



Grazing
Animals
Project



GAP NEWS

The Newsletter of the Grazing Animals Project

NEWSLETTER - No 27 – AUTUMN 2004



Cor! ... you still eating your bait! Come on, get off your butt, I'm ready for action!

John Bacon

Editorial - Tim Beech

Now about this fox-.... well, perhaps not. As Nancy Banks-Smith, the T.V. critic for The Guardian is fond of saying “There were enough said at our Eddie’s wedding”. However, without getting embroiled in the arguments flying like punches, it is patently clear from the forests of newsprint abounding that the subject is far from simple.

Elsewhere in this bumper edition there is a new section reproducing selected extracts from ‘Nibblers’. There was, at one time, some intent to print the entries concerning reform of the common agriculture policy but the world’s forests are precious.

(A pause for thought: every time a computer key is pressed a little whiff of carbon dioxide escapes into the atmosphere).

Why is it all so complicated?

How is it that the matter of putting a few sheep onto a bit of grass and trying to keep as many of them alive as possible got to be so difficult?

Has it never occurred to anybody that the writing of a risk assessment is no more than an insult to the human brain’s enormous capacity to reason and store information for itself?

Does it never strike anyone that all these words are the reduplications of a self-replicating machine, perpetuating its own fog of obfuscation in the cause of suppressing any possibility of an original idea?

And will somebody out there help William of Occham to get a decent shave?



Dates for the next Newsletters:

The deadlines for submission of entries (including ‘Grazelots’ adverts) for Newsletter No 28 to Tim Beech please by 19th November. Posting date is planned for 17th December. Newsletter No 29 will be submission of articles by 25th February 2005 with posting planned for 25th March.

Footnote: please note that the opinions in articles in the GAP Newsletter may not be those of the GAP Project

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Acknowledgements

The Editor would like to thank all the contributors, the English Nature team at Lewes and in the Print Room at Peterborough for the production of this Newsletter.

GAP 'ROUNDUP'

2. News from the Executive Group by John Bacon:

On behalf of the Executive I would like to give a warm welcome to Sophie Lake, Jim Swanson and Juliette Sunderland to the GAP Staff complement. Further details about them and the jobs they will be doing are included in 'News from the GAP Office'. It's great to have them on board and at the time of writing (early September) they are already pulling hard at the traces. I would like to say a special thank-you to Claire who has been working extra hard keeping the GAP office running this summer more-or-less single handed. Now that our complement is back up to normal we look forward to getting away from the reactive, and back to the proactive, areas of work.

New representatives:

To extend yet further GAP's closer links with the farming sector we have agreed with FWAG that it is time we had one of their staff on our Executive. We look forward to hearing from them shortly the name of the lucky person!!

Rolling over the GAP Plan – a GAP Plan for 2005-8:

We are just commencing the third and final year of the current GAP Plan, 2002-5. The concurrent contracts for running the GAP Project also therefore expire in the next twelve months. With the support of the GAP Executive, approval has been secured from English Nature, as the primary funder, to continue GAP for a further three years in the period 2005-8. There was clear agreement that the delivery of grazing will face new constraints, and that the work of GAP needs to continue. Drafting of the new GAP Plan is imminent so that it can be discussed at the GAP Executive on the 3rd November and finalized by early December. This will then form the basis

of a tender for contract(s) to be allocated in the new-year ready to enable a smooth transition to the successful contractors between April and August 05.

We particularly welcome your suggestions for items to be included in the GAP Plan 2005-8. These may be where our efforts need to be directed into specific 'work areas', or for specific 'products' that should be made available to help grazing advisers and practitioners. Please send ideas to me by the 15th October. Any thoughts on how 'extensive grazing systems' are likely to develop during the Plan period will also be welcomed for inclusion in the 'rationale' that will precede the Plan. Thank you.

Animal welfare:

Governments have been active this summer in putting more meat on their Animal Health and Welfare Strategies which were launched earlier in 2004. GAP became aware in July of Defra and the Welsh Assembly launching a consultation on their Draft Animal Welfare Bill. This has implications for the management of stock within extensive grazing systems, especially those being used to help deliver landscape, wildlife, and public access targets in the countryside. We believe grazing managers and advisers need to be aware of these developments so a brief resume appears later in this Newsletter which has been prepared by Sophie. This is followed by GAP's written submission made to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee on the Draft Bill for England and Wales.

The first meeting of GAP's reconvened Welfare Working Group for extensive grazing systems is due to meet on 30th September.

3. News from the GAP Office by Claire Weaver

For those of you who like to keep things brief, this issue's contribution from the GAP Office will suit you well. With the loss of both Sarahs it has not been possible to take on any new initiatives; keeping things running has taken all the available time.



On the staff front we are very pleased to welcome three new faces. Sophie Lake is joining us as UK GAP Co-ordinator and will be taking special responsibility for national policy issues. She comes fresh from her RSPB nightjar survey work and has recently published *Conservation Grazing on Lowland Heaths* with John Underhill-Day, reviewed in the 'New Publications' section of the last issue.

Jim Swanson took up post on the 23rd August as the South of England LGS Co-ordinator and will cover everywhere south of and including the Midlands. He is taking over from the County Wildlife Trust Regional LGS Co-ordinators. Jim comes to us on secondment from FWAG where he was one of their Officers in Gloucestershire. He has also had direct, valuable experience in running and steering LGSes and is a qualified vet. He will help to reinforce GAP's clear intention to work closely in the future with livestock farmers.

We are lucky to find two such well qualified and experienced successors to these posts and we are glad to welcome them - by way of a welcome gift we gave each of them a FACT/GAP (2003 Conference) tea-mug; whilst not

forgetting the box of publications and resources - and another box of work!

We are also pleased to welcome Juliett Sunderland as the GAP Assistant working with Claire at Newark two days a week. Juliette comes to us with experience in both the voluntary and corporate sectors and a keen interest in all things countrified!

Details of GAP contact changes:

Please refer to the 'GAP Contacts' box for contact details and amend your records. These include a change to the main GAP e-mail address to facilitate joint working from Sophie's Office (in Dorset), Jim in (Herefordshire) and both of them with Claire and Juliette at Newark! Please send all e-mails to enquiries@grazinganimalsproject.info. The postal address for the GAP Office remains the same.

LGS hand-over meeting, Cirencester

Jim and Sophie's first official day with GAP was at a meeting in August, part of which was the debrief of Sarah Kessell and our four part time Regional LGS Co-ordinators. We were bidding a sad farewell to Jan McKelvey, Pauline Oliver, Mark Pearson and Andrew Pollard as they hand over to Jim Swanson. They were thanked for the work they have been doing supporting and encouraging LGSes in southern England.

One of the priorities for this spring had been to make contacts with Habitat Action Plan (HAP) leads in each area, making closer links between Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) delivery and GAP work. Andrew Pollard's input was especially valuable on this aspect as his 'day job' is as a BAP Officer. He told us about some interesting developments in South West Region where HAP delivery is being costed out in much the same way

as a new business venture develops a business plan for securing funds. We also heard news of the first (to our knowledge) successful grazing-related bid to English Nature's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for a project in Shropshire.

Mark Pearson reported on a very successful meeting of LGS partners held to further the work started on the South Downs LGS – over 50 land owners and graziers attended. Jim will be setting up other meetings this autumn to meet and talk to people either already involved with, or interested in, LGSes.

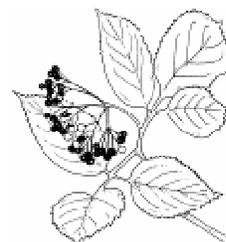
After a run through of developments in each of the regions we sat under a walnut tree in the sunshine and did some 'blue sky thinking' about the future of LGSes, trying to overcome the funding constraints that were outlined in Issue 25 back in the spring. John Bacon's overhead: "the optimism of the action is better than the pessimism of the thought" was a definite theme and we came away with some clear actions (more later) and a good understanding of the current situation. We hope to report on other possible solutions, as we develop them, in later issues of GAP News.

Georgina Dobson joined us as English Nature's upland and livestock policy officer and there were intense questions and scribbling on the issue of the Single Farm Payment Scheme and how CAP reform might affect delivery of conservation grazing in the field. Bill again highlighted the importance of landowners and tenant graziers discussing how the new payments might be divided/allocated at an early stage. He also stressed the need for financial recognition for graziers who satisfy the criteria that enable Agri-environment and CAP payments to be claimed on a piece of land.

By way of a bit of hello-goodbye fun for Sarah K, Jim, Sophie and the Regional Co-ordinators we briefly ended the meeting by playing a newly developed GAP Game. There were farmyard animals to move round a board that looked suspiciously as if it infringed Monopoly's copyright, the aim being to land on those squares representing the resources essential to making GAP work. Jim's natural negotiating abilities came to the fore on the Market Square when he haggled for the card that said 'funding for LGSes' and Bill's cow got off to a propitious start by landing on the 'you recruit LGS Co-ordinator' square. John Bacon steered his plastic pig (his request of gaming piece!) deftly round the board, blindly ignoring the rules and doing back-hand 'piggy bank' card deals to get the resources he needed. I cannot now remember who won (no doubt they will remind me!) except that there was a good degree of 'discussion' over the interpretation of unwritten rules, but everyone seemed to enjoy the jovial competition. The re-formed GAP Team is well and truly ruminating on the problems that lie ahead!

Stock Husbandry Handbook

Sorry to disappoint those of you looking forward to a new Top 10 of husbandry hits. The lack of colleagues until recently has meant that no progress could be made on this area of work. Don't let that stop you contacting the GAP Office with suggestions for solving GAP News 26's list of tricky issues, or sources of good information on husbandry topics. We are still looking for sound material and people with tried and tested husbandry experience who are willing to share their knowledge with us for the Handbook.



GAP's Stock Management Training Courses

We are now on the last leg of developing the 'lookers' and 'stock management' courses. The last box to tick to acquire LANTRA accreditation is a system of student assessment. Richard Small kindly drafted papers for the Trainers to consider and we hope that these have been agreed by Lantra by the time *GAP News* goes to Press. There is still some work to do in completing the Trainers' support material but we hope to pilot the first courses in Wales this autumn and roll the programme out across the country soon afterwards. Everyone who has expressed an interest in either of the GAP courses will be informed when a course is being organised in their area and given the opportunity to book a place.

We are now looking to complete a list of venues around the country where courses can be run. We are particularly short of venues in the North West and the East and West Midlands, and have no suitable facilities in the North East at present. If you have a site in one of these regions that is grazed by a sympathetic grazer, has livestock handling facilities and is near to a 'meeting room' with facilities for 10-15 students, please contact the GAP Office to discuss the possibility of using the site as a training venue.

We are also looking for more trainers around the country to teach the courses. Potential trainers will need a teaching qualification (e.g. PGCE, City & Guilds), or an interest in gaining one (e.g. 2- to 5-day Lantra teaching skills course) and will then need training on the relevant courses. We are looking for people with experience of habitat management through grazing and/or stock handling – not necessarily both, as each stock management course will be run by two people with complementary skills. Trainers will also need a basic first aid

qualification and experience of risk assessment. Potential trainers will need to fund their own teaching qualification, but will then be trained for the relevant course and paid for each course they teach. If you are interested, please get in touch – and we may be able to arrange a specific Lantra course offering suitable presentation skills training if there is sufficient demand. The last one we did had rave reviews!

Claire Weaver

Words from the new staff

From Sophie: My background is a mix of conservation practice and research, and has resulted in a strong interest in evidence based conservation. Livestock had a formative impact on me in my mid-teens, when I had a mutually antagonistic relationship with my mother's goats. Since then, things have mellowed and I enjoy working with the goats and my family's small herd of Shetland and Rough Fell sheep in the Yorkshire Dales ESA whenever possible. During my PhD I spent three seasons roaming the heaths of Dorset carrying out behavioural research on extensively grazed Hereford cross cattle and Exmoor and New Forest ponies. Previously, time on reserves in Norfolk chasing escaped Shetland ponies in the wee hours and checking Hebridean and Shetland sheep gave me a taste for conservation grazing. I have recently returned from a year of adventures abroad, where my work included milking dzomos (yak-like creatures), herding donkeys and shearing Kashmir goats in the Himalayas, and assessing the impact of feral cattle on forest in the Andes. I am glad to have returned to UK conservation at a time that looks set to be exciting and challenging for conservation grazing, and am looking forward to getting stuck into helping GAP facilitate effective, sustainable conservation grazing.

I will be providing national level support for the local grazing schemes and following up Sarah's sterling work on setting up the GAP training courses, in addition to contributing to other aspects of the GAP office work and getting involved with some national policy issues. I am out posted to Dorset, where I am working from the Butterfly Conservation offices, and we hope there will be some fruitful outcomes from this strengthened partnership. A recent trip with Butterfly Conservation staff to the central impact zone of Salisbury Plain introduced me to the interesting grazing regimes used by the Defence Estates to help maintain some 20,000 ha of chalk grassland. Interesting working conditions (e.g. daily live firing) have needed some ingenious solutions, such as the use of rotational temporary paddocks and the introduction of a herdsman who takes some 200 head of cattle up onto the plain each day, moving them around in accordance with the day's firing schedule. We hope to have an article from the Defence Estates ecologists in the next GAP Newsletter telling us more about this LIFE funded scheme.

From Jim: I am on secondment from Gloucestershire Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, (having moved down from Surrey in April 1999), a job where as advisers we do everything from sticking labels on to envelopes to fund raising, but our primary role is to achieve conservation gains on farmland, primarily through the provision of grant aid advice, but also through whole farm management plans. In Surrey I was the Grazing Project Officer for the County Council's Downlands and Heathlands Countryside Management Projects for six years, helping to manage lowland heathland and chalk grassland sites through grazing, and also practical management such as fencing, scrub and Scots Pine clearance. We used a variety of animals, New Forest Ponies, British White and Beef Shorthorn

cattle, Herdwick, Beulah Speckle Face and Hebridean sheep and a few goats. Prior to that I was a vet in mixed, mainly large animal, practice in Lampeter in West Wales; work was mainly beef and sheep, with some dairying (now mostly gone I suspect), plus horse and small animal work around the edges. The FWAG job has helped me to broaden my outlook, and I am just about to complete an MSc in Conservation and Protected Area Management from Birkbeck, which has also opened my eyes to the bigger picture and different perspectives on land management.

Whilst not actively seeking a change, the LGS coordinator job appeared at a good time, and I am looking forward to the new post; apart from the regional meetings outlined above, my intention is to visit as many people involved with, (or wanting to be involved with) grazing as I can within the first two to three months of starting. This is likely to involve me visiting regions (and areas within regions) for a few days and seeing as much as I can. I have already made some contacts that would appear to be priorities for my time, so please be patient, but don't hesitate to call if there are things I can help with over the phone or on email.

In the few days that I have already done with GAP, I have been really impressed with some of the work that is going on, but also slightly dismayed that there are important issues relating to conservation grazing that are still being discussed and not resolved - that is where you can help GAP and each other.

I am interested in the long term future for conservation grazing, the involvement of the wider agricultural community in GAP and LGS, successes and failures and the practicalities on the ground, and I am sure that I will learn a lot from you all in the coming months and years.

From Juliette Sunderland

By the time you receive this issue of *GAP News* I will have been taken up my post at the GAP Office. I've been beavering behind the scenes for 4 weeks in August and September but took a break to get married so I'm just getting used to my new name! I have had an interest in the conservation/countryside/agriculture sector ever since I spent 2 weeks working on a farm in Herefordshire when I was 15. This was followed quite shortly after by work experience at The Royal Agricultural Society for England at Stoneleigh (I am a Warwickshire lass!). However, my initial career was spent in Product Management, Sales and Marketing for 9 years where I gained extensive experience in the corporate and voluntary sector. I recently decided to change career direction due to an ever increasing yearning to work with wildlife and the pull of job satisfaction over salary has meant 2 years of poverty (and a very understanding husband) whilst I retrain at Brackenhurst College. I am currently studying a Science Foundation Degree in Conservation & Countryside Management which finishes June 2005. I will be with GAP until at least mid December of this year.



4. Local Grazing Schemes by Bill Grayson

Report Aug 04

Big changes are afoot in the world of Local Grazing Schemes, as Claire has already described in her News from the

GAP Office. The appointment of Jim Swanson as GAP's first full-time LGS Co-ordinator gives additional opportunities, offering the chance to build a level of regionally-specific insight and expertise that has not been possible until now; insight and expertise that will be essential for helping develop LGSs that can be genuinely effective and sustainable. Jim is uniquely qualified to take up this challenge, his experience of running a grazing project in Surrey combined with his inside knowledge of farming communities, gained whilst working as a FWAG adviser, will provide invaluable experience for helping LGS projects in the five regions of England that he will be covering.

With Jim busying himself in the south, more of my time will be available to concentrate on the north of England, Wales, Scotland and N. Ireland. Unfortunately I still only have two days a week to devote to this but my attention should become a little more focussed in future.

Not that GAP has ever allowed itself to be constrained by a north-south divide. Recently, despite my northern remit, I have attended a number of meetings in the South, helping to support the work of the part-time LGS co-ordinators who have done such sterling work in establishing the foundations for GAP's regional network. It is always a rewarding experience for me to visit thriving LGS projects wherever they are situated; fortunately the enthusiasm and energy that drives them are not limited by cumbersome administrative boundaries.

The Woolhope Dome Project is an LGS based in one small area of Herefordshire. It was the focus for a meeting of the Worcestershire and Herefordshire Grassland Forum that I attended in June. Rob Havard is the project officer charged with organising grazing across a complex

network of sites, many of them small, isolated and privately owned, but all of them rich in wildlife. He provides the working link between the various project partners: Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, English Nature, and the owners of land and livestock in the Woolhope Dome area. Most of the Forum delegates were from the private sector (it was on a Saturday), representing a community of interest that is central to achieving many key targets for nature conservation across the two counties. Having discussed a number of issues and topics that impact directly on the practical delivery of conservation grazing during the morning indoor session, the participants were able to visit some of the sites that are already benefiting from the activities of this particular LGS during the afternoon. These benefits include provision of advice and support, as well as help with practical management such as fencing, public access and scrub clearance work. Lately site owners have also been able to call on a specialist grazing service since the Dome has acquired its own flock of Wiltshire Horn sheep, dedicated to providing conservation grazing. They have been purchased by the project but are cared for by one of the farmers already involved in the scheme. He moves the sheep around a selection of sites in the locality that would not otherwise be likely to attract graziers through the normal commercial channels and is responsible for their daily care. Funding for instating and running this work has come from Sheep WES, arising originally from a portion of sheep headage payments siphoned off (modulated) specifically for conservation benefit. The scheme is administered by English Nature on behalf of DEFRA. It provides an outstanding example of the kind of conservation benefits that national envelope initiatives have been able to offer in the last few years. Unfortunately, because this money comes from 'pillar one' for EU farm support measures, it

will not be available after this year once CAP Reform kicks in. However, Wales and Scotland have decided to retain national envelopes as an option under their own Single Payment Schemes and may yet be able to offer opportunities for supporting environmental grazing projects.

Funding for meeting the costs of the infra-structural works needed before any grazing can be delivered on the Woolhope Dome has come from another EU source, the Herefordshire Rivers Leader Project. This is one of the Rural Development Schemes specially targeted to help poorer regions. Here too reforms are in prospect and the UK share of the budget may be reduced after 2007, leading to a reduction in the support available to disadvantaged areas like the Dome.



Anyone who would like to find out more about the Woolhope Dome Project can contact Rob at:

rhavard@herefordwt.cix.co.uk

South Downs LGS: More recently I spoke at a similar meeting hosted by the South Downs LGS and organised by their project officer, Lynn H Hutchison at Plumpton College in West Sussex. This too was a large gathering of folk from across the board, conservation staff, farmers, smallholders and landowners who all wanted to discuss the issues that surround sustainable implementation of conservation grazing. The packed hall and the length of time during which questions were being fired from the floor testified to the interest and concern that this topic now arouses in SE England (the participants had come from other counties as well). Predictably, many of the issues raised concerned the potential impact of CAP reform.

Lynn timer has only been in post for a year but has already been able to demonstrate the benefits of taking a positive and proactive approach to grazing management. Working for the South Downs AONB, she has managed to bring together a widely based coalition of partners to support and work and benefit from it. Together they have been able to provide specialist conservation grazing on a number of valuable chalk grassland sites, using animals managed by private farmers and conservation bodies (e.g. Sussex Wildlife Trust). The breadth of approach and the degree of inclusion applied to resolving practical constraints is one of the particular strengths of this LGS. Lynn timer has also managed to forge strong links with the county agricultural college at Plumpton, resulting in the provision of specialist training courses for conservation grazing staff. Although the funding for the S Downs project was initially only on a very short-term basis (2 years of HLF money) its prospects are beginning to look brighter in the longer term now that the core stakeholders are seeing positive results. Lynn timer can be contacted for more information on lhutchison@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk

High Weald AONB, Kent: We always hoped that the momentum behind successful LGSs would be infectious, spreading ideas spontaneously beyond their initial starting point. I saw evidence of this whilst at a meeting on the High Weald in Kent just a bit north of the Downs, an event organised by Caroline Fitzgerald, project officer for the High Weald AONB. We visited a heathland site being grazed by the last active commoner in Ashdown Forest where the need to outwinter his Welsh Black cattle was causing localized damage on the heathland itself as well as limiting the number of animals available for the more beneficial summer grazing regime. However, a brilliant solution to this was achieved once it was realized that areas of

ungrazed chalk grassland on the nearby South Downs would provide ideal wintering for the High Weald cattle, affording benefits on both sides. All it needed to make this happen was the sharing of information amongst the local grazing network followed, once the idea had emerged, by the payment of a financial incentive to the grazier to allow him to transport his cattle to the Downs each autumn and visit them to make regular checks on their health and welfare. Organising this was a fairly straightforward matter between the two organisations managing the sites at either end of the journey: the Forestry Commission in Ashdown and the National Trust on the South Downs. For further information about heathland grazing systems in the High Weald, contact Caroline via c.fitzgerald@highweald.org.

The main purpose of the High Weald meeting was to demonstrate an important method for assessing grazing impact on heathland invertebrates and reptiles, led by Damian Offer and Mike Edwards, who devised the method. The full details of this are set out in English Nature Research Report no 497 which is available from English Nature Enquiry Service (tel. 01733 455100); it should be required reading for anyone managing lowland heathland with grazing livestock.

Welsh and Scottish GAPS: Important and exciting events are occurring elsewhere in the UK with both Wales and Scotland showing fresh interest in the LGS concept. It is clear by now that both countries need their own specialist GAP service, something that we are actively promoting within each of them. Following a brainstorming session at the offices of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, amongst representatives from the National Park, National Trust, NFU, FWAG, Brecknock Wildlife Trust, Welsh Pony Society and CCW it has

become abundantly clear that the time for concerted action is now. A follow up meeting was held at the end of August at ADAS Pwllpeiran at which several key stakeholders began to address a way forward, assessing the most appropriate types of conservation grazing system for Wales and the kind of structures that will be needed for their support and facilitation. The discussions in Scotland are less advanced but appear to be moving along similar lines.

Field meetings: Aside from all this activity generated directly by the LGS network I have also been involved in a good deal of other GAP work recently. It has been my privilege and pleasure to attend a couple of really interesting, well-organised and relevant GAP Field Meetings this summer. Our visit to the heathlands of the Vale of York in June is described elsewhere in this issue by Julian Small, the project's co-ordinator and our host for the day. This event gave me an opportunity to see at first hand an important LGS from one of my own regions, and a chance to meet some of the key individuals charged with making it work, something that is always really useful for improving the network of contacts and the store of information. I hope to be able to concentrate on LGS needs in the north more effectively now that southern England has its own full time co-ordinator.

The Field to Fork meeting in Lincolnshire in July lived up to expectations, demonstrating all the essential elements of the LGS feedback loop at a single sitting. We saw the live animals (Roger Wardle's traditional type Lincoln Reds) in their native haunts where they help to maintain valuable wildlife habitats in a commercial farm setting. We also observed the processing stages at a small abattoir and specialist butchers shop, where the proprietor, Mr Phipps, described the facilities needed and

demonstrated the key points by which sheep and cattle carcass quality can be classified. And finally we enjoyed the taste and succulence of the finished product at one of Lincolnshire's fine village inns. It was a truly memorable day that thoroughly reinforced all of our very worthwhile prejudices regarding the added value associated with traditional breeds and conservation grazing. Our thanks to all concerned with hosting it and to Claire for arranging everything.

CAP reform and its potential impact on conservation grazing is continuing to be a major focus of attention. You will all be relieved that I am not going to burden you with further swathes of advice and information in this edition of GAP News, assuming that all the relevant discussions between graziers and site managers are now well in hand. This topic has generated waves of questions, comment and concern, arriving by phone and email, sometimes threatening to dominate the working agenda entirely. The queries have been networked widely via Nibblers, GAP's email discussion forum, which has been a very effective means for allowing others, similarly placed, to increase their awareness of the implications and consider options for enhancing outcomes. The GAP team will be happy to try and assist with any queries and issues that arise from the negotiations between site managers and graziers. We would especially like to hear about examples where problems have been successfully resolved as these can be passed on to benefit others in similar circumstances.

Defra advice: Defra have just issued a useful update on the implementation of the reforms in England, entitled 'Single Payment Scheme; information for farmers and growers in England'. It provides clear summaries of the latest advice on rules about who can claim entitlements and the conditions that have to be met, indicating what landowners and tenants need to do

in order to establish entitlements according to the type of grazing agreement that exists between them. It also explains the cross-compliance rules and details of the measures by which the Single Payments Scheme will be administered, including the Rural Land Register. Copies can be obtained (quoting reference PB9937) from Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX; tel: 08459 556000; email: defra@iforcegroup.co. I expect that the other UK countries will be producing similar summaries in due course, if indeed they have not already done so.

At the same time farmers, graziers and site managers throughout the UK who keep their own livestock have been receiving information statements about their historic entitlements, listing headage payments that each holding received in the reference years (2000-02). There are 28 days in which to respond to these statements if they contain errors or if there are any special circumstances that have led to unrepresentatively low values. This includes membership of agri-environment schemes, a situation that will be especially prevalent in the conservation grazing sector and again is something that grazier and site manager should review together. This whole process of determining historic entitlements should really put CAP Reform at the centre of attention throughout the livestock sector in Britain.

Marketing products from environmental grazing schemes:

Lastly I have an exciting development to report from the marketing arena. This is that the Countryside Agency has let a contract to explore the possibilities for launching a 'Landscape Quality Mark', a new farm assurance scheme that will give market recognition to livestock managers who are providing significant environmental benefit. It follows on from

some of the ideas and experience gained in the course of running 'Eat the View' and should, regardless of the technical and administrative details of any scheme that eventually comes from it, help to improve our understanding of the marketing process and provide clearer insights into securing better advantage from it.

5. Report of GAP field meeting on 22nd June 2004 by Julian Small

Eighteen people from as far apart as Nottingham and Lindisfarne came together for a GAP field meeting hosted by the Tomorrow's Heathland Heritage, Vale of York Heathlands Project to visit Skipwith Common and Askham Bog, near York. This is an example of a Local Grazing Scheme (LGS) based on a grazing network approach, with the Project Officer acting as co-ordinator and facilitator in building and maintaining links between sites and graziers. The day's activities included seeing two active and successful grazing projects that are benefiting from the LGS project and discussing the ways in which cooperation between conservation bodies in the region are initiating exciting conservation grazing solutions. The potential impacts of the proposed Single Farm Payments were also discussed.



Skipwith Common is a 280ha lowland heathland SSSI/cSAC owned and managed by the Escrick Park Estate, formerly leased as a nature reserve to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. Grazing on the Common, as with so many lowland heaths, came to an end in the 1930's and in its darkest period in the early 1990's, about 95% of the area had been lost to scrub. David Braithwaite, of Bishop Burton College, gave a fascinating outline of how sheep grazing was re-introduced

from 1983 in two paddocks to control birch regeneration. Different breeds were trialled and it was on Skipwith Common that Hebridean sheep, then known as St. Kilda's, were identified as the most effective heathland conservation graziers and the breed most at home on the heaths.

Jon Atkinson, the Escrick Park Estate's shepherd presented to the group the management of the estate's 750-strong flock of mainly non-registered Hebrideans. Today's challenge is to replicate the management of the original 1983 paddocks over the whole of the 280ha Common. Grazing by Longhorn cattle and Exmoor ponies has also been introduced to Skipwith in order to help control *Molinia* and to add an additional light poaching element to the ecological processes operating on the Common. The owner of the cattle has undertaken the grazing primarily in order to access area payments. In the future scenario where Single Farm Payments are accessed by the Escrick Park Estate, the incentive for the cattle grazer may well be removed.

The afternoon visit was hosted by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust at Askham Bog nature reserve. Simon Hunt, the YWT nature reserves officer outlined the importance of this attractive reserve and also the Trust's move to building-up its own 'flying flock' of Hebridean sheep. The grazing stock of choice for Askham Bog is Exmoor ponies, due to their ability to cope with the often wet conditions and their ability to tackle problem species like rushes while leaving important species like Meadow Rue undisturbed.

Ann Poulsen, of the Yorkshire Exmoor Pony Trust, described the work of a 'flying herd' of ponies, particularly their grazing abilities, their relative cost-effectiveness, people-friendliness and the use of handled ponies to graze a series of small, often wet and inaccessible sites. The group enjoyed the sight of the herd

stallion and two six-week old foals whilst hearing about the particular features of the breed that make it such a useful animal for conservation grazing.

Discussion around these topics was wide-ranging and stimulating. Particular conclusions reached during the day included the potential beneficial effect of the Single Farm Payment in supporting conservation grazing in lowland situations, especially if received in conjunction with the proposed payments for using native stock under the Higher Level agri-environment scheme. Conservation grazing is a growth area in the north of England with a number of new local grazing schemes appearing on the scene in the last couple of years. Increasing the level of effective cooperation between conservation organisations and graziers, along with the detail of the eventual Single Farm Payment and agri-environment schemes, will be critical in ensuring the initiation and sustainability of these conservation grazing schemes.

Julian Small
Heathland Project Officer
English Nature, North & East Yorkshire Team.



Field meeting

One-Day Seminar - the Organic NNRS Group (ORGANNRS) in association with GAP. Wednesday 27th October 2004, 10.00am - 5.00pm at Gait Barrows National Nature Reserve (just south of Kendal).

Integrating Conservation Grazing Management on Separate NNRs Using Organic Standards

Objectives for the day:

This one-day participatory seminar aims to give the participants an opportunity to explore how to develop a conservation livestock system based on complementary grazing regimes that are organically certified.

There will be opportunities to question both the NNR managers and the Grazier about their perspectives on the long-term sustainability (environmental, social,

economic) of the system, which receives no special funding from conservation sources - it is maintained entirely on income generated by the livestock or their grazing activities.

There will also be an opportunity to discuss the organic weed control strategies particularly for thistles and ragwort, and animal Health and Welfare issues under extensive, conservation-led grazing regimes (rough winter grazing, difficult terrain).

Please register your interest in attending this course by e-mailing lois.p@efrc.com Tel: 01488 608898. Space is limited to 30 and an organic lunch will be provided so you need to receive confirmation that your booking has been accepted.

The site does have livestock so please follow DEFRA bio-security recommendations.

Please car share where-ever possible.



7. GAP Contacts

GAP CONTACTS:

1. For all general enquiries and to be put on the mailing list:

The GAP Office, c/o The Wildlife Trusts, The Kiln, Waterside, Mather Road, Newark, Nottinghamshire. NG24 1WT. Tel: 01636 670095. Fax: 01636 670001. E-mail: enquiries@grazinganimalsproject.info

Staffed by:

- Claire Weaver, GAP Coordinator. (3 days a week)
- Juliet Sutherland, GAP Assistant. (2 days a week)

- Sophie Lake, GAP Coordinator. (Full time).
Note, Sophie is out-posted to: The GAP Office, c/o Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5QP. Tel: 01929 400209. Fax: 01929 400210.
E-mail: sophie.lake@grazinganimalsproject.info

2. For Local Grazing Scheme Coordinators (LGS):

2.1. North-east, North-west and Yorkshire regions of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- Bill Grayson, Strathairlie, Carr Bank Road, Milnthorpe, Cumbria. LA7 7LE. Tel: 01524 761347. E-mail: billgrayson@farmersweekly.net

2.2. All southern England regions from West-midlands and East-midlands southwards:

- Jim Swanson, The GAP Office, c/o English Nature, Bronsil House, Eastnor, Nr Ledbury, Herefordshire, HR8 1EP. Tel: 01531 631344. Fax: 01531 638501. E-mail: jim.swanson@grazinganimalsproject.info

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GAP HAYRACK

A Brief Review of the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain and its Application to Extensive Conservation Grazing Schemes – by Sophie Lake and John Bacon

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru Welsh Assembly, Scottish Executive, Defra.

The Animal Health and Welfare Strategy for Great Britain was released in June with the broad aim of improving the health and welfare of animals and protecting society, the economy and environment against the impact of animal diseases. Five strategic outcomes are identified: (1) working in partnership; (2) promoting the benefits of animal health and welfare (prevention better than cure); (3) ensuring a clearer understanding of the costs and benefits of animal health and welfare practices; (4) understanding and accepting roles and responsibilities; (5) delivering and enforcing animal health and welfare standards effectively.

The strategy expands on each of these outcomes. In essence, it calls on all involved in animal welfare (including farmed livestock, companion and other animals, aquaculture, game and wildlife) to take responsibility - this includes vets, food chain businesses, consumers and interest groups in addition to producers. It also identifies reasons for intervention by government, but lists changes in practices by industry, stakeholders and individuals as the preferred route in ensuring high standards of animal health and welfare.

Delivering the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy in England: Implementation Plan 2004 Defra

The Implementation Plan for England outlines the work Government currently undertakes across a wide range of animal health and welfare issues. Current activities are placed in the context of the strategy and progress in the key areas is described. It also provides an update on the new initiatives unveiled in the Outline Strategy. For example it includes information on the control of TB, emergency preparedness, farm health planning, the veterinary surveillance strategy, the national scrapie plan and veterinary research.

The proposed new **Animal Welfare Bill** will be a key element to the Animal Health and Welfare Strategy in England, and will be adapted for Wales. The Animal Welfare Bill updates our long-standing but dated welfare legislation. In particular, it puts a 'duty of care' on all people keeping or responsible for animals to provide for their welfare needs (such provision already exists for farmed animals). It will enable effective action to be taken where a non-farmed animal (such as equines), although not currently suffering, are being kept in such a way that suffering will probably occur in the future. The Draft Bill was launched in July 2004, and the final consultation exercise has just been undertaken. The GAP Executive decided to submit a response to the final consultation for this Bill relevant to extensive conservation grazing schemes. This is copied in below.

The strategy is available in English and Welsh at:
www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/strategy/strategy.htm, the Implementation Plan at
www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/ahws/strategy/implement_plan.htm and hard copies of both
from Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX. Tel: 08459 556000. The
draft Welfare Bill can be reached from <http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/bill/>

GAP response to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA).
24 August 2004

Dear Committee,

Written evidence on the Government's draft Animal Welfare Bill.

I am writing to you as Chair of the Grazing Animals Project (GAP) a partnership of over 20 organisations with representatives from the major voluntary and statutory nature conservation organisations and from the related livestock industry. We welcome this opportunity to contribute to this consultation. Nothing in this submission overrides any individual submissions that any of these organisations may make to you.

This submission intends to make the committee aware of the objectives of conservation grazing and the special considerations in terms of welfare that may arise from these livestock systems.

The focus of GAP is to work closely with land managers to resolve problems arising in the grazing of nature conservation land and this has included the crucial issue of ensuring high standards of welfare for animals grazing wildlife sites. In 2001 GAP launched its "Guide to Animal Welfare in Nature Conservation Grazing" which was developed in association with various animal welfare organisations throughout the British Isles. Conservation land managers now widely follow the Code which recommends implementation of a risk assessment and is based on the 'five animal freedoms'. This has been widely recognised as instrumental in eliminating inappropriate livestock management on nature conservation sites.

The purpose of writing now is to raise your awareness of the following points related to extensive nature conservation grazing systems which are used to deliver Government targets on biodiversity, landscape and public access:

1. The extent of the nature conservation grazing sector.

The amount of land subject to grazing for wildlife objectives steadily increased during the last century. The land area further increased as various support measures were developed, notably through agri-environment schemes such as Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Stewardship Schemes. More recently the Government's implementation of Biodiversity Action Plans and the setting of Public Service Agreement targets for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves and other designated wildlife sites have given further impetus to the amount of land needing to be grazed for wildlife, landscape and public access objectives.

2. Current sourcing and management of livestock.

There are two primary sources of livestock - of equal importance - but which often overlap.

- Those provided and utilised within the livestock farming sector as part of standard farming practice. The welfare standards for these animals currently come under the farming livestock codes which we understand will be endorsed under the proposed Act.
- Those animals provided by, or made available to, conservation organisations for extensive grazing schemes on wildlife and countryside sites. These are increasingly animals derived from native adapted breeds with hardy attributes ideal for the grazing of lower quality herbage found on such sites. The welfare standards for these animals are now often set and derived from the GAP Code which takes account of the particular conditions found on such sites. The Code is judged not only to provide ‘best practice’ to as high a standard as the farm livestock codes, but just as importantly be more appropriate to the conditions prevailing on extensive grazing systems.

3. Future delivery of Biodiversity, PSA, landscape and public access targets by extensive grazing systems:

GAP has recently been involved in the debate about the need for further development and implementation of extensive grazing schemes if Government targets are to be fully implemented. GAP has therefore initiated re-convening of its Animal Welfare Working Group to consider and update its Conservation Welfare Code to take account of new issues that have arisen. For example:

- How best to manage the welfare of animals that are grazing large areas of land being proposed for restoration for public access, landscape and nature conservation.
- The development and selection of breeds and genetic lines for different grazing systems.
- To support and help maintain important attributes of our adapted and rarer livestock breeds by utilising them on grazings that maintain their characteristics.
- The importance of animal group/social group dynamics in free ranging systems. This would support the work of welfare organisations (e.g. NEWC and RSPCA) in investigating and trying to recommend management techniques that reduce or eliminate stress behaviour in domesticated animals (particularly equines).
- The distinction between wild and non-wild grazing animals and related animal welfare issues.
- The benefits or dis-benefits of using ‘introduced’ species and breeds of grazing animals.
- The utilisation of herbage by free roaming animals.

Crucially, grazing large or complex areas requires animals to make more choices for themselves than those grazing relatively confined or uniform areas such as a grass ley. As keepers of stock, giving animals more choices does not free us from responsibility, but rather, places an additional duty of care upon us to ensure that we consider all of their needs. It becomes of paramount importance that we develop individualised grazing *systems* that suit both the welfare of the animals and the particular conservation requirements of the site. The breed, background and management of animals on such sites all become important choices, and the system that works well for stock grazing a large grass, heath and woodland mosaic, is far removed from that which is suitable for a grass ley.

4. The draft Animal Welfare Bill and conservation grazing – a way forwards?

Having explored the issues above in the light of the Draft Bill we would ask the Committee to take account of the needs of conservation grazing systems. We suggest that the Bill allows for a Code of Conduct for 'extensive grazing systems' to be developed (in consultation with GAP) and adopted at a later date.

In the meantime we will continue our work through the GAP Conservation Working Group, which re-convenes for its first meeting on 30th September. The Working Group does include representatives from a wide range of organisations with an interest in animal welfare and extensive conservation grazing management – for example RSPCA, SSPCA, USPCA, NEWC, BBSRC, UFAW, Defra, Bristol School of Veterinary Science (Prof John Webster as the five freedoms author), NT, GAP organisations.

The work would initially be to update and expand GAP's Code, but with the longer term possibility of it forming the basis of a Code of Practice for 'extensive grazing systems' approved under the Act. This suggestion has been passed across the Defra representative on our Working Group (Graham Thurlow) who thought it was worthy of further consideration as a pragmatic and efficient use of an existing resource.

Yours sincerely

Footnote:

As mentioned in the letter above the first meeting of the re-convened GAP Welfare Working Group on extensive conservation grazing systems has been arranged for the 30th September. Matthew Oates, Sandie Tolhurst and I will be representing GAP. A report of the discussions will appear in the next Newsletter.

Agricultural News – Extracts from English Nature's June, July and August 'Agri-News' - Edited for GAP News by Richard Small

June 2004 Newsletter

The eligibility of orchards (including grazed orchards) for the single payment scheme

The EU Regulation on the Single Payment Scheme states that land used for permanent crops, including orchards, cannot be used to support a claim for the new Single Payment (SPS). This rule applies throughout the EU - it was not a UK decision.

Existing guidance from the Commission states that a land parcel containing trees will not be classed as a permanent crop, *provided that the normal agricultural activity can be carried on as though the trees were not there*. The current interpretation of this for existing schemes is that land with a tree density of less than 50 per hectare will qualify for payment.

The Commission's current guidance also allows for payments to be made in certain circumstances when the tree density exceeds 50 per hectare. Land in dual use, for example, *traditional grazed* orchards, may be considered as forage rather than orchard land subject to some conditions. Environmentally important sites may also be eligible for exemption. Defra are in discussion with the Commission regarding updating this guidance to apply to the new Environmental Stewardship scheme. In doing so they will need to consider what

tree density would be appropriate and acceptable to the Commission and announce this in advance of applications.

In considering this issue, it is important to identify two distinct types of orchard:

- **Traditional orchards** (typically those which are at least 25 years old) – These can be of great conservation value for both landscape and biodiversity. This has been recognised in the current Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS), which already protects a large number of such orchards by means of an annual area payment of about £250 per ha, along with one-off grants for capital works such as tree planting and pruning. Although CSS has now closed to new applications, similar arrangements are expected to apply under the Higher Level of the Environmental Stewardship Scheme (ESS) when this is introduced next year.
- **Redundant modern orchards** – These are unlikely to be of such high conservation value. Commercial apple growers who have found it difficult to secure contracts may feel they have little alternative but to grub up and claim the Single Payment. It is in keeping with the principles of CAP reform that these should be converted to other uses if this proves to be the case. Defra has recognised the potential wildlife value that these orchards can have however. Under the Entry Level section of the ESS there will be options that can be applied to those orchards that don't currently qualify for the CSS. Under the Organic Entry Level Scheme there will also be an option to apply for conversion payments on top fruit orchards. Further details will be made available shortly.

English Food and Farming Partnership

EFFP launched its strategy: *Collaborating for Profit*, on 4th May. EFFP is a product of the Curry Commission, has a very strong focus on the competitiveness agenda and did not see itself having a significant environmental remit, but English Nature worked with them on Environmental aspects of collaboration. Chapter 4 gives a snapshot and can be found on the web at:

www.effp.com/intradoc-cgi/idc.cgi_isapi.dll?IdcService=GET_DOC_PAGE&Action=GetTemplatePage&Page=REPORTS
(this is all one address with no spaces)

- 9% of farmers surveyed collaborate to deliver environmental goals (compared to 5% collaborating in production, 25% in marketing and 38% in purchasing). Some of these have used the environment to a marketing advantage.
- All farmers believe environmental regulation - such as water quality - will be more demanding in the future and 73% identified the possibility of working together to meet new standards if it could help reduce their administration. Dairy farmers were particularly interested in this potential.
- While many Farmer Controlled Businesses see environmental legislation as imposing costs, 27% have used environmental attributes to help their businesses and add value to their product.

Whole Farm Approach and Farm Advice

Defra are piloting a self-assessment questionnaire amongst farmers to assess its ability to provide data on a range of business activities to underpin the Department's Whole Farm Approach. Depending on the results of the pilot, the questionnaire or 'whole farm appraisal'

as it is more commonly called, will be used to provide Defra and its agencies with valuable farm-level information to allow better targeting of schemes, farm advice and enforcement activity.

The whole farm appraisal will initially concentrate on the statutory obligations on farmers, cross compliance standards and environmental regulation, but because of the importance of having robust datasets to link across, the appraisal won't be going 'live' until late 2005. Nevertheless, it should become an important part of the CAP Farm Advisory System from 2007, and it could be a critical element of cross-compliance implementation.

EN is very supportive of the Whole Farm Approach and the need for better targeted environmental information for advisory and enforcement purposes. EN is working closely with Defra's Farm Focus Division on the development of the whole farm appraisal, and the Whole Farm Approach more generally, and has recently been asked to chair a task group, which will include the Countryside Agency and possibly English Heritage, to consider the biodiversity, landscape and access data requirements of the whole farm appraisal.

More information on Defra's whole farm approach and the current pilot can found at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/sustain/wfa/default.htm>

Agricultural Waste Consultation: manure and slurry

In most circumstances, when manure and slurry is applied to land to make use of its fertiliser value in line with good agricultural practice, it is not considered to be controlled waste. However, manure and slurry may be considered to be controlled waste in certain circumstances, for example:

- Where the amount applied to land is excessive (i.e. beyond good agricultural practice) whether on or off the farm upon which it was produced; or
- Where it is exported from a farm for use on another farm; or
- Where it is mixed with other controlled wastes before spreading.

If manure or slurry is applied to land beyond good agricultural practice a farmer could be found guilty of disposing of waste in a manner likely to cause pollution. Where it is exported Defra intend this to be covered by an exemption from licensing, which will need to be registered with the Environment Agency.

For further information on the controls of agriculture waste, see: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/agriculture Defra and EA will be producing guidance for farmers in light of the forthcoming consultation.

New Livestock Policy Officer

Georgina Dobson has been appointed to the post of Livestock and Hill Farming Policy Officer, in the Agriculture Unit of EN's Terrestrial Wildlife Team. She will be based in London. Georgina has a policy background and has been involved in many of the agricultural and agri-environment policy debates and reviews with CPRE. She also comes from a livestock farming family that has made the shift from conventional dairy farming to extensive, traditional suckler beef supported by Countryside Stewardship. (*GAP Editors note: Georgina spent two days at a GAP staff meeting on 10/11th August and is keen to work closely with GAP on livestock issues*).

July 2004 Newsletter

Cross compliance

From next year all farm payments will be subject to cross compliance. This will cover both adherence to certain EU Directives (e.g. Birds and Habitats Directives) and standards of “Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition” based on an EU framework. Cross compliance standards will apply to all the farmland belonging to any farmer claiming the Single Farm Payment (SFP) next year.

In particular English Nature argued that cross compliance should focus on mitigating the negative environmental impacts of agriculture and ensuring that these are internalised into farm operations. Positive environmental delivery should continue to be rewarded and guided by agri-environment schemes. English Nature does not see the SFP as an environmental payment and continues to argue for the transfer of funds to the “Second Pillar” of the CAP.

Based on the consultation cross compliance is expected to require the following; this is based on the consultation document, and the actual standards will be confirmed later:

- Adherence to management plans/agreements on Natura 2000 sites
- From 2005, farmers/land managers will be expected to retain and follow the consolidated GAEC guidance on management of agricultural soils on their land.
- In accordance with guidance, farmers/land managers to draw up a simple risk-based Soil Management Plan (SMP) in 2006.
- Soil Management Plans to be implemented on farms from 2007.
- Compliance with existing controls to prevent damage through overgrazing and supplementary feeding.
- No removal or destruction of stonewalls without consent from the relevant authority.
- Trimming of hedgerows on the farm must not be carried out between 1 March and 31 July.
- Minor amendments to the existing set-aside rules to improve the delivery of environmental benefits (EN continues to argue for better controls to improve environmental delivery from set-aside).
- An option for set-aside land being put into 6-10m strips, subject to specific management restrictions and located along field margins adjacent to sensitive 'living' habitats including controlled water, wet ditches, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), woodland and hedges.
- A requirement to cut/manage land once every 5 years to prevent abandonment, with some kind of under-grazing regime being considered (though the practicalities of this are problematic).
- Compliance with the Heather and Grass Burning Regulations.
- A protective buffer strip alongside hedges and watercourses.
- Controls on conversion of permanent pasture (although ecologically important pasture should be covered already through the EIA Regulations).

Ragwort Code Launched 4th July

Alun Michael, as Minister for the Horse, launched Defra's "*Code of Practice on How to prevent the Spread of Ragwort*" at the Royal Show.

The Ragwort Control Act (2003) and Code was initially requested by the equine industry (notably the British Horse Society) in their endeavour to reduce the number of horse deaths caused by ragwort poisoning. During the drafting discussions they were made aware of, and have now fully accepted, the biodiversity value of ragwort. At the same time wildlife organisations have accepted the animal welfare requirement to try and prevent animals (notably horses and other grazing livestock) being poisoned by ragwort. The Code represents a delicate balance between these two important requirements. The Animal Welfare Bill currently being drafted by Defra and animal welfare organisations will give added weight to this issue later this year.

In brief the code covers the following:

- Legal: The Ragwort Control Act 2003 gives the Code evidential status in any proceedings taken under the Weeds Act 1959. This means that a failure to follow the Code is not an offence but non-compliance may be used as evidence in any legal action. Equally, owners/occupiers should be able to establish a defence if they can demonstrate that they have adopted control measures that comply with the Code.
- Species: The Code relates only to Common Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) in England. However, if 'the spirit' of the Code is followed then it may be deemed also to relate to Marsh Ragwort (*S. aquaticus*), Hoary Ragwort (*S. erucifolius*) or Oxford Ragwort (*S. squalidus*) where these present a poisoning risk. Rare ragwort species are specifically excluded from control.
- Aim: Clause 2 states the 'aim' of the Code as: "*To define the situations in which there is a likelihood of ragwort spreading to neighbouring land where it will then present an identifiable risk of ingestion by vulnerable animals, and to provide guidance on the most appropriate means of control, taking into account both animal welfare and environmental considerations*".
- Recognition of biodiversity interest: Clause 4 states: "*This Code does not seek to eradicate ragwort ... ragwort as a native plant is very important for wildlife in the UK ... it supports a wide variety of invertebrates and is a major source for many insects ... in many situations ragwort poses no threat to horses and other livestock ... however it is necessary to prevent its spread where this presents a high risk of poisoning horses and livestock or spreading to fields used for the production of forage ... a control policy should be put in place where a high or medium risk is identified ... Defra gives priority to investigating complaints where there is a risk of weeds spreading to land used for grazing horses or livestock (and) land used for forage production ...*"
- Responsibility for control: Clause 9 confirms that: "*Responsibility for control rests with the occupier of the land on which ragwort is growing*".
- Prevention: Clause 10 states that the most effective way to prevent spread is by good pasture management.

- Risk assessment: Clause 13 outlines guidelines for assessing the three risk categories: “ ... ragwort is present and flowering/seeding with 50m (high risk), 50-100m (medium risk), or more than 100m (low risk) of land used for grazing horses and other animals or land used for forage production.” There has been lengthy debate over these distances with conservation bodies seeking reduction in distances and the equine organisations seeking increases. In the end the Minister has decided.
- Categories of land: these are described in Appendix 4. Substantial safeguards for the interpretation of ‘risk’ on wildlife sites have been secured: “where land has a special designation, attracts support payments which place conditions on the way land is managed or has a specific biodiversity/wildlife interest no action to prevent the spread of ragwort should be taken without the approval of the competent authority.” It is expected that EN and Rural Development Service staff will be in the front-line of these consultations.
- Publications: various publications are listed in Appendix 8. EN publications may be helpful and include: *Ragwort Information Note – towards a ragwort management strategy*, 2003 (Enquiry Service); *A guide to animal welfare in nature conservation grazing*, 2001 (GAP, enquiries@grazinganimalsproject.info); *The Herbicide Handbook – guidance on the use of herbicides on nature conservation sites* www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/handbooks/upland.asp?id=7).

The Code is available on Defra’s website:
http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/weedsact/cop_ragwort.pdf



August 2004 Newsletter

Implementing CAP Reform in England

On the 22nd July the Secretary of State made the expected announcement on the implementation of various aspects of the 2003 CAP reforms in England. Of particular interest to EN were the decisions on cross compliance and modulation (to fund the new Environmental Stewardship). This announcement was of considerable importance to EN’s interests and there was much to welcome in the statement.

Overall the announcement:

- Confirms decisions on modulation assuring resources for the roll out of the Entry Level Scheme in England.
- Signals a strong commitment to a further shift in farm support in England towards paying for positive environmental management through agri-environment and rural development schemes.
- Introduces a number of welcome measures under cross compliance. This includes a decision to introduce a 2m buffer strip next to hedges.
- Draws a clear line between the baseline standards required through cross compliance and incentive led management through agri-environment schemes.

The text of the statement made by Margaret Beckett can be found on:
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/statements/mb040722.htm>

English Nature's press release in response to the statement: 'Bold step forward to deliver sustainable farming' can be found on <http://www.english-nature.org.uk/news/story.asp?ID=624>

European Commission's Proposals for Future of Rural Development in Europe

In July the European Commission published its formal proposals for the reform of the Rural Development Regulation (RDR) and the creation of a new European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). This is an important piece of draft legislation as the RDR, and in future the EAFRD, will provide the legal basis and funding for agri-environment and rural development schemes in England – the main tools for delivering core objectives, including the SSSI and Farmland Birds PSA targets.

The proposals substantially change the architecture of support for rural development in the EU and are structured around 3 Axes of Development: Competitiveness and restructuring of farming with at least 15% funding; Environment and land management with at least 25% funding; and wider rural development, emphasising local development strategies, collaboration and bottom-up approach, again with a minimum 15% spend.

There is a strong emphasis on integration and bottom-up delivery at local level. The environment is also integrated into the enhanced competitiveness and restructuring axis. This bottom-up approach to delivery, endorsed in the proposals, is likely to become very important in delivering catchment or landscape-scale environmental objectives where coherent delivery across a geographical area, rather than on individual sites or farms, becomes critical for success.

Over the next year the proposals will be discussed in the Council of Agricultural Ministers and there will be considerable opportunity to influence the final agreement. The three key issues are the allocation of funding to individual Member States and a bigger share of the budget for the UK; ensuring the framework of the legislation can meet our needs; and ensuring that the delivery structures in England are capable of effective implementation.

Shift from Wildlife Enhancement Scheme to Environmental Stewardship on SSSIs

The policy agreed 2 years ago between Defra and EN was that the Environmental Stewardship Scheme should, from 2005, be a main source of funding for management on eligible SSSIs, replacing over time the current role of the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES) on those sites. The main issues are:

- Delivery of the annual PSA targets set for SSSIs must remain the first priority for EN.
- Delivery on eligible SSSI should as far as possible be through HLS.
- EN wishes to have a lead advisory role in facilitating draft HLS agreements on land that contains or affects SSSI so that added value that can be brought to wildlife outcomes on SSSIs.
- EN will retain a residual use of WES to secure favourable condition on HLS-eligible SSSIs where HLS cannot be used (e.g. due to resource constraints).

Putting this policy into practice is an opportunity for the Rural Development Service (RDS) and EN to explore areas where value can be added to rural delivery through joint working processes that chimes well with the Government's new Rural Strategy.

Agri-environment scheme targeting – Defra national policy finally approved

How the Higher Level Scheme (HLS) component of Defra's new agri-environment scheme Environmental Stewardship will be targeted, what it will prioritise, and which Government targets it is expected to contribute to, has finally met with approval from Ministers. EN has been working closely with Defra in shaping this policy to ensure that it can deliver the appropriate biodiversity targets through the scheme.

Some significant late changes to the HLS targeting policy have included:

- The amalgamation of 'Top' and 'Additional' national priorities into 'National' priorities. This has greatly simplified what the HLS is prioritising and ensured that all of our key biodiversity objectives appropriate to the scheme are now national priorities.
- There is a general re-focus on delivery of Public Service Agreements (PSA) targets, specifically those on sustainable development, SSSIs, farmland birds and sustainable farming and food. RDS Regions must show evidence that they are contributing sufficiently to these national targets.
- Traditional orchards are now a key national priority within the landscape objective (at least for 2005). We are very supportive of this in light of the current uncertainty surrounding orchards and the Single Farm Payment.
- The national targeting strategy will be revisited in 1 year. We will need to be prepared for this and so feedback over the coming months will be crucial from all engaged in this process.



Notes from Nibblers

The following pieces have been extracted from the Nibblers News Group – for details of joining Nibblers contact Bill Grayson

Bovine TB in deer and other wildlife

TB spreading through wildlife Source: FWi 16 July 2004

By Andrew Watts

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS has spread further into wildlife populations than was previously thought, according to the findings of a newly published report.

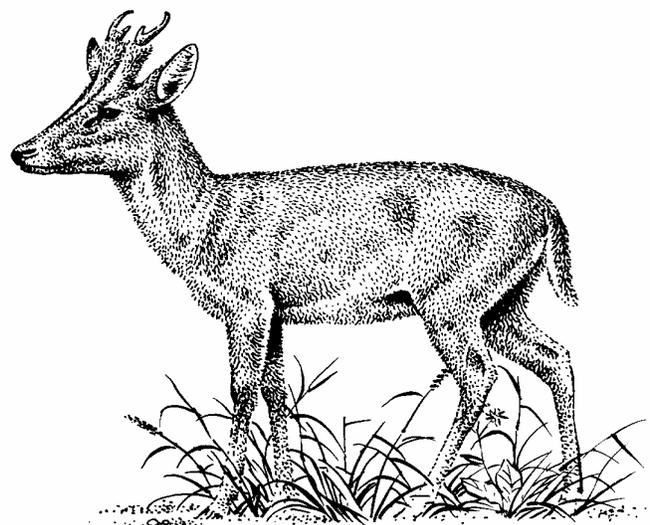
The report - The Risk to Cattle from Wildlife Species Other Than Badgers in Areas of High Herd Breakdown Risk - was published last week (Jul 9) amid allegations that its findings were so controversial DEFRA had chosen to release it quietly.

Carried out by the Central Science Laboratory, the study revealed that "deer could pose a significant risk" of spreading bovine TB to cattle and that other wildlife species were infected.

The CSL's four-year study in seven English counties is the largest systematic survey for *M. bovis* ever carried out in the UK.

It involved investigating nearly 5000 carcasses and, while prevalence of the disease was greater in badgers, risks posed by deer should no longer be overlooked, it stated.

The report estimated the UK deer population - including farmed deer - to be between 1.25m and 2.6m, compared with about 300,000 badgers.



Between 1% and 15% (12,500-390,000) of the deer could be infected with bovine TB.

While 4.4% of the 504 fallow deer tested displayed symptoms, 16% of whole carcasses available tested positive.

The report also noted that deer were particularly vulnerable to bovine TB and often shared pasture, feed and water troughs with cattle.

The report was critical of the government, its predecessor, and DEFRA and its predecessor MAFF.

The ministry knew of the high susceptibility of deer to TB 10 years ago but only recently had DEFRA taken action.

MAFF left two herds of deer on the same premises under movement restrictions for 11 years after bovine TB was found in a red deer hind.

MAFF declined to examine the carcasses of the deer when they were culled after foot-and-mouth in 2001, but owners' private tests revealed likely bovine TB in more than 30% of stock, it said.

The National Federation of Badger Groups' chief executive Elaine King said it was strange the report had been posted on the DEFRA website late with no press release or briefing.

"It's now quite clear that bovine TB is endemic in wildlife across the UK," said Dr King.

The study confirmed the presence of TB in certain species and showed it had spread to the yellow-necked mouse, wood mouse, shrew, polecat, muntjac and stoat.



CLA warns of forthcoming loss of grazing livestock – by Andrew Watts

CLA warning over grazing decline Source: FWi 06 July 2004

The Country Land and Business Association has warned that the landscape could change dramatically because of the declining state of the grazing livestock sector in England and Wales.

In a report - A future for livestock grazing in England and Wales - the CLA outlines the important function played by grazing livestock in maintaining some of the country's favourite areas of beauty and most memorable vistas.

The report, launched at the Royal Show at Stoneleigh, Warks, highlights the role of grazing livestock in supporting many species of wildlife and as a sustainable method of land use.

It also covers the role of livestock in supporting small rural economies by way of local markets, livestock markets and promoting the countryside as a favoured tourist destination.

But the CLA says grazing livestock is "a sector in peril" and warns that the introduction of the decoupled single farm payment could trigger further cuts in animal numbers.

The report says there needs to be a more co-ordinated approach towards policy for the farming of grazed livestock to ensure the sector can thrive and become profitable.

The vision put forward in the report by the CLA is that there should be an accessible network of abattoirs, livestock markets and processing facilities.

This would allow farmers to develop a wide range of products and markets and increase the value added, it says.

The report calls for a closer relationship between government and the industry with a more streamlined approach to bureaucracy to reduce the regulatory burden on producers.

Finally, the document also suggests there should be a sensible and time-managed approach to introducing the right-to-roam so there is a minimal impact on livestock management.

Water troughs – by Nick Owen

Urban fringe SSSI with high public access and experience of vandalism to troughs? That sounds like Epsom Common. We use standard steel farm troughs on concrete "H" bases. Let into the ground next to the bases and set into concrete are four ground anchors made of painted concrete reinforcing rods. These hook over the rim of the trough and stop it being moved. The ballcock box lid has a hasp and staple welded to it so it can be padlocked and there is galvanised weldmesh welded into it to form a bottom, to stop anyone reaching up to the ballcock from underneath. The supply pipe is conventional alkathene armoured with 4" road sign pole with a lump of road sign ground anchor welded across the top to meet the ballcock box. This protects the pipe and the coupling. The bottom of the 4" pipe is concreted into the ground.

Painted silver (except for the ground anchors which are green, as we ran out of silver), the trough looks like a standard farm trough from a distance - something we thought was important. Stick a structure on a SSSI and if it looks commonplace, it has less of a visual impact. The other factor was budget (there wasn't one). We used scrap steel and did the fabrication and welding ourselves - tacked it together with a mig welder and finish-welded it with a stick welder as stick welds are less brittle.

So far the mods have kept the troughs safe for several years, after an initial spate of vandalism. Damage included smashed connections, destroyed ballcocks and boxes, smashed stopcock housings, troughs overturned and broken "H" bases.

Stopcock housings are concrete with cast iron lids. Make sure the installing contractor sets these flush to the ground. They seem more vulnerable if this is not done. Even better, if you can get hold of the big cast-iron housings for use in the highway, these are more robust and difficult to open without a special tool. More expensive though.

We did similar "Blue Petering" with above-ground battery/energizer housing. This sits on two big posts and steel housing and is wired "live" with the fence. So is the padlock. Housing in a past life was an old galvanised central heating header tank which one of our volunteers got from a neighbour's skip.

Hope this helps.

Lower Mole Countryside Management Project.

01372 743 783



Preventing water trough vandalism – by David Hodd

A trough full of water is difficult to nick – it's too heavy. The vandalism problems I have encountered with galvanised troughs are:

1. The cover plate for the float valve (like a loo cistern). Most designs have a place for putting a padlock on, but our friends have no need to tamper with the lock as they can peel open the plate sufficiently to get at the insides. The float valve is then bent to ensure the tap doesn't switch off. Possible solutions include: get a metalworker to change the plate for a more substantial grade, and perhaps design one which can't be bent back. Use a float arm that won't bend (may require metalworker again for bespoke job -order replacements at same time, and careful plumbing), and finally consider surfacing area of trough (or improving drainage) so that when our friends do succeed, cattle don't have to visit a quagmire.

2. Pipe supply. I have only occasionally encountered this one. Our friends will go for the connectors but could damage the pipe directly. The only solution I have for this would be to box the pipe in to ground level.

3. There is often a stopcock or meter near some troughs. These should be sited at least 20 feet away and be unobtrusive. This one is of particular importance as they can switch the supply off (= thirsty cattle).

4. Never use a bowser. If it is kept on site a whole range of vandalism /theft options open up. If the grazier uses it to just top up a trough the trough will get low enough to knock over / nick etc.

If the site is a real problem, consider not grazing during the school holidays (and certainly don't put stock on during or just before the holidays) - that way you will have time to make repairs. Likewise install out of holiday time.

Finally get the local high school involved in the site's maintenance. You may not get the vandals helping you, but you could well get their mate or their little sister.

Cheers

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New publications

The Land Use Policy Group report on "The Integration of Agricultural, Forestry and Biodiversity Conservation Policies with Flood Management in England and Wales" is now available on the LUPG website <http://www.lupg.org.uk/pubs/>



“Just a Tick ... Tick Bites and Lyme Disease” is the title of an excellent pamphlet published by the New Forest District Council in association with the Forestry Commission, which deals with the recognition of the creature, prevention of attack, what to do if bitten, signs and symptoms of Lyme Disease (which may be passed on to humans by infected ticks) and the life cycle of the deer tick. This may be found on www.nfdc.gov.uk/media/adobe/ACFDD1D.pdf

Addition to GAP’s Breed Profiles Handbook – Fell Pony Profile:

We have been able to add a profile for the Fell Pony. This has been written for us by David Murray who we would like to thank. David has been very active recently singing the praises of the Fell Pony and he has pulled together a good review of the breed’s attributes. The profile is being added to the Handbook.

Contact for a copy: The GAP Office.

Writing was funded by English Nature through the GAP Project.

New websites:

Try the new English Nature website for information about National Nature Reserves, other protected sites and areas of semi-natural habitats: www.natureonthemap.org.uk

Conferences:

4th GAP/FACT Conference: in case you missed the last newsletter, this is to confirm that our 4th GAP/FACT biennial Conference is to be held on Tuesday 28th to Thursday 30th June 2005. It will be held at Bangor University with a large part of the conference being site’s visits in north-west Wales. The main theme will be to discuss the delivery of multiple objectives on wildlife and countryside sites.

Grazelots

At the same time as submitting your Grazelots advert to GAP News we suggest you also submit it direct to Ecolots for additional coverage. Please see Ecolots contact below.

For those unfamiliar to this new definition of the classified ads this is your opportunity to buy, sell or exchange stock, machinery, hay, grazing, services and anything else needed to aid your grazing programme.

To place a ‘grazelot’ in the GAP Newsletter please provide the following information to the editor by the submission date:

- ◆ brief description of the item(s) available for sale, exchange or wanted

- ◆ when they are available or wanted
- ◆ your name, organisation and all contact information
- ◆ any financial information that may be relevant

Please note that the Grazing Animals Project can take no responsibility for the accuracy of the information supplied by the advertisers.

"Wanted up to six Exmoor ponies, preferably geldings, to graze heathland site Normandy. Contact William Ardley (eve)00 33 233 546 326 e-mail william.ardley@cg50.fr

The free ECO-LOTS advertising service:

Contact: Through the Web site at: WWW.ecolots.co.uk or direct (and for the 'flyer') to Beacon Forestry, at Broombush House, Venlaw High Road Peebles. EH45 8RL. Tel: 01721 724788. Fax: 01721 724798. E-mail: mb@ecolots.co.uk.

Please continue to use and publicise the Eco-Lots advertising service. Log on to the web-site - WWW.ecolots.co.uk - the more people who use it the more valuable the service will become - and it's still free!



Malcolm Emery – Site Manager, English Nature

Gunfight at the O.K. Corral?

From the field

Cryptosporidium and the Threat to Grazing – by Tim Beech

There is at least one National Nature Reserve upon which grazing was prohibited by the water company that owned the land, because of fears that the stock would pollute the watercourse. Thirty years after prohibition was lifted the site is still classified as ‘unfavourable’ (though improving).

There are many organisms and chemicals that may contaminate water. Of increasing prominence amongst these is the parasitic protozoan *Cryptosporidium parvum*. It was not until the early years of the last century that this microscopic animal was first identified and not until the 1970’s that it was shown to be a cause of gastroenteritis. Unlike many other causes of this condition, it is not host specific, that is to say it infects many mammals, including man, and some birds.

A careful inspection of more or less any grazed site is likely to find *Cryptosporidium*.

The life cycle of the organism is complex and fascinating but not really relevant in this short piece. It is enough to say that it enters a host in the stage of its cycle where it is known as an oocyst. It completes its life cycle within the single host (unlike related parasites such as *Toxoplasma*) whereupon it is voided into the environment via the faeces. The oocysts are very tough and can survive most environments for a very long time; aridity and heat being its main natural enemies.

Tens of millions of oocysts are shed by infected animals but very few are needed to produce Cryptosporidiosis. In most livestock the disease is confined to the young. In humans all ages are infected. In people with a healthy immune system the illness is generally self-limiting (there is no effective means of eradicating infection as yet), unpleasant but not life threatening – it simply goes away with time. In people whose immune system is in some way compromised (e.g. those infected with HIV, transplant patients and certain cancer sufferers, the very old and the very young) the situation is far more serious; symptoms persist and are often fatal. These symptoms are the usual ones for gastroenteritis, including severe diarrhoea, dehydration, nausea, vomiting and stomach ache; indeed they are clinically indistinguishable from many other causative agents, e.g. salmonella, and may only be detected by faecal examination.

A careful inspection of more or less any grazed site is likely to find *Cryptosporidium*. The question that needs to be asked is – at what level does this become a threat?

There are many ways of transmitting Cryptosporidiosis, as many as there are ways of faecal contamination. Of foremost importance to grazing projects, however, is water-borne transmission wherein, in some way, protozoa contaminate the water source. The greatest concentration of the parasite is found around birthing areas (either indoor or out) or in

intensive systems. The latter is unlikely to be of concern to most conservationists; the former may be, though in most outdoor situations, the probability should be much reduced.

From a limited search of the literature ('Google' offers over 200,000 sites) it would seem that the majority of outbreaks in humans, where water contamination has been found to be the source, come from surface water supplies. There is a single reference found to a groundwater source, however, the conclusions drawn from this occurrence are not conclusive; certainly it cannot be said, categorically, that leaching through the stratum from stock grazing was the cause. When any particular cause has been proposed it has been from a more intensive husbandry system than is normally to be found in conservation grazing. Run off from housed cattle or intensively reared pigs have been cited; no example of free-ranging sheep, goats or ponies has been found to be the cause.

The removal of *Cryptosporidium* from contaminated water is very difficult. Most water treatment works rely solely on chlorination as the means of purification particularly if the source is from underground aquifers. Chlorination is no protection against *Cryptosporidium*. Probably the best method of eradication is by filtration provided a fine enough filter is used (the protozoan is between four to ten microns, which is very small). However the cost of providing all treatment plants with filters is said to be prohibitive. Ozone and ammonia treatments have also been found to be effective but problematical.

It can be readily imagined that *Cryptosporidium* is of great and growing concern to water companies and may, therefore, be a threat to the grazing of sites that come under their suzerainty. Certainly in a world in which the word 'risk' is increasingly used and misunderstood the matter is serious. *Cryptosporidium* exists more or less anywhere animals (wild or domestic) are to be found but is far more concentrated in the young and where animals are kept 'close-packed'. Its route to the human water supply needs, obviously, to be made as difficult as possible (it is highly unlikely to penetrate hundreds of feet of natural chalk filter, for example) and informed analysis of the scientific data is necessary in order to prevent it joining the long line of 'health scares' that permeate the media.

Pitfalls and pratfalls of freelance livestock management – by Stephen P.B. West

This is a piece put forward as a banner for all independent and small-time conservation graziers to muster to. You thought you were the first person ever to make those mistakes! You thought it was just you that was being persecuted by the dreaded fence-cutters and sheep worriers! You thought it was just your livestock that choose bank holidays and the middle of dark, wet, wintry nights to a) get loose, b) give birth, c) suffer injuries, d) drop dead! You probably also thought that no-one else in the whole of the conservation and farming worlds realised that graziers do not get wealthy by grazing NNR's, SSSI's and other nature reserves. You thought you were battling against the massed ranks of officialdom on your own; the hydra-headed opposition looking fierce with its many faces of Defra, Trading Standards, Vets, Slaughterhouses, Animal Rights Activists, Vegetarians, General Public.

Well I am writing to tell you that you are not alone! There are others out there who believe in what we are doing, who suffer the same slings and arrows, who battle long hours for little or no financial return, and who look over the livestock in the meadows and scrublands and see the essential rightness.

(By the way did you realise that GM trials are underway to breed domesticated ruminants with four ears to accommodate the extra ear tag requirements?). Instead of that, perhaps they should put some effort into breeding stinging nettles to grow like their relatives - elm. Good food value don't ya know. El'mentary my dear (Crick and Watson).

How many times have we heard, "he's only playing with them", or "this land has never been grazed" or "***** off Eddie Grundy"? How often have you slumped into your office chair after a routine 12 hour day to open another welcome set of missives from our dear, beloved government controllers and thought you had entered another dimension where dyslexic crossword compilers have taken over the world. ("Your starter for ten is to explain the following:- SAPS, SCPS, SPS, EPS, HLCA, BSE, FMD. Come on, come on!).

The other unbridled joy of being freelance is the abundance of landlords there are. We have fifteen! Is that a record?

Then, of course, there's ragwort, hemlock, laburnum, grass clippings and the like.

So a few words to the wise. Dexters love sallow bark, Berkshire boar finishers love elm *and* oak bark, and Beulahs love bramble. Water supplies always fail at the furthest point from civilisation and in the worst weather. It's better to have a bucket-trained or better still halter-trained animal in a group than a brand new fence around them, and assume nothing,at all, ever.



May I suggest that other small scale conservation graziers and freelancers set up our own self-help e-group. We can then commiserate with each other if nothing else.

Now where the flip is that movement book?

Europaes Land Management Services (E.L.M.S.)
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Summary Notes

'Advisory Group' meeting @ Low Gillerthwaite Field Study Centre
Wed 5th – Fri 7th May 2004
Rachel Yanik and Gareth Browning

Vision: "to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people, relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology"

These notes provide a summary of feedback from the 'advisory group' who attended the 'Wild Ennerdale' meeting at Low Gillerthwaite in early May. The group was invited together by the Wild Ennerdale partners: Forestry Commission (FC), National Trust (NT) & United Utilities (UU), to provide valuable advice on the partnership's plans to enable a broader range of natural processes to operate in the valley. This will, over time, enable the evolution of Ennerdale as a 'wild' place.

The group was welcomed on Wednesday evening with brief introductions by each partner and a presentation on the background to 'Wild Ennerdale' – how and why the partnership was formed and a brief overview of current and future plans for land management in the valley.

On Thursday morning, the group set off early for a full day walking in the valley. A route had been planned to incorporate the many different features of the valley (e.g. the lake, rivers, woodland, farmland, forestry, archaeology & pilot site for cattle) and to give people an impression of the scale of the landscape and opportunities which exist for 'Wild Ennerdale'.

Key issues for discussion during the walk were highlighted, under four main headings:

Natural Processes

What natural processes are operating at present and how well are they doing?

What natural processes are missing?

How do natural processes relate to people's sense of 'wild'?

Introduction of Cattle

Is it feasible to introduce cattle to this area?

How might cattle interact with, and facilitate natural processes?

Woodland Management

How might woodland regeneration and expansion happen?

What would be the impacts of woodland expansion?

Intervention

Should we (as land managers) be agreeing acceptable limits to change?

At what stage may we need to intervene? (E.g. habitat loss & impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), 'kick start' woodland expansion through planting)

What levels of control/intervention may be required?

Friday morning provided opportunity for a summary session on Wild Ennerdale based on feedback from the walk the previous day and proposed plans for the future. Sir Martin Holdgate, former director of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), provided valuable clarity to the close of the proceedings.

A summary of comments/feedback from the group over the three days is provided below:

Vision

- Seems reasonable, but with the understanding that ‘to allow’ includes facilitation of processes in the early stage. Large herbivore introduction & management is part of the set-up process.
- Using term ‘allow’ suggests no need to do anything, but intervention may well be required at first.
- Key thing in discussions on vision is to set out reasons for actions

Grazing & Large Herbivores

A summary sheet was provided to outline proposals for the introduction of large herbivores (cattle) in Ennerdale. Comments were as follows:

- Pilot grazing area mixture of wooded and non-wooded, some valley bottom land but probably overall poor vegetation. Possibilities of then extending cattle into ‘middle forest’. Central valley should be cleared substantially and reverted to grazing. (a) It is the richest and hence preferred grazing land: (b) it forms the pattern expected in a Lake District valley: (c) it provides a better link to the valley head. Introduce groups of broadleaves but otherwise largely leave it to the animals to sort out whether it remains open or not.
- Nature of grazing: short-term, roe deer already present, red deer moving in; some sheep. Possibility of grazing trial. Longer term aim for continued reduction in sheep (role will be taken by deer) and allow cattle to build up: cattle initially managed in traditional way but possible move to more free-range, naturalistic approach. Initially considering Galloways or Highlands. Which more likely to create problems with walkers/dogs? Galloways not horned, but possibly the horns on highlands might give people the impression that they could be dangerous, so less likely to interfere.
- Cattle have different impacts to sheep & deer. Also consider other animals such as ponies and wild pigs?
- Cattle provide visible link to local community through people working the land. If management of cattle reduced over longer term (‘wild’ herd), risk of excluding community link.
- Continued monitoring of cattle would be essential and could be role for community in future.
- It was not clear if any improvement of the in-bye fields towards the Lake is still carried out. In principle this should be reduced or stopped, but in the short term this area may become important as part of reserve land for the cattle trial, so doing anything with this is quite low priority.
- Monitoring of livestock movements and vegetation change will be crucial. If there are no fixed outcomes, monitoring will need to be widespread to detect change wherever it occurs. Monitoring can justify expansion of pilot area in future but must be comprehensive and be undertaken from the start.

- Good baseline data should be backed up by information for the public (e.g. fixed point photography – demonstrates visual benefits)
- Ennerdale is not an ‘island’ – would be useful to know stock movements/numbers and encroachment from neighbouring valleys
- Some financial support will be required for initial set up costs & ongoing monitoring and welfare of cattle, though decisions will be based on what we need in interest of ‘wild Ennerdale’, not funding driven.
- Introduction of large herbivores provides a ‘missing’ natural process – whether it works or not is part of that natural process and cannot be determined in advance.
- We are making a range of value judgements anyway as to the starting point of wild Ennerdale, so why not add cattle
- Happy that the cattle will survive over winter. Can't expect farmer to pay all the set-up costs.
- Should be attractive to Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

Woodland & Forest

A summary sheet was provided to outline proposals for allowing the forest to develop, focusing on the expansion of native broadleaf woodland and current/future forestry activity. Comments were as follows:

- The forest, and in particular what should be done about the conifers, needs consideration. There might be a long-term aim to eliminate all non-natives, but can this really be justified in view of the fact that these have, for many people, become part of the valley. Even if a long-term aim, there would be problems of adopting it in the short term. The current clearfells are unsightly in parts and could be causing problems for the river, so moves towards more use of “continuous cover” approaches are generally desirable. However with such a large forest some small-scale clear felling may still have a place in creating variety of structures in the lower valley.
- Invasion and increase of broadleaves is desirable. In the longer term this should be by natural regeneration but limited planting to establish “ecological potential” is likely to be needed in some areas in the short term.
- What should be done with the spruce at upper end of valley? Shift broadleaves from bottom to top of the valley. But do we want to keep dense woodland at the top of the valley? How practical is Spruce control? Spruce lower down will always be a significant component of the valley. In some places mature spruce may be encouraged in suitable soils and locations.
- At valley head, if partners ‘do nothing’, could end up like 5 years ago through conifers seeding. Appreciate the need to intervene & plant broadleaves – ‘kick start’ the process. Expand native broadleaves and reduce conifers, then take ‘step back’ and see what happens.
- Where planting is undertaken, trees are taken from local source (in Ennerdale where there is excessive broadleaf regeneration) or further a field if not available in Ennerdale, but kept local to Cumbria (e.g. Juniper)
- Are we initially just introducing a seed source (through planting), or are we going one step further with the need to suppress conifer regeneration?
- Get balance right in first instance, then consider dynamics – do something to deter spruce and introduce some enclosures. Worst time at present for spruce regeneration – lots of bare ground and seeds regenerate freely. Grazing would help address problem combined with introduction of broadleaf seed source through planting.

- Measures to control spruce: mature trees now being felled at head of valley (removes seed source), spruce can be felled at 3-5 metres high. Some broadleaves already becoming established in same area.
- Removal of conifer results in loss of habitat for red squirrel & better habitat for Greys. Conflict of interests?
- Soils, geology & geomorphology will help determine what tree cover & where.
- Partners accept spruce will never be completely removed from valley (nor do we wish to), but rather that we seek to achieve a better balance between spruce & mixed woodland. Ennerdale will not develop as 'typical England' as it's not in that state now – has features more like Canada. Some conifer cover is good and adds to sense of 'wild'.
- No consistent rationale – can't have non-native species in ecologically 'wild' place.
- Partners are unashamedly using two different definitions of 'wild' – cultural & ecological.
- Inconsistency can be positive – Wild Ennerdale is about people just as much as ecology. If it looks good (landscape) then just as important as ecological aspects.
- Need to be pragmatic about funding resources and hence what we embark on – can tolerate some spruce, as complete removal would be too costly and unrealistic.

River & Fisheries

- *The River Liza is a major asset. There are probably few (if any) rivers in England which still show such uncontrolled dynamism. This should be treasured and a key test of all work in the upper valley must be that it does not interfere with channel dynamics or water quality. Major channel shift in a storm event in 1999.*
- River Liza is a fantastic feature, which has been underestimated in past. Ennerdale Lake not that well known – more scientific data required.
- Forest design plans in past have ignored River Liza. The pH entering the lake has been rising steadily. General improvement over last 5 years.
- Fish pass between lake and river Ehen not operating effectively. When salmon do travel up river (usually in flood event), potential exists for them to migrate towards head of valley. Deciduous woodland may stabilise bank – more so than at present. Salmon need loose gravel for spawning, but if river too dynamic & volatile eggs get destroyed.
- Access of fish into tributaries sometimes made difficult due to culverts.
- Lots of fine sediment must be entering river due to nature of soil, steep gradient of adjacent land and present scale of forestry operations.
- During flood events, river runs cloudy at first then clear within relatively short time, therefore shift of material must happen quickly.
- Lots of fine sediment also trapped in ditches alongside forest track. Not sure how much of this is entering river. Forest tracks also contribute as sediment source into river. Drainage channels should generally be allowed to fill/be deliberately blocked.
- Not clear how serious potential *Cryptosporidium* problems might be if more stock and particularly cattle were kept in the valley. UU and EA views are therefore critical. EA are happy with the uncontrolled nature of the Liza: debris dams and fallen timber in the river. Low pH events still happen and may release aluminium, which is present in the catchment. Char populations in the Lake are a concern: however trout and salmon in the river are doing reasonably well.
- Mostly been focusing on head of valley – partners also interested in increasing 'wet woodland' habitats around lakeshore – more towards west end of valley.

Man-made structures

- Forest track identified as visually intrusive in landscape. Discussions have focused on removal of track in places. Very angular lines exist at present, emphasised by clear felling.
- Removal or abandonment? Would abandonment have less impact?
- As mature trees are removed from head of valley, no plans to harvest in future & thus no need for wide (compact) track built for timber wagons.
- Tracks could be allowed to blend more with landscape, with less use and encroachment of vegetation (may need a 'kick start'). Access would remain for walkers & cyclists and would need to consider access to Blacksail Youth Hostel & for farm vehicles.
- Present fence boundaries mark boundary between forest and open fell – erected to prevent stock entering forest. Would hope to remove in future here possible. Keep perspectives between visual impact of a fence line compared to large scale clear fell operations.

Monitoring

- **Monitoring.** A useful distinction was drawn between monitoring that is needed for management purposes – which might be quite limited – and what might be desirable from a research point of view, or to demonstrate what the approach is delivering. Minimum requirements are likely to be:
 - good quality vegetation maps/aerial photographs, supplemented by ordinary photos, to show how the habitats are developing in gross terms.
 - very good records of what management has been done, where, when and why (historical data);
 - records of grazing numbers, including estimates of deer, in different areas;
 - regular visitor/stakeholder analysis – since there is a strong people justification behind the current project.
 - financial monitoring – not just for use within the project but to help others interested in similar approaches.
- Moving more to the “research” type monitoring, there would be benefits in a mixture of some sort of systematic “grid” set of records, but also of more target recording in areas that are expected to show most change/or when novel management is introduced. Thus the response of the vegetation to cattle grazing could be of interest. The way the cattle behave would itself be a worthwhile study.
- Map natural processes
- Important to see how much research type monitoring can be done by students / university groups, both for financial and educational gain.
- Need a portfolio of 3-4 month projects, which target MSc students.
- Important not to ‘over monitor’. Establish what is critical & not too much cost/resource input on trying to monitor everything.
- Paleo-ecological pollen & sediment analysis would be valuable - possibility of lake core being studied, data to show altitude levels of forest.
- SSSI's & Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) – will English Nature (EN) want to protect initial assets for special designations, or will change be allowed? SSSI boundaries are lines on maps – as felling continues and large herbivores are introduced, benefits to be gained in one area may well compensate for those lost/impacted upon in another.

- If we take the present framework of policy as rigid for the next 200 years, will destroy whole process of change. Don't let present directives be too restrictive – plenty of heather (for example) exists elsewhere!
- One key reason for monitoring – historical interest for future generations.

General

- Before we do anything, must ask ourselves (challenge) whether we need to and for what purpose? Don't do anything without good reason.
- Part of whole process is that we don't really know what will happen, but unique opportunity exists to allow nature a greater hand in shaping the future landscape of Ennerdale.
- Identifying natural processes as 'good' or 'bad' would be a useful exercise.
- Human processes are important too, and rather than 'good' & 'bad' natural processes, focus more on 'acceptable limits'.
- A 'measure of success' for 'Wild Ennerdale' would be that visually intrusive features are reduced.
- Some natural processes may appear detrimental in the short term but take the long term view and all the time assessing what is happening and whether it is impacting something important and we need to intervene.
- Is bracken spread just a transient habitat that may only last 50 years. Ennerdale a demonstration of allowing more dynamic processes
- Need a principle regarding introduced species, what do we try and kill or remove. It needs to be clear. Need to control those that we know will significantly affect the desired outcome. Where not controlling them will negate what we are trying to achieve.
- Need to agree limits to various processes – e.g. set limits on area of bracken and number of visitors
- Opportunity for support from University students, could help keep costs down.
- What do we count as 'native' species – how far back in time do we go?
- If management policy changes, it is important to have fundamental guiding principles. Such principles can be drawn out over the long term and within that will be short-term work plans. Guiding principles are:
 - Be prepared to take risks
 - Keep the river as a high quality, hydrologically pristine example
 - Favour broadleaves over Spruce
 - Reduce sheep generally
 - Favour large herbivores (deer & cattle)
 - Monitor & assess changes
 - Don't intervene except to deliver principles
- Important to think what is right for Ennerdale and not specific to woodland (for example) – be idiosyncratic and experimental, will break up homogeneity.
- Essence of being wild is not having preconceptions about what the limits of habitat change are.

