farmer to bring a quality product to the consumer.



(PDRDF)

...closed and empty abattoir.

Appendix 1

Participatory Appraisal Surveys at Bakewell Agricultural Centre – 15 and 29 November 2001



(PDRDF)

The two surveys took place on market days, but because of the time of year sheep farmers were in the minority. There were a number of large sheets of paper on tables with pictures and statements. These were issues that had previously been raised in a survey at Bakewell Agricultural Show in the summer. The first PA survey on 15 November enabled us to get initial reactions to the issues, which were then regrouped and prioritised for the second survey. Farmers were given coloured dots and asked to stick them by the statements they thought represented the most important and relevant issues for them. There were 4 different colours to identify age groups, over and under 40, and men and women. The results showed, however, that all categories shared the main priorities. These are in italics below. There was also room for them to add their own statements.

Problems (each person was given 5 dots for problems)

Economic

Hostility of banking industry/high interest borrowing

Drop in incomes/bad cash-flow/fear of bankruptcy/poor prices

Farmers going out of business/not possible to make a living

Imports of meat

Social/Personal

Life is all bed and work

Nothing for children to inherit

Low morale

No markets to meet up in

Position in community undermined

Policy

Too much bureaucracy and paper work

Lack of clarity from Defra

Globalisation

Not trading on level playing field

Government against farmers/lack of government understanding about farmers

Added Comments

Greater restrictions on imports (like none)

Options put forward for diversification get turned down for planning

Miles too far to go to sell beast

Not enough options or markets to sell in

Money in ERDP is also used for people in offices: every office body = 150m of walling

Lack of knowledge/understanding by government – government have no wish to understand

21 day restriction should be removed & definitely not be permanent

Right to Roam problem to farmers – farmers don't even know when their land designated open



(PDRDF)

SOLUTIONS (each person was given 5 dots for solutions)

Economic

Schemes to encourage young people into farming

Re-learn how to work together within farming

Farmers to be paid to be environmental guardians

Work with others in food chain / farmers markets

Policy

Stable markets

Reduced paperwork and bureaucracy

Government support and greater understanding

Restrictions on the import of meat

Need more local abattoirs

Government involve farmers in farming policy

Mobile advisor employed to provide free advice on paperwork

Imported meat should meet same welfare standards as UK

Social

Bring back the markets (social aspect)

Better prices/'fair price for fair stock'

Diversification

Public support from local people and buy British

Someone employed by government/local council to help farmers with direct marketing schemes

Added comments

Work with other farmers – co-operation

Relax restrictions for local/small abattoirs

Get markets open

A nation-wide marketing scheme selling direct to the public

Farmers retaining ownership of stock until sold to consumer

Full public enquiry into foot and mouth/Government not listening to people who know

As subsidies change from headage to land management/environment financial viability has to be maintained

Subsidy for conversion to organic farming should continue in England after conversion as it does in other parts of Europe



(PDRDF)



(PDRDF)

Production and milk cost closer to consumer price
 Stop imports of products that we can produce
 Local one stop shop for information – Defra?
 Better branding of meat – show real country of origin
 Less regulation, eg too much bedding required
 Animal cleanliness requirement too high
 General public should learn about seasonality & good local food
 Farmers should be recognised and rewarded for producing the best and safest food
 Enable farmers to learn new skills, eg electrician, joiner, such skills would allow for men to earn and fit round farming work
 Farmers should agree minimum prices and refuse to take less
 Fetch back Guy Fawkes

Children when asked what they liked initially said ‘everything’, other responses were ‘all the animals’, ‘the cows and sheep – lambing’, ‘having lots of pets’, ‘going on the tractor’. Dislikes were ‘there is less time for football’, ‘being away from my mates’, ‘when our animals go to be sold’, ‘when an animal dies’.

Respondents were also asked the size and type of farm, see table 6, the hours they worked, time spent on paperwork and off farm employment. Not all respondents answered these questions.

Table 6 **Size and type of farm**

	Up to 50 acres	50–200 acres	200+ acres	Total
Beef	9	15	15	39
Sheep	7	7	7	21
Mixed	7	12	22	41
Dairy	–	12	12	24
Total	23	46	56	125

Appendix 2

Peak District Rural Deprivation Forum – Farming Working Group – Interview Schedule

<p>Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. It aims to look at solutions to a number of problems that some farmers in the area have identified.</p>
<p>I would like to reassure you that any information you give me will be treated in the strictest confidence and your name will not appear in any report we write. We will not put information in the report that allows individual farms to be identified. I would like to tape record this interview so we do not miss any details of what you say. Is this still OK?</p>
<p>If you have any questions about the research could you please ask me them now or at the end of the interview.</p>
<p>Introductory Questions</p>
<p>1. Can you tell me the type of farm this is? <input type="checkbox"/> Dairy <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Sheep <input type="checkbox"/> Cattle</p>
<p>2. What is the size of the holding? <input type="checkbox"/> Under 150 acres <input type="checkbox"/> Over 150 acres <input type="checkbox"/> How many sheep/cows, etc.</p>
<p>3. How many people normally work on the farm? <i>(Please include family members)</i> Are they <input type="checkbox"/> full-time or <input type="checkbox"/> part-time?</p>
<p>4. What is the thing you enjoy most about farming today?</p>
<p>5. What is the thing you like least about farming today?</p>
<p>Solutions to farmers' problems</p>
<p>We are now going to ask you a series of questions about possible solutions to problems identified by groups of farmers in the Peak District.</p>

<p>1. Farming incomes have, in general, dropped considerably over the last few years. What would help to increase farmers' incomes?</p>
<p>2. A common concern of farmers is the amount of paperwork they have to complete. Do you find this a problem? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes: Why is this a problem? (e.g. Quantity/timing/frequency?) <input type="checkbox"/> Duplication <input type="checkbox"/> Over-complicated? <input type="checkbox"/> Other reason? What could help to reduce this problem (e.g. availability of advice, use of information technology?)</p>
<p>3. A number of local markets have closed permanently over the last few years. Has this affected you? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes: Where do you now go? How could you best market your stock to increase your income? What could help to make this happen?</p>
<p>4. A shortage of local abattoirs has been identified as a problem for many farmers. Is this a problem for you? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If yes: What would need to happen to improve this situation (e.g. changes in regulation)? <input type="checkbox"/> Types of support needed to get started? <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of grants & loans?</p>
<p>5. An issue raised by some farmers is that different standards (food standards or animal welfare?) for imported and home produced meat are unfair to British farmers? What needs to change to make the system fairer?</p>
<p>6a Diversification of activities on farms is a government aim. How are you affected by this? Do you wish to diversify? Do you need to for financial reasons/subsidies etc.? Which activities have you started or considered? (e.g. organic farming/environmental crops/conservation/b&b/school visits/ other)</p>
<p>6b What would help you (& other farmers) to develop these activities successfully? (e.g. Changes in regulation?) Types of support needed to get started? Grants & Loans?</p>

<p>7. Do you think better co-operation between farmers is needed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If Yes: What could help to achieve this? (e.g. Local co-operatives, Farmers' markets)</p> <p>If No why is this?</p>
<p>8. Foot and mouth disease last year was a disaster for many – how do you think it could have been handled better (e.g. views about issues such as movement restrictions on livestock/compensation payments/destroying affected livestock)?</p>
<p>9. The government has recently introduced legislation increasing the right to roam. What needs to happen to safeguard the interests of farmers when this legislation comes into force?</p>
<p>10. What would encourage young people take up farming?</p>
<p>11. Stress & overwork have been identified as a problem for many farming families. What do you think could help to reduce this?</p> <p><i>Prompt to include other farmers they might know of who have problems</i></p>
<p>12. Some folks say that social isolation is a problem for many farming families. Do you think this is a problem? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>If Yes what could help to reduce this isolation?</p>
<p>13. Can you identify one problem for farmers in your area that we have not mentioned so far?</p> <p><i>If relevant: Prompt for solutions if these are not forthcoming</i></p>
<p>14. Do you think you will still be in farming in 10 years time?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><i>Prompt for reasons for both yes and no</i></p>
<p>15. We have asked you about a number of policy issues that are of concern to farmers. How do you think that individual farmers could influence these policies? Such as diversification, closure of abattoirs.</p> <p><i>Prompt: through NFU or other organisations/MP/local councillors?</i></p>
<p>16. Is there anything else about the future of farming that you would like to comment on?</p>

Questions about you and your family

1. Approximately how many hours did you and your partner work in the last week?

You

Your Partner

Less than 50

Less than 50 hours

51-79 hours

51-79 hours

80 or more

80 or more

2. Of the area you farm what percentage is

owned

secured tenancy

short term tenancy

other

3. Do you or your partner have paid employment off the farm?

Yes No

If Yes: How long have they been doing this? Was this from choice or necessity?

4. Which of the following age groups are you and your partner in?

You

Your partner

Under 44

Under 44

45-64

45-64

65 & over

65 & over

To conclude

Thank you for taking part in this interview. We expect a report to be completed in the summer and we will send you a copy. We will be making a transcript of this interview, would you like to have a copy of that as well?

Appendix 3

List of Farming-related groups & initiatives

LOCAL CONTACTS

Adult & Community Education

Derbyshire Dales 01629 824158, High Peak 01457 852245

Agricultural Chaplain

Graham Hinds 01332 602124, 07833 638562

Ashbourne & Cheadle Training

01283 732377

Bagshaws Agricultural

01629 812777

Bakewell Agricultural & Business Centre

01629 813777 www.bakewell.co.uk

College of the Peak

Louise Nadin 01629 821929

Dales Agricultural & Rural Training

01332 556944

Derby College (Broomfield)

01332 836600

Derby Rural Community Council (DRCC)

Rural Officer 01629 821929

Derbyshire Rural Helpline

07002 326326

Derbyshire Smallholders Association

Gill Gidlow 01283 585130, Bill Jones 01332 882322

Derwent Rural Counselling Service

01629 812710

Farm Business Advice Service

01629 732814

Farm & Countryside Service (Peak National Park Authority)

01629 816200

Farmers Education Network

01629 534273

Farm & Environment Project (Peak National Park Authority)

01629 816200

Farm & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

01332 572901

'Farm Out' Health Project

Linda Syson Nibbs 01629 812525

Farmers Markets

Bakewell 01629 761 211, Buxton & Glossop 01298 28464

Farm Solutions (farming computer programs)

01335 324239

Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group

01332 572901

The Original Farmers' Market Shop

01629 815 814

National Farmers Union

Bakewell: Andrew Redfern 01629 812481,

High Peak: Philip Burnip 01298 813055

Peak Birds Project

01629 816247

Peak District Cuisine

01332 594606

Peak District Environmental Quality Mark

01629 816321 www.peakdistrict.org

Peak District Foods

01332 591078 www.peakdistrictfoods.co.uk

Peak District Farm Holidays

0781 7642627 www.peakdistrictfarmhols.co.uk

Peak District National Park Authority

www.peakdistrict-npa.gov.uk

Peak District Products

01433 620285 www.peakdistrictproducts.co.uk

Peak Rural Welfare Rights

0800 214133

Rural Business Administration

Free courses ESF funded 01629 56573

Rural Health Information Centre based at the Agricultural Business Centre, Bakewell

Mondays 10.00am – 1.30 pm

Rural Training Clubs

01298 71100/28323

W I Country Markets

Bakewell 01433 631243, Buxton 01298 813539, Leek 01538 308246,

Hope Valley 01433 651613, Matlock 01629 583589

Young Farmers

David Clayton 01246 825913/07836 204646

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONTACTS

The Cheese Society

01522 511003 www.thecheesesociety.co.uk

Bio-dynamic Agricultural Association

01453 759501

Country Land and Business Association

020 7235 0511 www.cla.org.uk

Countryside Alliance

Honest Food Campaign www.countryside-alliance.org/honestfood/

East Midlands Rural Service Centre

0115 929 1191

East Midlands Agricultural Business Desk

0845 450 0630 www.ruralbiz.net

Farm crisis network

07002 326 326

Farm Retail Association

0238 036 2150 www.farmshopping.com

Food & Drink Forum (East Midlands)

01636 679644 www.foodanddrinkforum.co.uk

Food from Britain

020 7233 5111 www.foodfrombritain.com

Heart of England Fine Foods

01746 785185 www.heff.co.uk

LEAF (Linking the Environment and Farming)

0247 6413911 www.leafuk.org/leaf/

Local Food Works

0117 987 4584 www.localfoodworks.org

National Sheep Association

01684 892661 www.nationasheep.org.uk

National Beef Association

*01684 565442 www.nationalbeefassociation.co.uk
National Trust Association www.nationaltrust.org.uk*

National Trust Association

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Organic Conversion Information Service

0117 922 7707

Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (RABI)

01865 727888

Rural Skills Register

0870 6060 543 www.ruralskills.org.uk

Rural Stress Information Network

02476 412916

Tenant Farmers Association

0118 9306130 www.tenant-farmers.org.uk

Small & Family Farms Alliance

01726 843210

Slow Food (for the defence of biodiversity)

www.slowfood.com

Soil Association

0017 914 2425

Sustain (Alliance for better food and farming)

020 7837 1228 www.sustainweb.org

Women's Food and Farming Unions (WFO)

02476 693171 www.wfu.org.uk

