English Nature Research Report

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FARM CONSERVATION PLAN STUDY

CONTRACT NO F72-02-05

REPORT 1:
TECHNICAL ISSUES

CEAS
CONSULTANTS (WYE) LIMITED

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TECHNICAL ISSUES

A report prepared for

English Nature

by

CEAS Consultants (Wye) Ltd
Centre for European Agricultural Studies

in collaboration with

Wye College (University of London)

and

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

Telephone: 0233 812181
Fax: 0233 813309
Telex: 849228 PROMAR G

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Preface

This report is in a series of three prepared by CEAS Consultants in collaboration with Wye College (University of London) and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) for English Nature (EN).

The first report addresses the technical content of Whole Farm Conservation Plans (WFCPs). It provides an account of the rationale of this approach in the general context of conservation initiatives. We outline our approach to developing a WFCP which could be either usefully adapted to existing EN procedures or schemes or used in a separate stand-alone scheme. The report includes an analysis of the results of case studies which applied the procedures for preparing WFCPs which we have developed. As supplements to this report we include the completed case studies and the handbooks and guidelines.

The second report considers the issue of farmer response to Whole Farm Conservation Plans. This is based on an assessment of the current position of farmers in relation to conservation incentives, the results of a survey among farmers on conservation issues and an economic analysis of the issue of incentives for conservation investments.

The third report reviews the overall project and programme recommendations which can provide the basis for EN's future development of this area.

In the course of the work, because of budget constraints and priorities, a decision was made by EN to remove provisional funding for piloting a WFCP scheme in the financial year 1993/4. This has resulted in a complete revision of the original thoughts on how this work can best be utilised by EN. Irrespective of the implementation by EN, we consider that this review has lead to considerable advances in the development of procedures for preparing Whole Farm Conservation Plans. These advances can be applied more generally by conservation interests throughout the country to the benefit of habitat quality on farm land.

CEAS Consultants
FWAG
February 1993

Contents

General introduction

The core of this report is the development of a Whole Farm Conservation Plan (WFCP) process which is practical, standardised and repeatable. Such a plan process should be able to stand alone or be adapted to other schemes and approaches.

The report has been undertaken as part of a wider examination of the role of WFCPs. Its specific objectives are to:

- assess the extent and nature of current practice in whole farm conservation planning;
- develop a new whole farm plan process;
- test the process in a number of different circumstances.

The report is divided into three parts.

Part 1 is a review of current practice, showing which organisations are or have been involved in WFCPs, to what level, and what they include in their own plans. Part 2 assesses what level of information should be included in an 'ideal' WFCP and draws on examples of current practices to develop guidelines for a new WFCP process. Part 3 describes how the new plan method was tested on four farms around England, what conclusions were drawn, and what changes were made to the method as a result.

The full case studies (Supplement 1) and the handbook developed from the guidelines (Supplement 2) are supplemented to this report.

PART 1:

TECHNICAL ISSUES:
REVIEW OF CURRENT PRACTICE

1 Introduction

The concept of whole farm planning is increasingly being recognised by policy makers as a potential instrument for uniting farming and conservation objectives within the discipline of countryside management. A wide range of organisations working in countryside management have become involved in whole farm planning over the last decade: in particular the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) has been keen to develop and promote the whole farm approach in its work. The review of current practice below brings together and assesses this diversity of experience in whole farm conservation planning. Firstly, however, whole farm planning should be viewed against the background of changes in agricultural policy and practice and their effects on both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the wider countryside.

The effect on wildlife of the intensification and specialisation of UK agriculture that has taken place since the 1940s has been well documented (NCC, 1975, 1984). Dramatic losses in the areas of eg, heathland, downland, wetlands and ancient woodlands have placed greater emphasis on SSSI as 'islands' within an otherwise intensively farmed landscape; yet their proportion is small (8% of the UK area as against 80% in farmland). At the same time various initiatives have sought to promote farming and wildlife conservation, particularly within this 80% of wider countryside, both for its own sake and as essential to the survival of the SSSI 'islands' (RSPB, 1970, Countryside Commission, 1984). SSSIs themselves have been vulnerable to loss and fragmentation (NCC, 1990).

Apart from the voluntary approach to conservation on farmland (typified by the growth of FWAG) government funding has swung increasingly behind schemes to promote more extensive or traditional farming (Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)) or as an alternative to production altogether (Farm Woodlands Scheme, Set-aside). These schemes remain small as a proportion of total spending on agriculture, but together with current CAP reforms they do present a dynamic situation with opportunities to influence farm practice. Yet the fundamental problems remain, of ensuring the recognition and adequate management through farming practice of areas of countryside of greater or lesser value for conservation.

The problem with SSSIs is not only the loss of valuable sites through damaging operations and the fragmentation of habitats; SSSIs often lack management because of inadequate guidance or technical support. Awareness that management agreements which pay compensation for profits foregone on SSSIs are a negative and open-ended process, has also led English Nature to believe that SSSIs need to be considered within the context of the whole farm and their management promoted positively. This approach could have the following benefits:

1. Improved linkage of the SSSI with other habitats on the farm
2. Buffering the SSSI through more sensitive/appropriate management of adjacent land and facilitating the management of natural areas

3. Consideration of the potential impact of farm operations on the whole farm including the SSSI
4. Positive payments for management of the SSSI and its context (this would reflect a major change in philosophy and one that has already been promoted by English Nature in a limited way through the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, introduced in 1992 as a pilot measure).

In addition to the particular problem of SSSIs the concept of whole farm planning in the wider countryside raises other issues Here, the piloting of schemes such as ESA and CSS, where entry is typically on a part farm basis, has highlighted the problem of displacement. This occurs when a farmer agrees to participate in an environmental scheme on part of his farm, but subsequently increases the intensity of production on the rest of the holding, reducing or negating the environmental benefits of scheme participation. Further, such schemes and SSSIs are targeted on specific areas which has meant that large areas of the countryside have been left untouched by policy initiatives designed to protect and enhance. This also occurs where schemes such as the Woodland Grant Scheme are available, but being feature specific leave areas of the farm unprotected. In evaluating such schemes, these issues have been recognised and the concept of whole farm planning has been promoted as one means of addressing the problem. Already participants in the new ESA scheme can (voluntarily) prepare a farm conservation plan (whole farm plans are a condition of entry in Scottish ESA's) and the Tir Cymen scheme is purposely whole farm in nature. Here money is available through management prescription relating to the farm system and capital payments for management/creation of linear or point features.

The concept of whole farm planning is therefore to protect existing valuable habitats and landscape and to encourage their management and/or recreation, but to do this within the context of the whole farm where sensitive management of all the holding is promoted.

Most of the schemes mentioned have been implemented at a time when the policy environment essentially worked against their success. That is, where high product pricing resulted in the intensive use of land and a consequent loss of/damage to features of environmental value. With reform of the CAP (entailing a downward pressure on prices and the accompanying agri-environmental measures which include reference to the promotion of the whole farm approach) a new opportunity exists for the development and promotion of whole farm conservation planning (see Report 2: Farmer Response Issues).

2 Review of current practice

2.1 Background

The objective of the first stage of the project was to review, and evaluate, current provision and preparation of whole farm conservation plans (WFCPs). A total of 42 agricultural and conservation organisations (see Appendix 1) were contacted by telephone and were asked a range of questions about their involvement in the preparation of whole farm plans and the processes employed (see Appendix 2). These organisations were then divided into five broad groupings for analysis: **National Statutory and Voluntary Organisations**, including EN, FWAG, MAFF, Countryside Commission and CPRE; **The National Parks**; **Industry Based Organisations and Individuals**, including BASC, Elm Farm and private agricultural consultants; **County Agricultural Colleges** known to be involved in the preparation of whole farm plans; **County Councils and Local Authority Management Projects**; and **Other Organisations** including the Scottish Agricultural Colleges, and the Open University. Organisations actually involved in the preparation of WFCPs, included 5 National Parks, one College of Agriculture, 2 County Councils and 1 Local Authority Management Project, 3 Industry based individuals and organisations, 7 national statutory and voluntary bodies, and 2 other organisations.

The following report will present, and discuss, the results of these telephone questionnaires. It will then discuss and evaluate six sample farm plans, which will form the basis for the next part of the project: the evaluation of information requirements, and preparation of draft guidelines.

2.2 Response to questionnaire

The most striking pattern in the responses was the variability between the various organisations in their approach to all aspects of the whole farm plan process. Of all the organisations contacted, just over half have been involved in the preparation of whole farm conservation plans (see Table 2.1 below). The Countryside Commission's Demonstration Farms project is an early attempt at whole farm planning but is no longer administered by this organisation, and would not necessarily represent their current approach to whole farm planning. This compares with the recently launched Tir Cymen Scheme (Countryside Council for Wales), an incentive scheme for landscape improvement, which adopts a whole farm approach.

Table 2.1: Number of organisations involved in the preparation of WFCPs

Response	Numbers	Percentage
Involved in plan preparation	22	52.4
Not involved in plan preparation	19	45.2
No response	1	2.4
All Respondents	42	100

It was left to the individual organisation to express what they felt to be a 'whole farm conservation plan', and as such it was apparent that the plans vary considerably in character and approach. This relates as much to the plan format and objectives as it does to the organisation's policy on what the plan should entail. The majority (64%) of organisations followed their own format in the preparation of WFCPs, whilst the rest used English Nature, Countryside Commission, FWAG, Soil Association, and ESA Agreement Plan formats, in roughly equal numbers. The plan detail was also found to be influenced to a great extent by the needs and means of the individual client for whom the plan was being prepared (this, combined with the objectives of the organisation affected the output). The clients for whom the plans were prepared were either individual clients (typically individual farmers and landowners), demonstration farms or farms belonging to the organisation, or specific areas or agreements for these.

As Table 2.2 illustrates, most of the plans included wildlife, landscape, woodland, archaeology and recreation/access, with much less attention directed towards aspects of farm management/practice, such as shooting, the use of farm chemicals, soil and water conservation, pollution control, and the farm business. In respect to the latter, only a small proportion included a business plan (28%), with a further 33% believing that this would only be appropriate in some cases. The remaining 39% did not include a business plan. The emphasis placed on aspects of the farm conservation resource and practice, in the WFCP, depended to a large extent on the orientation and objectives of the organisation. For example, the Countryside Commission emphasised landscape, English Nature wildlife and habitat, Elm Farm management practice and the National Park WFCPs were directed towards the broad aims of park management.

Table 2.2: Features included in Whole Farm Conservation Plans

Plan Feature	Coverage (%)	Plan Feature	Coverage (%)
Wildlife	100%	Pollution Control	46%
Landscape	100%	Pesticide Use	41%
Woodland	100%	Nitrogen Use	46%
Archaeology/History	96%	Soil and Water Conservation	55%
Access/Recreation	82%		
Shooting	50%		

The specific objectives in the formulation of WFCP's included:

- conservation of wildlife, landscape and woodland;
- the promotion of extensive or organic farming practices;
- the promotion of farm diversification/viability;
- incentives to achieve environmental aims, and testing and/or demonstrating the whole farm approach itself.

As mentioned above, the needs/objectives of clients influenced the specific objectives

of plan formulation in some cases. Typically, most respondents had more than one objective.

As for monies available for the preparation of plans, 57% of respondents did not charge for the service. Charging was very much related to the structure of the organisation and whether it had its own budget for the preparation of plans, for example, a government funded body, or whether it was a profit-making, commercial organisation. Approximately equal numbers of organisations did or did not have grants available for the preparation of plans. Those who did have grants available, either had their own sources, and/or referred clients to suitable grants and incentive schemes available from the Ministry of Agriculture and organisations such as Forestry Commission or Countryside Commission. Table 2.3 shows the range of incentive schemes that have been taken up in the preparation of these plans.

Table 2.3: Incentive schemes utilised in the preparation of Whole Farm Conservation Plans

Incentive Scheme	Numbers Using Scheme	Incentive Scheme	Numbers Using Scheme
ESA	7	FWPS	9
CSS/Tir Cymen	7	FCGS	8
Woodland Management Grant	8	Local Authority Management Agreements	4
English Nature	2	Countryside Premium Scheme	2
Set-Aside	3	English Heritage	3
NSA's	0	Other	4
Access Agreement	1		

NB A number of respondents (9) said 'all relevant sources' would be taken up. Schemes given above were specifically mentioned.

Respondents were also asked if they made whole farm planning a condition of any grant aid or incentive scheme that they offered; the majority (64%) said no. A further 19% said no, but with the proviso that the plans were linked to other conditions or incentives. Asked if the provision of the WFCP service was part of a broader project which the organisation was undertaking, respondents were split between those who were and those who were not providing the WFCP service as part of a broader project.

86% of organisations were carrying out, or intending to carry out monitoring of plans once implemented, although only 38% could say how often this took place. The number of person days taken to prepare a plan ranged from 1-2, to over 10, although 71% had no information on this, or it was too variable to say. Most organisations had only been providing this service in the last 5 years. This demonstrates that the idea of whole farm planning for conservation is still in its very early stages of development, reflecting in part, a slow (governmental and EC) policy evolution towards this approach.

For example, the first round of ESA's in Scotland had a whole farm element, but not as extensive as the Tir Cymen Scheme launched in 1992, which represents the first major incentive scheme to adopt a consistent whole farm approach. Organisations involved in whole farm plan preparation prior to this policy development tended to be responding to enlightened individuals who were interested in preparing conservation plans on their farms, although FWAG and the Countryside Commission are notable exceptions in this respect (ie, taking an organisational lead). In terms of promotion of this service, just under half of the organisations did promote the preparation of WFCP's, with some targeting the service selectively.

Of those organisations who were not involved in the formulation of WFCP's, the majority (63%) had no formal policy on whole farm planning. The reasons for this were various, for example, the organisation felt it was not part of their role, pleaded a lack of time and resources, used a different approach to on-farm conservation, or its whole farm plans were in a developmental stage. However, over 50 % were in favour of WFCP's albeit with some reservations. For example, there was a view held that WFCP's are fine in theory, but in practice are probably too involved (in terms of time and money). Also, that whole farm plans are unnecessary where an organisation favours a 'separatist', habitat-based approach. A view was also expressed that WFCP's ran the risk of being overly bureaucratic and would not allow the farmers enough flexibility, and control over the activities proposed.

2.3 Analysis of sample farm plans

Samples of plans were requested from those organisations who were involved in the preparation of WFCP's, and 6 were obtained from: FWAG; Hertfordshire County Council; North York Moors National Park; Reaseheath Agricultural College, Cheshire; English Nature; Countryside Commission. The intention was to obtain a representative set of sample plans from the range of different types prepared by different organisations under different conditions.

The six sample farm plans, were first subjected to a descriptive analysis and then evaluated in more detail. The following descriptive factors were examined for each farm plan:

- farm size;
- farm type;
- farm tenure;
- year of plan;
- the number of pages the plan comprised;
- the plan format;
- if aims and objectives were clearly stated;
- process involved in producing the plan;
- if an operational plan was included;
- if a schedule of operations was included;

- provisions for monitoring;
- targeting/compliance;
- input (in terms of person days and whether the plan is costable).

Table 2.4 and Table 2.5 indicate the great variability between the different sample plans, in terms of the size of the farms involved (from 22 ha to 789 ha), the length of the plan (from a 2-5 pages, map-based, local authority plan, to a 180 page highly detailed English Nature management plan). Inputs varied from continuing programmes such as the English Nature project and Reaseheath College, which have no cost information to the specifically stated 4 person days, per 60 ha per year, in the North York Moors. Further, the objectives of the plans varied from the very clearly stated to the barely stated. The process of plan formulation itself varied both in the stages of formulation and the end result (eg agreement or operational plan etc).

Table 2.4: Analysis of sample plan by organisation

Plan description	Organisation		
	FWAG	Herts County Council	North York Moors N.P.
Year	1991	1992	1990
Farm Type	Lowland/Arable	Lowland/Dairy	Upland/Mixed
Farm Tenure	Owner Occupier	Tenant	Owner Occupier
Farm Size (ha)	312	101	22
No. Pages	33	2-5	12
Format	FWAG type 3	Annotated map 1:2500 + Summary (2-5 pages)	Legal Document + Management Agreement
Aims	Yes	Yes	No
Objectives	Yes	Yes	No
Process	Aims/Objectives ---> Survey ----> Analysis ----> Prescription	Aims ----> Survey ---> Analysis ---> Prescription	Survey ---> Analysis --> Prescription --> Agreement
Operational Plan	Yes	Yes (Map)	Yes
Schedule of Operations	Yes	Yes	Yes
Monitoring	No	Yes	Yes
Targeting/ Compliance	No	Yes	Yes
Input: Person Days	4 + Organisations over 15 months	10	4/year/60 ha
Input: Costable?	'Free'	Yes	Yes

Table 2.5: Analysis of sample plan by organisation

Plan description	Organisation		
	Reaseheath College, Cheshire	English Nature	Countryside Commission
Year	1976, 1983, 1992	1988	1979
Farm Type	Lowland/Dairy	Lowland/Livestock	Lowland/Arable
Farm Tenure	Owner Occupier	Owner Occupier	Owner Occupier
Farm Size (ha)	82	277	789
No. Pages	90, 127, 26	180 approx	18 (exc single purpose plans)
Format	'76 Survey '83 Survey '92 Prescription	NCC	Countryside Commission
Aims	'76 Yes	No	Yes
Objectives	'76 No, '92 Yes	Yes	Yes
Process	Survey '76, '83 ---> Prescription	Survey--> Analysis ---> ---> Operational Plan	Aims ---> Survey ---> Analysis --> Prescription
Operational Plan	Yes '92	Yes	Yes
Schedule of Operations	Yes '92	Yes	Yes
Monitoring	Not Explicit	Yes	Yes
Targeting/ Compliance	N/A	NNR	Yes
Input: Person Days	Continuing	> 3 person years	Not known
Input: Costable?	?	?	?

On the basis of this initial analysis the individual plans were then evaluated in terms of their relative strengths and weaknesses, and also their benefits/outputs and usable ideas (see Appendix 3). The evaluation of the plans was of great importance as it raised issues and questions for the next stage of the process - to review information requirements. Whilst each plan can be evaluated in its own right, general conclusions needed to be made in this process so that these plans could be drawn on meaningfully when putting together new guidelines.

2.4 Summary and conclusions

This part of the technical issues report presents the findings of a review of current practice in whole farm conservation plans. Over half of 42 agricultural and conservation organisations contacted have been involved in WFCPs to some degree. Most have used their own format and a wide range of objectives, design and features included were encountered. More detailed analysis of 6 sample plans highlighted this variability, and showed that all the plan approaches appear to have strengths and

weaknesses.

During this process it became clear however, that a number of questions still neede to be answered. These included:

Objectives

- what exactly are WFCPs trying to achieve?
- what sort of WFCP are we working towards?
- is it possible that one model alone will be appropriate to every circumstance
- how much time and money can be devoted to the preparation of each plan?
- what are the specific benefits we will want to see and how can these b measured and/or quantified?

Format

- how can we judge which is the most appropriate, the most user friendly, th most acceptable to the widest possible range of individuals and organisations (do we ask farmers, or practitioners or conservationists?);

Competence of the practitioners

- who and how many people will be allocated to the preparation of each plan ar where do they work from?

- what is their background and training?

The role of the information requirements section that follows was to provide answe to these questions and to suggest criteria for a WFCP method.

PART 2:

TECHNICAL ISSUES:
INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

3 Information requirements

3.1 Criteria

From our review and evaluation of current practice we suggest that any WFCP process needs to meet these criteria:

a) Farm involvement

Ownership of the plan is crucial. A set of externally imposed solutions (even those of experts) is less likely to carry through into action than those arising from discussion generated within the farm. The farmer should be involved at the key stages of gathering background information, environmental impact assessment and examination of constraints and opportunities. If the author of the plan is not the farmer himself, this person needs to be seen as a facilitator and not a problem solver. If the plan is to be linked to an incentive scheme, this needs to be in the form of an agreement between partners.

b) Practicality

Limits must be set on the inputs required and staffing for the plan process. One person should be able to see the plan through all its stages. Unless this simple criterion is met, it will exclude the farm from creating its own WFCP. Contracting out the writing of the plan, or adding in extra information or expertise should be seen as a choice for the farmer not a necessity (this links to remarks on ownership made above). Likewise, the plan process must be time limited (although some flexibility will be necessary) to allow accurate time/cost budgeting by the farmer or the plan facilitator.

c) Systematic/useable/repeatable

The plan process itself should be clear and well ordered as well as dynamic (ie, moving from descriptive to prescriptive stages). Stages themselves should be logical and coherent and preferably amass or assess information in a standard format. This has a number of advantages.

i) it limits time spent on each stage to that needed to complete the format;

ii) the material itself is well presented and therefore more accessible to the farmer;

iii) the exercise is repeatable under a variety of circumstances by different people.

d) Technical requirements

The plan process should meet the technical requirements of sufficiently analysing the farm and conservation resource.

e) Incentives

The plan should contain elements to which some kind of incentive to manage for specified objectives could be attached, in the form of a 'partnership' agreement.

In examining previous practice in whole farm planning, it is clear that no single approach can include every advantage and meet every criterion. Broad approaches capable of being applied to a range of farm types tend to carry the tag of potentially unlimited input. Site or area specific approaches can avoid this trap by having a narrower or predetermined set of objectives, but of course are difficult to apply outside this narrow focus. (The logic of schemes such as ESA and Tir Cymen toward simple, user friendly agreement forms hides the painstaking survey work that has previously gone into defining the characteristics of these areas.)

3.2 Plan format, scope/scale

The technical and information base required for a WFCP could vary greatly in detail. At the minimum level of detail, a plan could be a simple annotated map of the farm highlighting important features and outlining measures to be taken on these. A short tour of the farm and discussion with the farmer might provide all the necessary background information. The current FWAG 'whole farm report' would fit this definition.

At the maximum level of detail, complex information would be assembled on the farm and its interaction with the environment at all levels. This kind of 'total environmental audit' approaches the standards of BS7750 for environmental management systems. It is a stated aim of National Trust to work towards this for its estate.

The further one moves along this spectrum toward the maximum, the greater the inputs (cost and time). It is also likely to require more expertise and thus paradoxically take the WFCP further away from the farmer's own ability to carry out. The further one moves toward the minimum, the more superficial the plan is likely to be, and less questioning of the farm, so the benefits of the plan are likely to be more narrowly focused.

Thus, on the basis of the criteria we have identified above, the ideal plan will occupy a position in the centre of the 'detail spectrum'. (The term 'ideal' is questioned, as there will still be circumstances when the minimum or maximum approach is demanded.) The ideal plan will build in sufficient detail to be genuinely 'whole farm' without the level of input becoming infinite or unmeasurable (a drawback of the long

term or multi-agency WFCPs that we examined).

Even so, the 'ideal' plan will still include an optimum level of data on the farm and its environment which in itself could cover a wide spectrum, depending on source and availability. This information could be compiled from a checklist of surveys and carried forward for further analysis in a number of ways, for example:

Climate		
Geology		
Soil type		Farm unit
Landform		Stock
Habitat	Legislation	Crops
Landscape	Codes of practice	Diversification
Archaeology	Designation	Game
Access	Linkage	Forestry
↓	↓	↓
Management guidelines	Constraints and incentives	**Environmental impact**

Alternatively, the need for further surveys could be made to depend on the 'trigger' of a particular piece of information, for example the presence of an ancient woodland site or some farm practice concerning potential pollution:

Ancient woodland +/-?	Slurry stored/handled?
↓	↓
Check EN inventory	Check relevant legislation
↓	↓
If yes, survey site(s)	Test compliance of farm

This kind of decision tree is attractive compared with the catch-all survey approach in limiting input while providing 'hooks' for further information where needed.

3.3 Summary: system contents

The survey of current practice and analysis of sample plans gives strong clues as to the likely contents of a WFCP system. The system here is the process through which the plan moves to convert information via a set of objectives and analyses (statement) into action. Plans with a strong system are easy to follow and keep a balance between their various sections. They should also be easier to carry out, ie, to write, which could mean by the farmer himself. We suggest the following system contents in this order:

Aims
General and environmental information
(Critical) Farm practices and guidelines
Survey and evaluation

Priorities
Constraints/opportunities
Management objectives
Work plan

We will elaborate below on this structure and its details.

3.4 Summary: technical contents

Detail or length (or weight!) of the finished product will not be the only technical aspect to impress the WFCP client or otherwise. In studying a variety of plans we were also aware of the general 'feel' of these, which should not be overlooked as a factor in their acceptability. Indeed we had to hand some examples from whole farm planning in Australia which while not strictly relevant to the UK situation in contents, in presentation and useability were notably 'farmer friendly'. We listed the following as example techniques of which effective use might be made.

Maps Overlays	presentation of information
Keys Colour codes	to categorise and highlight
Schedule	of works to be carried out
Appendices	for further information
Codes Guidelines	to emphasise legislation or desirable practice

We will elaborate below on how the technical contents of a WFCP might be made part of an overall presentation package.

4 Draft guidelines

The WFCP planning process (Figure 4.1) seeks to meet the criteria set out above of technical specification and communicability. It proposes a framework that firmly allocates inputs, yet can also be flexible and with 'hooks' for further questions or information needs. Time allocated for, and material generated by, each stage are carefully considered. Material required for each stage is shown in the form of a handbook which will generate the final plan. Lastly, the requirements for marketing the plan and monitoring its outcome are taken into account both in terms of technical content and presentation and related to any potential incentive or partnership scheme.

4.1 Explanation

The Whole Farm Plan process has been divided into six phases to enable time planning. Each phase has one or more stages which take the plan through from a broad statement of aims (stage 1) to a detailed workplan (stage 9). The stages are also divided between time spent on the farm (with the farmer or surveying the farm) and in the office (reviewing information collected and drawing up final plans and maps). Visits to the farm to carry out different stages of the plan may be combined as time and circumstances allow.

The Handbook (see Supplement 2 of this report) records the facilitator's and the farmer's observations and produces the material that both will agree as the final plan. The flow diagram shows what parts of the handbook are needed for the various phases, as well as the information needed to send to the farmer ('Farmer Handbook'). Site plans are not included in the handbook but further information could be provided at the farmer's request or discretion. Essential points at which consultation with the farmer is required are marked with an asterisk in Figure 4.1.

The completed plan which is sent to the farmer is in effect a summary of the Handbook and this includes:

- A statement of environmental targets for the farm (stage 4)
- A statement of long and short term objectives (stage 8)
- A year by year workplan (stage 9)

plus a map with details of priority areas (from stage 6) and numbered workplan sites.

A pro-forma set of pages (with a front cover) as a client copy to send to the farmer is part of Supplement 2 to this report.

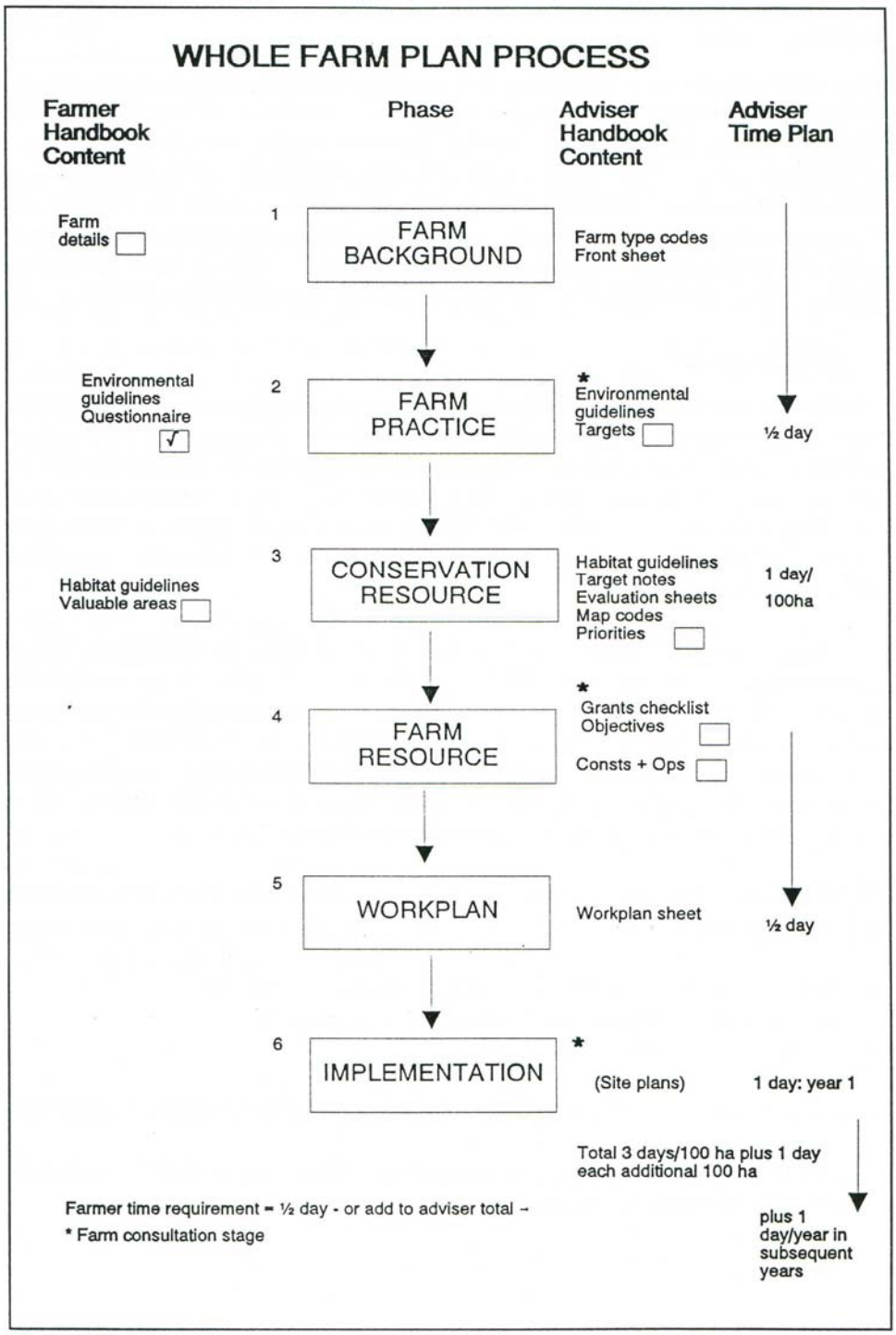

Figure 4.1: Whole Farm Conservation Planning Process

4.2 Whole Farm Conservation Plan process

Phases 1 + 2: stages 1-4
Time requirement: ½ day

Stage 1: Aims

System contents:	general statement of aims;
Technical contents:	statement: ¼ page

A broad statement of the policies which will underlie management of the land, indicating the balance to be achieved between the various land uses and interests (after Countryside Commission, 1986)

Stage 2: Description

System contents:	general (farm) background information; environmental (physical) information.
Technical contents:	pro-forma: 1¾ page; a base map[1] at an appropriate scale will be needed for further stages
Further information check:	draw on external data where readily available or to supplement information if necessary, eg, soil maps.
Farm consultation stage:	draw as much information about the farm from the farm as possible.

A summary description of the farm; location, type, tenure, numbers employed, area, climate, geology, soils, topography, under standard headings. Broad land uses not likely to change during the plan period, eg, woodland, permanent pasture, long term set-aside. Main infrastructure, eg, farm buildings, made up roads. Name and area of SSSI: other valuable wildlife areas.

Stage 3: Farm practice

System contents:	farm operations; environmental impact.
Technical contents:	checklist (tick box): 4 pages
Further information check:	refer to relevant environmental legislation or codes of practice where necessary.
Farm consultation stage:	go through with farmer on first visit (send beforehand).

A farm environmental management audit (FEMA; after Kent FWAG 1991). Considers day to day activities such as use of pesticides and fertilisers, prevention of pollution, vermin control, cultivations, building design and water resource management. A

[1] availability and copyright aspects of OS maps used for base maps should be checked.

checklist not a score card, but gives a picture of the way the farm business activities interact with the environment.

Stage 4: Environmental management guidelines

System contents:	targets for conservation management; targets for farm operations.
Technical contents:	statement: 1 page

A set of targets which supplement legal requirements, and form a voluntary code of practice, for both critical farming operations (identified in stage 3) and management of key features (identified in stage 5). Implies that conservation is so closely involved with farm operations that it should be thought of as an integral part of running the business (after FWAG 1991). The FWAG Guidelines for Environmentally Responsible Farming should be included as part of the WFCP handbook and the farm guidelines lifted from these and included in the plan text.

Phase 3: stages 5 + 6

Time requirement:	1 day per 100 hectares

Stage 5: Resource evaluation

System contents:	surveys by sector/feature; catalogue and evaluation.
Technical contents:	evaluation: 5 pages; map: 1 page.
Further information check:	Obtain information on SSSI. Draw on other survey information where readily available or to supplement information for other sites.

This phase/stage is crucial to the plan and worth some discussion. Potentially it can generate the most information and require the most time, if surveys are carried out in detail (eg, woodland by woodland) yet is the easiest to do superficially (ie, not thoroughly enough). Possible approaches that were considered include:

Ranking by, eg, age of feature qv FWAG (scoring could be added to this system)
Checklists for individual habitats qv Open University
Systematic and map based qv Phase I survey
Landscape categories qv Countryside Stewardship Scheme
Inventory leading to management agreement qv National Parks
Menu based related to end payments qv ESA agreements

All these approaches are attractive, but under the criteria of limited time, we considered the best approach to be one that:

a) works in fairly broad categories perhaps combining habitat/landscape/historic

attributes, with indicators;

b) includes some quick (even if subjective) evaluation system;

c) while brief and standardised allows for both description and target notes for future management guidance.

This information can be conveyed by use of a map with a standard set of colour and symbol codes.

Stage 6: Priorities

System contents:	ideal objectives for existing/new features; features needing/responsive to management. statement: 1 page
Technical contents:	map: 1 page

Ideal management objectives before constraints (and here opportunities) are considered (after NCC 1983). These are priority areas derived from the resource evaluation (stage 5) but may also be influenced by farm practice (stage 3). These priorities may include both existing features and areas with potential for habitat creation, and features which may benefit from management or require it urgently. This information can be conveyed by use of the outline map with both priority areas and environmental targets marked using a standard set of colour and symbol codes.

Phases 4 + 5: stages 7-9

Time requirement: ½ day

Stage 7: Analysis (Farm resource)

System contents:	constraints; opportunities
Technical contents:	checklist: ½ page
Further information check:	include notes on relevant legislation, designations, schemes and grants where necessary.
Farm consultation stage:	discuss with farmer, especially changes, plans and trends likely to influence plan outcome. Make aware of constraints/opportunities outside farm knowledge. Important to gauge future direction of farm as business and/or family unit.

The management objectives (stage 6) relating to the evaluation of the resource (stage 4) are subject to constraining factors both external and internal. These need to be listed and at farm scale will include designation and legislation, legal and non-legal obligations, as well as labour costs, potential new enterprises and perceived 'problem' areas (although these may also be conservation opportunities). Equally there will be opportunities in schemes and grants to finance conservation management and these should be noted. There may also be agreements under existing schemes such as ESA.

Stage 8: Objectives

System contents:	operational objectives; long and short term objectives.
Technical contents:	statement: 1 page

Once ideal objectives (stage 6) have been analysed in the light of constraints and opportunities (stage 7), realistic management objectives can be set (after NCC 1983). Some of the earlier priorities may have to be abandoned in favour of more achievable objectives at this stage. These objectives are also a more specific statement of how the plan aims (stage 1) are to be pursued, in the long term (overall) and short term (by area or enterprise) (after Countryside Commission, 1986).

Stage 9: Work plan

System contents:	site numbers; resources needed eg, grants; time scale.
Technical contents:	schedule: 1 + pages; map: 1 page.
Further information check:	include appendices for further information, technical specification, contacts, if necessary.

At this stage achievable objectives are worked up to more detailed plans for individual sites, with an indication of the resources required to effect these and the timescale over which they should take place. These plans may be written into a schedule under simple headings and the site numbers added onto the stage 6 priorities map.

Phase 6: stage 10

Time requirement:	1 day in year 1 1 day for each subsequent year

Stage 10: Implementation

System contents:	detailed plans; budgets and costings; grant applications.
Technical contents:	site plans/maps (not included in handbook)
Farm consultation stage:	include yearly visits to farm.

Stage 10 comes into play if the facilitator role extends to implementation or if it is part of a continuing partnership or incentive scheme. It carries the plan forward year by year from the schedule of proposals (workplan) and will require more detailed plans to be drawn up. It also allows for continuing contact with the farmer.

4.3 Incentives and partnership

We were given the brief that the WFCP system could be part of a framework for supporting owners of SSSIs. Three of the plan stages were identified as the potential linkage points to such a framework.

i) Stage 4: the basis of any partnership between EN and the farm could be in the **guidelines** as a general set of targets drawn up for that farm and which the farm has to meet. Could attract a basic whole farm payment.

ii) Stage 8: the **objectives** could form a statement of measures that will be undertaken by the farm to fulfil the requirements of the guidelines (after ideal objectives and constraints have been examined).

iii) Stage 9: a **work plan** intended to achieve the objectives through a set of positive measures within the term of the agreement. Could attract payments from a menu of options with standard payments.

This kind of approach would essentially be that which will be used in the new ESA and Tir Cymen agreements.

4.4 Monitoring

There are three aspects of monitoring that could potentially apply to a WFCP and its implementation.

i) *legal*: compliance with any existing schemes such as CSS undertaken as part of the WFCP and/or any additional incentive offered by EN. Existing schemes have their own monitoring arrangements;

ii) *biological:* the WFCP survey process (Stage 5 resource evaluation) will provide a baseline of information on the farm. English Nature will be able to undertake biological monitoring of the SSSI;

iii) the provision within the WFCP for a continued role in implementation by the plan facilitator also gives an opportunity for low key annual monitoring. An annual visit to draw up plans for the following year could combine a review of the previous year's activity, plus a record of any agreed changes to the plan brought about by changes in farm policy (other than those affecting i) above). A proforma for the annual review is included as Appendix 4 in this report. English Nature would be a party to this process and could gather reports on a regional/national basis as an indicator of activity levels under a WFCP scheme.

4.5 Contents and presentation

The following material will be generated by the plan:

i) the WFCP Handbook of 34 pages, including checklists, proformas, evaluation guidelines, environmentally responsible farming guidelines (see Supplement 2);

ii) a 4 page summary copy of Handbook to be sent to the farmer with map detailing priorities and work plan sites (included in Supplement 2);

iii) a 2 page annual review (see Appendix 4).

The following material would be useful as background and to complete the plan:

i) loose leaf file, for advisers (and interested farmers) including an environmental management reference guide, eg, LEAF, ATB and FWAG farm and environmental management guidelines, and all current scheme guidelines, codes of practice and environmental legislation (updated when necessary);

ii) equipment such as clipboard with waterproof cover, coloured pens;

All material could be marketed in kit form for use by advisers/consultants and would be highly suitable for sponsorship.

4.6 Training

i) training could be given to consultants and others who will be carrying out whole farm plans to standardise the approach and explain techniques. Training could be done by EN and FWAG on a regional basis, covering use of the Handbook and interpretation of results (FWAG) and regional conservation characteristics (EN);

ii) where a number of farmers can be brought together (for example, those jointly managing a single SSSI) informal training could be offered through a whole farm plan discussion group.

4.7 Summary and conclusions

Following the review of current practice, Part 2 of the technical issues report sets out criteria for any WFCP such as farmer involvement, practicality and useability. Other criteria concern technical requirements and the possible linking of a WFCP to an incentive scheme.

The information required for a WFCP is discussed and an 'ideal' level of detail suggested. How this information should be gathered and treated is set out in a 10-stage whole farm planning process (a 34 page handbook). The handbook produces a 4-page summary copy which can be sent to the farmer with a map. Suggestions are

made for other aspects such as training and monitoring.

It must be stressed that compromises have to be made between an approach that is too detailed (costly) and one that provides sufficient basis for action by the farm, and guarantees to any sponsoring body. The role of the case studies section that follows was to test the plan process itself and the constraints on time and staffing that we had set.

PART 3:

TECHNICAL ISSUES: CASE STUDIES

5 Selection of case study areas

The selection of case study areas was done in collaboration with English Nature. It was agreed with English Nature that the areas should be distinct geographically as well as agriculturally. Ultimately we also chose counties that had been included in the farmer response survey for Report 2 (Devon, Hampshire, Lincolnshire and Cumbria), although only one of the farmers visited had actually been interviewed by the project.

5.1 Parameters for case study farms

The list of parameters proposed by English Nature for three case study farms is reproduced at Appendix 5. (The fourth farm in Lincolnshire was added at our suggestion, to take in eastern England). We were able to meet these parameters almost entirely in our choice of farms, albeit partly dictated by finding people willing to participate at relatively short notice. Parameters 12-14 and 16 were met by one or more of the farms selected; although parameter 15 was not met (we visited three owner occupied farms and one managed). Indeed issues such as pollution, set-aside and the relationship to other countryside management schemes were to the fore.

Although the farms differed widely in size (50-500 ha) and location, all had some arable and livestock in various enterprise mixes. All the SSSI were grassland, from chalk downland to fen and marsh to acid bog, reflecting various aspect of the need for management (grazing in particular) and integration or otherwise with the farming system (see also summary table of the case studies).

5.2 Procedure for case studies

Farmers were contacted by letter and follow-up telephone call. Background information was sent on the project and WFCPs, together with the forms for the farmer to complete covering farm background and farm practice. It was stressed that while the case studies were part of a larger proposed scheme we could not anticipate at this stage any incentives being offered on top of the plan itself. No charge was made for the plan which it was said should be useful to the farm and comments on the plan procedure itself were invited.

Links were established with local English Nature staff and other agencies appropriate to each county such as FWAG, ADAS and local authorities. This provided not only names of individuals to contact for case study visits, but useful background knowledge and hopefully points of continuing contact with the farmers to put plan proposals into action. The need for this continuing contact was identified early on both as essential to achieving the plans and to creating an improved relationship between English Nature and SSSI occupiers, who in most case simply wanted guidance on what to do.

5.3 Case study WFCPs

The four plans were completed in November and December 1992 (see also summary table). This was a very wet time and conditions were frequently far from ideal for surveying (on top of normal winter conditions such as lack of flowering plants). Nevertheless, the draft guidelines held up very well, both as far as processes and time required were concerned, with the exception of the survey method which was altered after the Devon plan. The original site by site survey approach was found to be too cumbersome and a more flexible system allowing grouping of site features (at the surveyor's discretion) was introduced.

Full details of the results of the case study WFCPs are contained in the completed handbooks supplemented to this report.

5.4 Summary and conclusions

The key points and conclusions from each of the case studies are summarised below.

Four other conclusions regarding procedures and time scale, including some that led to changes to the draft guidelines (WFCP handbook) are summarised here.

1. Farm management practice questionnaire.
   Was not found to be intrusive by the farmers and gave some useful clues that could be taken up in discussion and in setting environmental management guidelines.

2. Maps and overlays
   Map scales need to be flexible to allow for different farm sizes. Farms may have their own maps (especially as these are now required under the new EC arable support regime). Overlays may help the planner but are of little value to the farmer; one map accompanying the report with priorities, environmental targets and workplan site numbers is sufficient.

3. Farmer interviews
   The stage during preparation of the plan when constraints and opportunities are discussed with the farmer is a useful opportunity both to review what has been found and for the planner to set out his/her stall regarding what might be done (ie, ideal objectives). It therefore looks both backwards and forwards over the plan process.

4. Timescale
   Time allowed for surveys (1 day/100 ha) generally holds good, although for larger estates (>500 ha) there may be more uniformity therefore less time need be allowed. For realistic time and cost budgeting, plans above 500 ha will have to be individually estimated or done on wider bands (ha/days needed). It is important even so not to squeeze survey time as it provides information that will be used over

many years. Given the format of the handbook, less time is needed for other stages than anticipated - we suggest a further one day. Stage 9 of the handbook - the year by year operational plan - can be reached therefore in two days on a 100 ha farm. To enact the site plan(s) for any year (eg, scrub clearance on the SSSI or some tree planting) we suggest time should be added back in and budgeted for on an annual basis; one day/year including the first year of the plan. This gives a total of three days/100 ha farm, including the implementation phase.

Overall conclusions

1 Farmers need to be motivated to undertake conservation measures both on and outside SSSI.

2 This motivation need not be entirely financial: much can be achieved by:

a) approaching farmers in a helpful way;

b) maintaining contact over site management so farmers know what they need to do.

3 Farmers need a clear, simple statement of what needs to be done year by year.

4 This approach would deliver both protection of wildlife and value for money.

Whole Farm Conservation Plan Case Studies: key points and conclusions

Case study 1: Devon
Farm type: 11 (sheep, cattle and arable < 100 ha)

Key points:

- low impact farming system, with low pesticide and low fertiliser use and low farm yard manure. Six year rotation - three barley and three ley
- good wildlife resource due to low intensity management
- there is still scope to improve areas outside the SSSI
- due to grade 1/2 land adjacent to SSSI, there is little scope for this to be more extensively managed to form a buffer for SSSI
- SSSI is adequately managed by grazing but tussock sedge requires burning. It is suggested that a payment is made to cut/carry/burn sedge off SSSI site.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- With technical support and guidance (particularly with advice on use of grants and incentives) together with a relatively small payment a great deal could be achieved on this farm, both on and off the SSSI.
- Existing features could be improved and better managed
- Better links could be made between the SSSI and the rest of the farm
- Scope for planting small areas of woodland on the rest of the farm which lacks tree cover

Case study 2: Hampshire
Farm type: 12 (sheep and arable >100 ha)

Key points:

- seven year rotation: 2 grass ley/peas/2 winter wheat/winter barley/winter barley undersown with stubble turnips/spring barley undersown with grass ley
- high levels of fertilisers used and conventional level of sprays
- traditional estate layout with much recent woodland planting. Shooting is very important
- SSSI is an area of chalk grassland with much scrub (including juniper) and woodland. Area suffers from a lack of management, requiring scrub clearance and follow-up grazing. Manager is motivated to undertake appropriate management, but needs guidelines and encouragement
- a good network of verges, hedges, tracks and woodland exists on the rest of the farm; plus the general layout and mixed cropping provides opportunities for, eg, birds.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- Support, technical advice and a small amount of money could greatly improve the potential of the SSSI
- Potential exists for buffering the SSSI by extensive management on adjacent grasslands, possibly by application to an appropriate scheme
- Ideally multiple funding from different schemes would not be precluded where several agencies have an interest in the site (ie, English Nature, Countryside Commission, English Heritage)
- Hedges could be improved by cutting a proportion later in the winter to leave food source for birds
- Small areas of woodland with semi-natural characteristics could be managed specifically for conservation

Case study 3: Lincolnshire
Farm type: 4 (predominantly arable < 100 ha)

Key points:

- crops - winter wheat, winter barley and oil seed rape
- conventional levels of fertiliser and spray use
- permanent pasture on farm receives no fertilisers and a stewardship agreement exists on these areas
- SSSI is a chalk valley side and marsh. It is grazed and managed under an agreement. Lincolnshire trust holds land adjacent to SSSI
- father and son running the farm perceive themselves to be leaders in conservation and are well aware of available grants and schemes.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- with technical support and guidance under a whole farm plan, a great deal could be achieved for very little cost as farmers are already motivated
- farmers would value survey information to monitor changes from what they do
- hedges are typically short/narrow - these need to be allowed to grow out to increase their potential
- tree planting is at a maximum already for this farm size/type
- downstream enrichment/pollution potential from farm yard: farm needs to be aware of this
- potential from a permanent set-aside scheme with an environmental top-up could be utilised in the future
- boundary areas (not belonging to farm) have great potential for habitat and landscape

Case study 4: Cumbria
Farm type: 3 (predominantly dairy >120 ha)

Key points:

- mostly intensive grassland, with up to 300 kg/ha N with 20 ha winter barley. Also flying flock of ewe lambs sold as shearlings. High yielding, highly specialised and highly profitable unit. Farmer aims to make as much money as possible.
- SSSI is a 34 acre bog damaged by peat extraction in the 1980s. Sold to NCC for £800/ha. It has now recovered and management prescription is to do nothing or possibly very light grazing (this could be done by the farmer under licence) [SSSI is part of a 3 x 5 mile common which is overgrazed and enriched by run off from farm]
- outside SSSI there is virtually zero wildlife interest, with degenerate shelter belts and few/no hedges (mostly fences). Also, there is massive potential for water pollution on-farm stream is enriched (slurry and silage effluent)
- NRA audit has been undertaken. Slurry disposal, plus high levels of N, together with the farmer's aims means there is limited potential for habitat creation or environmental improvement. However, farmer has some interest in shooting, and is willing to re-establish a beech avenue leading up to the farm and replant shelterbelts (ie, on non-agricultural land which can be covered by planting/management grants).

Conclusions and recommendations

- low interest at present and little potential outside SSSI
- potential for rent free grazing on SSSI under management prescription
- woodlands could be dealt with by a contractor
- best output would be to educate farmer about the value of the SSSI and how it could be managed to prevent damage as occurred before. Give responsibility of SSSI management to farmer and back-up with occasional visits.

Case studies - summary

Location	Farm type	Area (ha)	SSSI type	Area (ha)	Plan done by	Local liaison with	Date of plan	No of days required	Main issues emerging or tested
1. Devon	Sheep/arable	50	Valley fen and tussock sedge	7	P Cobb	English Nature, FWAG	Nov 1992	1½	Small, low input farm. Scope to improve land outside SSSI
2. Hants	Mixed	500	Downland plateau, chalk grass/scrub	13	P Cobb C Morris	English Nature, Hants CC	Nov/Dec 1992	5	Good network (sporting interest) SSSI needs management
3. Lincs	Arable/cattle	80	Glacial valley. Chalk banks - lime rich marsh	3	P Cobb	English Nature, FWAG	Dec 1992	2	Aware farmers land in stewardship. Potential for set-aside to add to SSSI
4. Cumbria	Dairy/arable	126	Acid bog	14	T Bryson	English Nature, ADAS	Dec 1992	1½	Intensive livestock pollution. Little interest outside SSSI

Appendix 1: Whole Farm Conservation Plans: current practice survey respondents

A National Parks

North York Moors
Dales
Northumberland
Lakes
Snowdonia
Exmoor
Dartmoor
Pembrokeshire
Peak
Brecon Beacons
New Forest
Broads

B Agricultural Colleges

Otley College, Suffolk
Reaseheath College, Cheshire
Kirkley Hall College, Northumberland
(Bishop Burton College, Humberside)

C County Councils and Local Authority Management Projects

Hampshire
Hertfordshire
Sylvanus

D Industry based individuals and organisations

Linking Environment and Farming
Elm Farm Research Centre
British Institute of Agricultural Consultants
Wilmots Crop Protection
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
Agricultural Training Board
British Association of Shooting and Conservation
Ruth Tittensor, Agricultural Consultant

E National Statutory and Voluntary Bodies

Royal Society for Nature Conservation
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (England and Scotland - ESAs)
Agricultural Development and Advisory Service
National Rivers Authority
Countryside Commission
Countryside Council for Wales
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
National Farmers' Union
National Trust
English Nature
Game Conservancy

F Other organisations

Scottish Agricultural Colleges
Open University

NB: organisations in parentheses are those from which no reply was received.

Appendix 2: Current practice telephone survey contact sheet

Name: . . . . . .
Tel: . . . . . .
Organisation: . . . . . .
Address: . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
Position in organisation: . . . . . .

1 Is your organisation involved in the preparation of whole farm conservation plans?

. . . . . .

2 If so, what format do you follow in this preparation?

Open University	☐	NCC	☐	CoCo	☐
FWAG	☐	Other	☐		

If other, please give details

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

3 What does the plan include?

Wildlife	☐	Woodland	☐	Landscape	☐
Archaeology/history	☐	Shooting	☐	Pollution control	☐
Access/recreation	☐	Pesticide use	☐	Nitrogen use	☐
Soil & water conservation	☐	Business plan	☐		

4 Who are the clients that you are preparing these plans for?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

5 In the formulation of WFCPs, what are your objectives?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

6 Is monitoring built into the plan and carried out?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

If so, how often?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

7 Do you charge for this service? If so, how much?

. . . . . .

8 Is this service part of a broader project which your organisation is undertaking?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Do you make a whole farm plan a condition of any grant aid or incentive scheme that you offer?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

9 Are there any grants available to pay for plan preparation?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

10 How many plans have been completed?

In the last month		In the last 6 months	
In the last 12 months		In total	

11 How long have you been providing this service?

. . . . . .

12 Estimate of person/days per plan

Field visits		Office	
Monitoring		In total	

13 Do you actively promote this service? or wait until it is requested?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

14 Is the conservation plan part of a whole farm business plan?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

15 Have any of the following incentive schemes been taken up in these plans?

ESA		FWPS		Stewardship	
Local authority		NSAs		NCC	
Management agreements		Set aside		Countryside Premium	
Woodland Man Grant		Eng Heritage		Other	
Access agreements		FCGS			

16 Is it possible to obtain a sample of a WFCP that you have prepared?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Appendix 3: Whole farm plans evaluation

Example:	FWAG
Sample:	Great Tong Farm Whole Farm Plan
Format:	Most detailed FWAG type, though not as long as some samples. Clear stages and information presentation/analysis, based on Countryside Commission approach. Stops short of detailed prescriptions for individual sites.
Input:	Multi agency, with a long time scale, albeit an attempt to test plan process itself. Repeat exercises could be done more quickly.
Benefits/output:	Attempts to get as much as possible out of contributing agencies, short of these charging for input. Picture of farm - basis for action for future. Useful planning or publicity tool.
Strengths:	Logical format. Analyses fit of options and seeks to reconcile different land uses. Uses others expertise. Farm environmental management audit (FEMA) examines impact of farm practices.
Weaknesses:	Weak on detailed proposals and monitoring.
Other remarks:	Conscious contribution to WFP process. References useful. Other FWAG examples have simpler approach.
Useful sections:	FEMA could be developed.

Example:	Herts CC
Sample:	Butlers Green Farm Whole Farm Plan
Format:	Basic, very much based on map, with a short report. Linked to grant aid and management agreement packages.
Input:	In house team (Herts. Countryside Heritage Project) advises on interest/value, prepares plans and draws up agreements/provides grant aid.
Benefits/output:	Combines 3 schemes into single package for 'minimum of fuss and form filling' (identification of sites to owners, explanation of interest, and voluntary agreements to manage).
Strengths:	Simple package likely to appeal to farmers, especially where connected to assistance.
Weaknesses:	First approach to farmer from Local Authority about 'special site' could be crucial to acceptance of whole scheme.
Other remarks:	Maps not easy to use in farm office?
Useful sections:	Single package approach

Example:	N York Moors NP
Sample:	Long Causeway, Farndale Farm Scheme Agreement
Format:	5 year legal agreement includes schedule of works and payments and maps. Operations requiring consent detailed plus schedule of features to be retained/managed.
Input:	In house (NP Advisory Section - Farm Conservation). Annual payment on individual farm schemes range from £500 to nearly £6,000.
Benefits/output:	Delivers objectives of NP management effectively within a contract arrangement.
Strengths:	Relatively straightforward, despite legal framework.
Weaknesses:	Aims and objectives are not explicitly stated, though they may be those of NP by implication. Legal framework could be off putting to farmers?
Other remarks:	Combination of carrot and stick approaches.
Useful sections:	Standard management agreement format/headings.

Example: Cheshire College of Agriculture

Sample: Reaseheath Wildlife and Landscape Management Plans

Format: Early plans lengthy and heavily survey based, but aims and objectives not clearly stated. 1992 plan restates earlier plan aims and is much shorter.

Input: In house Steering Committee under Warden of Outdoor Education Centre, meets each year since 1976 to monitor progress. In 1990 decided to simplify plan basis without repeat of detailed surveys.

Benefits/output: Considerable body of information on single farm allows changes to be monitored. Sites safeguarded and managed on farm.

Strengths: Survey information useful for educational role of farm and to monitor changes.

Weaknesses: Detail swamps objectives of plans: these are poorly stated if at all, in early plans.

Other remarks: Format develops proposals, but does not summarise them clearly (exc. '92 version).

Useful sections

Example:	English Nature
Sample:	Parsonage Down NNR Management Plan
Format:	Follows NCC Management plan (full length). Longest of all plans: lengthy background, descriptive and survey sections. Ideal management objectives - constraints - 'operational' objectives useful.
Input:	In house, (2 authors are stated) plus 60 years of management records, plus environmental data eg, soils, climate.
Benefits/output:	Delivers objectives of NNR management and monitoring/recording.
Strengths:	Logical format, if cumbersome. Considerable body of information. Strong on operational plans.
Weaknesses:	Far too detailed for average farm use. No easy summary of operational plans eg, in map form.
Other remarks:	Minimum format management plan much simpler (used by County Trusts).
Useful sections:	Background information if/when more readily available (eg, via Phase I, GIS). Bear 'minimum' format in mind.

Example:	Countryside Commission
Sample:	Bovingdon Hall Demonstration Farm Plan
Format:	Adapted from detailed plans including single purpose plans not given here. Clear stages and information presentation/analysis. CoCo own format, set out in CCP 206, where this is the WFP example.
Input:	High profile project from 1975-91 on 10 farms. Local Steering group for each farm. Specialists brought in for single purpose plans.
Benefits/output:	Farm has detailed operational plans including costs, and individual site plans. Considerable published information from project, plus 'demonstration' role (continues).
Strengths:	Logical format. Analyses fit of options and seeks to reconcile different land uses. Monitoring and evaluation of project itself part of approach.
Weaknesses:	Prohibitively expensive to use on large scale. Still too detailed for easy farmer use? Vulnerable to changes in policy and incentive framework - or farm changing hands.
Other remarks:	Valuable contribution to WFP process, but unlikely to be repeatable.
Useful sections:	Plan process (especially analysis section)

Appendix 4: Proforma for annual review of WFCP

WHOLE FARM CONSERVATION PLAN: REVIEW (Page 1)

Farm.....

Client .....Date of plan (year 1) .....

Date of this visit ..... Plan year No.....

Work carried out this year

Site name & No.	Operation	Check √	Remarks

Factors requiring change to plan since previous year(s)

External (eg, new grants, policies, legislation)

Internal (eg, change in farm policy, staffing, environmental factors

WHOLE FARM CONSERVATION PLAN: REVIEW (page 2)

Proposed changes to plan

Year	Workplan site and change	Reasons	Agreed

Work schedule for next year

Site name & No.	Operation	Remarks

Signed: .....(client) .....(Adviser)

Checked EN [ ] Name ..... Date .....

Appendix 5: Parameters for selection of case study farms

1. Number of farms - three.

2. Assessment by a wide range of circumstances - so far as practicable.

3. To test the design strength and weaknesses of the draft guidelines - CEAS to specify those areas of plan that should be targeted.

4. Avoid farms which contain say 80% + SSSI.

5. Avoid farms which have single isolated SSSI with little other interest surrounding.

6. Avoid farms with single intensive enterprise, eg, all dairy.

7. Exclude farms which only have a woodland SSSI.

8. Avoid hobby farmers, say ≤40% of income from farming.

9. Target one upland farm, ideally on the edge where break up of 'traditional' upland farm occurs and other enterprises begin to appear.

10. Target one lowland farm mixed arable/grassland.

11. Target remaining farm (if possible) taking into account geographic variety eg, upland = Cumbria; lowland = Sussex; remaining = South West eg, Devon.

12. One farm should test the relationship of WFCP to the arable regime and set-aside in particular.

13. One farm should reflect the need to modify the farming system, eg, grazing regime, cropping pattern.

14. One farm should test issues such as pollution, eg, in relation to watercourse management and wetland in general.

15. If possible, a tenanted farm should be chosen as well as an owner/occupied farm. Partnerships, companies, share farmers, etc are of secondary importance.

16. If possible a farm can be adjacent to or include an area under an existing countryside management scheme.

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