

## **APPENDIX F**

### **North Pennines NA Draft Farm Profiles**

**(Number of sides - 18)**

# **1. COWBYERS FARM**

## **Farm Type**

Large tenanted hill farm in the north east of the Natural Area.

## **Farm Business Character**

This is a 567 ha tenanted holding, which has been farmed by the present occupier since 1956. Since 1975, sheep numbers have increased from 630 to 700 ewes, and suckler cows from 100 to 150. These increases were made possible by better grassland management, the addition of land to the farm and the use of winter housing for both cattle and sheep. There are 290 ha of moorland on the farm, which is no longer grazed for much of the winter and supplementary feeding no longer takes place. In return for these changes, which were carried out in order to enhance the grouse shoot, the landlord made available additional in-bye land. The farmer has no responsibility for the management of the heather or much of the farm's woodland.

## **Farm Ecological Character**

The outstanding feature of this farm is the heather moorland on Cowbyers Fell. This is very well managed by a gamekeeper. At the higher end of the fell, there is a patchwork of heather, heath rush and fescue. There are some wet flushes on the Fell, where cross-leaved heath is common. The heather is in very good condition and of varying age - none being over-mature. Towards the lower end of the fell, closer to the farm, the heather is more heavily grazed and heath and soft rush, and fescue are more in evidence. Part of the fell has been fenced-off and subject to agricultural improvement. The flora in this area consists of rye-grass, white clover along with fescues and rushes. Many birds were noted, including Lapwings, Cuckoos and Skylarks. The in-bye area of the farm is mostly improved grassland, with well-maintained stone walls throughout. The most ecologically interesting area of the lowland section is the birch woodland, which grows along the bank of Hot Burn. This would benefit from stock exclusion in order to allow the ground flora to flourish. The banks of Hot Burn are species-rich, with celandine, wood anemone, primrose, violet and wood sorrel.

## **Good Practice**

- Extremely well-managed heather moorland;
- Well-maintained stone walls;
- Reversion of improved grassland to heather moorland.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Dry-stone wall management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currently undertaken without incentives.</li></ul>
Reduced intensity of grassland management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives, with more flexible grant schemes;</li><li>• Entry into farm assurance schemes, to increase market value of products while lowering inputs.</li></ul>
Woodland management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouragement to landlord.</li></ul>
Long-term management for nature conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continued co-operation between landlord and tenant, especially regarding heather management for grouse shoot.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmer is aware of the nature conservation issues over the farm, as demonstrated by good stock management and the provision of winter housing. Through encouragement by the landlord, grazing pressure on the fell has been reduced, with significant nature conservation benefits. However, further reduction of stocking throughout the farm would probably not be accepted if it involved a significant fall in income. Heather and woodland management are also not part of the farmer's responsibilities. Long-term nature conservation objectives would best be achieved through joint action by the landlord and tenant (as has already occurred). However, the farmer is also deterred from entry into conservation schemes, due to an anticipated loss of farm management flexibility.

## **2. THE LAWS**

### **Farm Type**

Medium sized tenanted hill farm in West Allen Dale, to the north of the Natural Area.

### **Farm Business Character**

This is a 220 ha stock holding, including 120 ha of fell, which has been farmed by the same family since 1980. Since this date, suckler cow numbers have only slightly risen from 38 to 42, although ewe numbers have risen from 330 to 385. Lambing percentages have increased by 30% due to better flock management (especially feeding). The moorland is grazed over the winter, although the landlord is currently attempting to reduce winter grazing, in order to improve heather management. Burning of the heather and other heather management is no longer the responsibility of the farmer and is now undertaken by the landlord, in a more controlled and systematic fashion. The tenancy agreement also prevents the grazing of cattle on the fell.

### **Farm Ecological Character**

Laws Fell is heavily grazed. The intensity of grazing decreases the higher up the fell one walks. All heather has been grazed out at the farm end. Extremely gnarled heather (malformed due to grazing) starts to become apparent around halfway up the fell. Towards the fell top, the heather is more abundant, but in need of management in the form of burning or flailing, in order to promote the growth of younger shoots. Some of the fell is quite damp and wet flushes have developed. Removal of drains would be likely to encourage the development of other wet areas of nature conservation value. The stone wall boundaries are in a good state of repair. Many birds were seen, mainly lapwing, but also curlew. The in-by-land is intensively managed but a copse and beech hedges its value.

### **Good Practice**

- Well maintained stone walls;
- Well maintained beech hedge;
- Improving management of heather moorland.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Further dry-stone wall management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further financial incentives.</li></ul>
Heather management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provision of winter housing for sheep;</li><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Benefits for game birds;</li><li>• Co-operation with landlord.</li></ul>
Tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Co-operation with landlord.</li></ul>
Reduce intensity of grassland management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Entry into farm assurance/welfare schemes, to increase value of products with lower inputs.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmer will consider ending the winter grazing of the fell, provided he is grant-aided and has access to additional land in compensation. He would not consider schemes which would result in reduced stocking over the whole farm, due to financial constraints (including rent) and the fall in size of a viable hefted hill flock. MAFF's Moorland Scheme in particular was considered to be totally uneconomic. Nevertheless, the farmer is sympathetic to nature conservation and would probably undertake more sympathetic management if there was sufficient incentive under the tenancy agreement (e.g., for new tree planting and the erection of new farm buildings for winter housing). Therefore, improved heather management and nature conservation on the farm would best be achieved through the landlord and tenant working closely together.

### **3. HILL FARM**

#### **Farm Type**

Large tenanted hill farm in the South Tyne Valley.

#### **Farm Business Character**

This is 648 ha holding, mostly moorland, which has been tenanted by the same family for many years. Sheep numbers have remained roughly the same since 1975, although pressures to increase stocking have largely addressed by a management agreement on SSSI land. There are currently about 600 breeding ewes. However, better flock management has increased lambing percentages to 120%. This has resulted in an increased demand for grazing, with yearling ewes away-wintered as a result. The suckler enterprise was terminated due to the farm's limited labour resources and forage area. Heather management is the responsibility of the landlord and English Nature. Due to grazing restrictions on the moorland, there has been a more intensive use of in-bye land.

#### **Farm Ecological Character**

This is an extensive hill farm, containing part of the Moorhouse and Cross Fell SSSI; designated due to its '...rich variety of upland habitats with associated plant and animal species'. The outstanding area of the fell is located at its southern end, where it borders the river Tees. Here, low growing heather provides a habitat for Black Grouse. Skylarks are abundant. Growing among the heather is cranberry. Wet flushes create damp patches with rushes and bryophytes. Towards the lower slopes, mat grass predominates. Drainage works were in evidence (moorland gripping). As one travels north, towards the farmhouse, the heather is grazed out and a mosaic of upland grasses and wet flushes predominates. The lack of heather communities over the majority of this fell is probably due mainly to grazing intensity. The small area of in-bye land is improved grassland, some fields being managed as hay meadows. There is small, coniferous plantation in the corner of one field and a copse composed of both deciduous and coniferous trees bounds the River South Tyne.

#### **Good Practice**

- Well maintained heather moorland within SSSI;
- Hay production;
- Stone walls mostly maintained.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Reduced intensity of grassland management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entry into farm assurance/welfare schemes, to increase value of products with lower inputs;</li><li>• Provision of new buildings for winter housing;</li><li>• Financial incentives, e.g. ESA.</li></ul>
Heather management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives, e.g. under SSSI;</li><li>• Co-operation between landlord and tenant;</li><li>• Benefits for game birds.</li></ul>
Management of shelter belts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Information and training;</li><li>• Co-operation with landlord.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

Due to the economic pressures on such an exposed hill farm, the farmer wishes to increase the area of grassland and overall stocking. However, if sufficiently compensated, he will consider ending the winter grazing of moorland, although reductions in overall stocking would probably not be acceptable for economic reasons. The farmer acknowledges that better moorland management could be achieved with a greater area of in-bye and the provision of new buildings for winter housing. He has also expressed interest in grant aid for walls and would like to increase woodland areas for much needed shelter.

## **4. LOW HUNTSHIELD FORD**

### **Farm Type**

Family owned, medium sized upland farm in the Wear Valley.

### **Farm Business Character**

This is a 110 ha holding, which has been farmed by the same family for three generations. The farm ceased dairying in the mid-1970s, due to the marginal viability of dairy farming on an upland holding, labour problems and the major capital investment that would have been required to modernise. Until recent years the farm had been neglected, with a fall in the quality of walls and relative under-stocking. The farm's management has now been taken in hand. Since 1975, suckler cow numbers have increased from 20 to 30 cows (aided by the erection of a new cattle shed). Sheep numbers have doubled from 10 to 20 ewes. The farm has been entered into the Pennine Dales ESA in order to supplement income, although this has had little effect on the operation of the holding due to the already low stocking rates. The small size of the farm enterprise has also seen the number of full-time workers fall from 4 in 1975 to 2 in 1996.

### **Farm Ecological Character**

Low Huntshield Ford has a large area of rough grazing, composed mainly of soft rush and mat grass. This is not a particularly valuable habitat and, unusually for this area, there was not much sign of bird life. Rushes dominate much of the highest land, apparently due to the land having been ploughed in the wrong direction (with the slope) before the war. Wet flushes add a little to the floristic diversity. Semi-improved fields form around half of the fell area. The grass here is more diverse - including fescues and bents, along with seeded mixtures. The stone wall boundaries are largely in a state of disrepair - these are being repaired under the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme. The lower lying in-bye is improved grassland, with plenty of mature, single trees.

### **Good Practice**

- Stone wall maintenance and re-building getting under way;
- Continuation of hay cutting;
- Retention and enclosure of broad-leaved woodland;

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Further dry-stone wall management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li></ul>
Further cattle grazing of rougher grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further financial incentives, e.g. under ESA;</li><li>• Information on associated benefits.</li></ul>
Grassland management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continued ESA incentives;</li><li>• Provision of new buildings for winter housing.</li></ul>
Woodland management and tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Information and training.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmer's entry into the ESA and intended improvement of walls is an indication of his willingness to undertake work for nature conservation and his awareness of the grant schemes available. However, further reduced grassland management and stocking would probably not be acceptable. Possible increased stocking rates should be addressed at an early stage through more attractive payment rates and the erection of a sheep building. The farmer also has a good working relationship with the local FWAG representative. The farmer is concerned over public access to his holding.

## **5. HIGH BLACKTON**

### **Farm Type**

Medium sized, mostly rented hill farm in the Tees Valley.

### **Farm Business Character**

This is a 114 ha hill farm, which has been farmed by the same family since the 1920s. A further 52 ha of fell land is taken for summer grazing. There are also 90 stints on an adjacent common. The farm was divided between family members in the mid 1970s and the resulting limited forage area led to an emphasis on increasing the quality of the sheep flock, rather than on increasing numbers. This resulted in an enterprise based on the sale of pedigree Swaledale breeding ewes and rams. There are currently 280 ewes on the holding. The farm's grassland has always been managed on a low input basis, while heather management on the common and rented land is the responsibility of the shooting tenant and English Nature (SSSI) respectively. The small forage area led to the ending of hay production, in order to release grazing land.

### **Farm Ecological Character**

This holding is a typical mixture of in-bye land, fell land and common land, with grazing rights on a hill detached from the main area. The in-bye land is agriculturally-improved, with some stone walls and small trees along old hedge lines. There is a small area of woodland. The fell is composed of a mature mosaic of heather, rushes and mat grass, with some bilberry. The heather is generally healthy, but of an even age (quite old) and therefore in need of a burn/cut to aid re-generation. The heather is particularly thick and abundant on the summit and slopes but becomes grazed-out closer to the road. The adjoining common land is very similar, though the heather is even thicker in some places and forms a monoculture on the summit. Again, it would benefit from a burn or cut. The grassland for which grazing rights are held is unimproved, being composed of mat grass, fescue, rushes and sedges. There are some wet flushes and a small area of bracken but no heather. The area contains part of the Teesdale Allotments SSSI, designated due to its breeding bird assemblage.

### **Good Practice**

- stone walls maintained;
- reasonably managed heather moorland;
- bracken control.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Further reduced intensity of grassland management and reintroduction of hay cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further financial incentives, e.g. by extension of ESA;</li><li>• New buildings for winter housing.</li></ul>
Tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives.</li></ul>
Heather management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives, e.g. under SSSI;</li><li>• SSSI stocking limitations;</li><li>• Co-operation between landlord, shooting tenant, farm tenant and commoners;</li><li>• New buildings for winter housing.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmers are broadly sympathetic to nature conservation and have always farmed extensively, concentrating on the quality rather than quantity of stock. However, the farm's limited grazing area would probably make the ending of winter grazing, the overall reduction in stocking and the re-introduction of hay-making unacceptable without significant grant-aid. Away-wintering would not be accepted as there would be concerns over the well-being of valuable stock kept off the farm. Long-term management of the moorland would best be achieved through close collaboration between the landlord, tenant, English Nature and the Commoners' Association.

## **6. WHITWHAM**

### **Farm Type**

Medium sized, family-owned, upland farm in the South Tyne Valley.

### **Farm Business Character**

This is a 100 ha holding, farmed by the same family since the early 1970s. Over the years, the farm has reduced the intensity of operations, especially grassland inputs, mainly for economic reasons but also for nature conservation objectives. Since 1975 the suckler herd has been reduced from 30 cows to a small pedigree herd of 6 cows, due to the low viability of the enterprise and the farmer's preference for sheep. Since reducing the suckler enterprise, the use of clamp silage has also ended, with nearly all conserved fodder being cut as hay. Due to the poor condition of the farm buildings, the remaining cattle are wintered outside. In contrast, sheep numbers have risen over the same period, from 100 to 230, due to the reduction in cattle numbers and the relatively higher profits in the sheep enterprise. The work force has also fallen from 2 full-time workers in 1975 to one in 1996. The farmer is considering a number of diversified enterprises to reduce reliance on agricultural subsidies and to help finance the further extensification of the farm.

### **Farm Ecological Character**

Whitwham has a diversity of habitat types, ranging from improved lowland hay meadows, semi-improved grassland, scrubby banks, woodland, stream-side and hill land. The most interesting feature is probably the oak woodland which grows along the river bank, and supports a rich bird community. The wood would benefit from stock exclusion. The areas of scrubby bank have a relatively rich ground flora - including lesser celandine, primrose, violets and pignut. Much of the in-bye land is a mosaic of improved/semi-improved/unimproved grassland with much soft rush. The damp nature of much of this land has encouraged a reasonable growth of wetland plant species and where cattle have recently grazed, new habitat niches have been opened up by poaching of the ground. The hill land is also semi-improved with rush/mat grass communities on the slopes and more improved land toward the bottom of the slopes. The course of an old railway line is fenced off and is reverting to scrub.

### **Good Practice**

- Hay cutting;
- Old railway line fenced-off and reverting to scrub/willow.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Woodland management and tree planting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives, especially to exclude stock with new fencing;</li><li>• Information and training.</li></ul>
Grassland management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives, especially to further reduce fertiliser inputs (e.g. ESA);</li><li>• Encourage cattle grazing of rushes, through new cattle housing and increasing profitability of cattle compared to sheep;</li><li>• Entry into farm assurance/welfare schemes/organic farming, to increase value of products while lowering inputs;</li><li>• Profitability of proposed new water bottling enterprise, to allow more extensive farming practices.</li></ul>
Retention of traditional farm buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives to allow sensitive reuse for farm or non-farming purposes;</li><li>• Encouragement from planning authority for sensitive reuse proposals.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmer is sympathetic to and aware of the nature conservation interests and issues on his land. The extensification that has taken place over the farm is partly the result of his interest in wildlife. However, he would not wish to reduce inputs and stocking levels any further. Increased cattle numbers would also only be practical if adequate cattle housing could be provided. Nevertheless, his interest in conservation and organic farming suggests that he would consider grant schemes which would enhance the farm's nature conservation interest, if payments were sufficiently attractive. The success of the proposed diversified enterprises will also be important in determining future farm policy. The farm is crossed by a number of public footpaths and the farmer is keen not to encourage any further public access. This is due to past problems with public access, such as disturbance to wildlife.

## 7. LANE HEAD FARM

### Farm Type

Small hill farm in the Wear Valley.

### Farm Business Character

This is a 45 ha family-owned farm, which has been in the same family since the 1930s. The farm also has 660 sheep grazing rights on adjacent common land. The farm left dairying due to its poor viability on such a small, exposed holding and also because of the need for significant capital investment in order to modernise. The suckler enterprise was also ended to allow further grazing for the more profitable sheep enterprise. As a result, ewe numbers have increased since 1975 from 360 to 660. All moorland grazing is on the common, the heather management of which is the responsibility of the holder of the shooting rights (who undertakes a structural programme of burning). A busy road runs through the common, resulting in the significant loss of stock, especially of young lambs (60 killed in the last 5 years).

### Farm Ecological Character

The improved grassland is over-grazed, with bryophytes and nettles in evidence. These fields were ploughed up just after the war and Mr. Mews can remember uprooting the heather on the banks by hand. One field, containing a disused mine, has steep, unimproved slopes leading down to the stream (tellingly called *Heathery Burn* - no heather persists). Fescues, bents, bryophytes and sedges are all present on these slopes. Wet flushes run down the slope with violet, celandine and buttercup species. Bracken also persists on some of the steeper slopes. The improved fields below the house on either side of the road have plenty of mature trees - both stands and remnant hedges - with lots of hedgerow birds. The land on which Mr. Mews claims grazing rights is mainly formed from mine spoil-heaps. A sparse, mixed (willow, beech, larch, birch) woodland grows on the slopes with gorse, primrose and a variety of plants on the rocky outcrops. The grass is relatively lush in this area. The common land differs to each side of the road across it. On Weather Hill, there is more grass and the heather is in better condition. It does not appear to have been recently burnt, but shows good re-generation from a burn at some point in the past. The Bashaw side of the common is over-grazed, with patchy burning which should help heather re-generation.

### Good Practice

- Heather management in the form of burning and grazing;
- Enclosure of woodland shelter belt.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
More extensive management of grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• New buildings for winter housing;</li><li>• Increased farm area;</li><li>• Entry into farm assurance/welfare schemes, to increase value of products while lowering inputs.</li></ul>
Heather Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Co-operation between commoners and shooting tenant;</li><li>• New buildings for winter housing;</li><li>• Increased farm area;</li><li>• Traffic calming on through road to reduce lamb mortality.</li></ul>
Scrub/bracken control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Information and training.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The active management of the heather is not the farmer's responsibility (including burning and gripping). The common is also grazed by many other commoners and changes in management would have to involve all commoners and grouse shooting interests. Due to the small area of owned land, the common comprises a major part of farm's forage area and the farmer would be unlikely to reduce or end winter grazing without significant compensation or provision of additional in-bye and farm buildings. Management which would involve the loss of an already limited forage area would also probably not be accepted. He already believes that his fertiliser cannot be economically reduced any further.

## **8. LEEKWORTH FARM**

### **Farm Type**

Small family owned farm in the Tees Valley.

### **Farm Business Character**

This is a 12 ha holding, located along the River Tees, which has been farmed by the same family since the 1930s. Dairying ended in the early 1970s, due to the farm's difficult access and the high capital investment that would have been needed to modernise. The farm's size has been reduced since 1975 and the suckler enterprise ended due to the farmer's back problems and approaching retirement. A small hill farm was also sold for the same reason. Due to the ending of the cattle enterprise, sheep numbers have increased since 1975 from 30 to 70 ewes. Lambing also takes place indoors in January/February, due to the availability of the old cattle buildings and lambing percentages has increased from 70% to 120% as a result. The farm has also had a caravan site for many years, which significantly contributes to farm income.

### **Farm Ecological Character**

This is a very small, improved farm which has diversified into a caravan site. The most interesting feature is the River Tees, which flows along its south-eastern boundary. The river is tree-lined and has a good bank flora. Stone walls are in a good state of repair and large, single trees are scattered through some of the fields. The remains of hedgerows (mature hedgerow trees) are apparent along some of the boundaries. This farm would benefit from de-intensification of its grassland management.

### **Good Practice**

- Well-maintained stone walls.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Riverbank management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Information and training.</li></ul>
More extensive management of grassland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives, e.g. through extension of ESA;</li><li>• Entry into farm assurance/welfare schemes, to increase value of products with lower inputs;</li><li>• Profitability of caravan enterprise.</li></ul>
New water features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives;</li><li>• Information and training.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmer has extensified farm management due to impending retirement and has already expressed an interest in reducing grassland inputs and construction of new water features - if grant-aided. A management agreement under the Pennine Dales ESA would therefore probably be considered if the ESA were extended to cover this part of the Tees Valley. Tree planting would probably not be considered, as it would involve the reduction of an already very limited forage area.

## **9. NETTLE HILL FARM**

### **Farm Type**

Small family owned upland farm in the Allen Valley.

### **Farm Business Character**

This is a 31 ha, mostly owned holding which has been in the same family since the early 20th century. Dairying was ended in the 1960s, due to the low viability of the enterprise on such a small, exposed holding and the major capital investment that would have been required to modernise. There have been no sheep on the farm for many years and the suckler herd has not significantly increased since 1975. However, returns have been improved through better beef breeding, herd management and the introduction of silage. The farm was entered into the Pennine Dales ESA in order to supplement income, although this has led to increased grazing pressure on some parts of the holding. Overall, entry into the ESA is still considered worthwhile.

### **Farm Ecological Character**

This farm mainly comprises improved grassland with remnant hedgerows. The wooded stream banks provide the main focus of interest - with wood anemone, wood sorrel, primrose, dog's mercury, celandine and violets. Another feature of interest is the ditches, along which were noted marsh marigold and wood anemone. Lapwing and curlew were noted. The upland section of this farm has been converted to improved grassland.

### **Good Practice**

- Well managed ditches;
- Stone walls maintained;
- Low artificial fertiliser rates throughout the farm.

## Opportunities

OPPORTUNITIES	TRIGGER OR INCENTIVE
Replacement of wire fences with hedgerows or walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial incentives.</li></ul>
Further extensive management of grassland and rough grazing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further financial incentives under ESA;</li><li>• Entry into farm assurance/welfare schemes, to increase value of products with lower inputs.</li></ul>

## Attitudes

The farmer is aware of the nature conservation issues affecting the holding and of the related available grant schemes. However, the farm's small size and subsequent economic pressures mean that further reduced grassland inputs and management involving a loss of forage area (e.g. tree planting, pond creation) would not be considered. Reversion to 100% hay making is unlikely, given the practical labour and management problems which would be involved and the reduced quality of forage. Further conservation management would best be achieved by significantly increasing grant rates, to encourage reduced grassland inputs and the management of ungrazed areas.