Implications of a Nutrition Driven Food Policy for Land Use and the Rural Environment

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Project Motivation

- Increasing concern about non-communicable diseases (cancer, diabetes, cardio- and cerebro-vascular disease) and their link to diet
- Recognition of the need for reform of agriculture to produce healthy but competitive products (White Paper, Curry, DoH)

Project Motivation (contd)

- Opportunity for policy reform given the ongoing decoupling of agricultural support from production incentives
- The growing interest of consumers in healthy eating
- Recommendations to eat more fruit and vegetables and less saturated fat

Project Objective

- Examine the potential for the development of sustainable UK food chains able to deliver healthy foods at prices consumers are willing to pay and, in particular:
  - develop novel plant and animal production systems that deliver healthier foods;

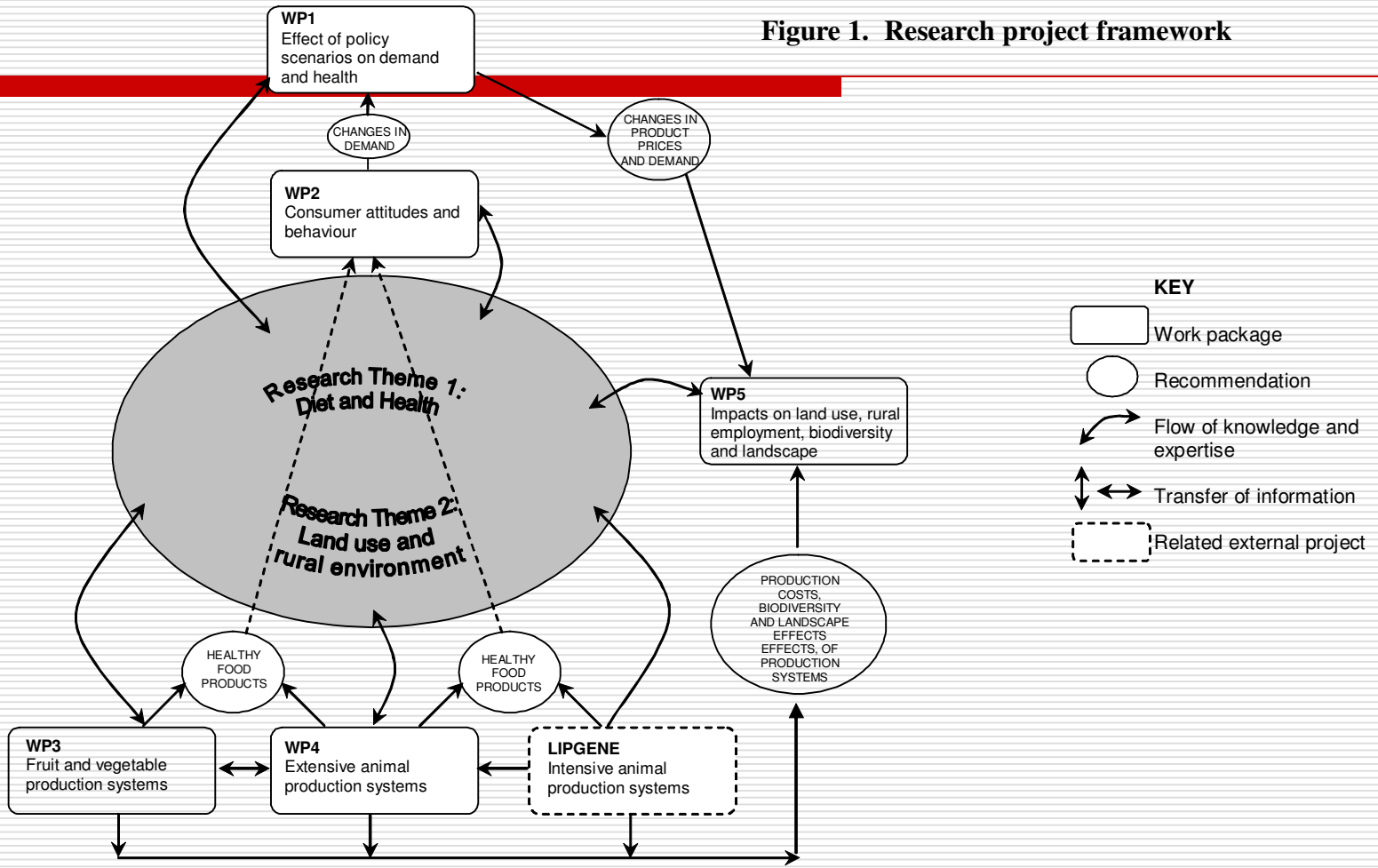
Project Objective (contd)

- assess the impacts of the novel production systems on biodiversity and landscape as well as land use, rural employment and incomes;
- assess policy choices to foster desired change;
- assess the impact on diet and health

Project Organisation

- Five interlinked ‘workpackages’ organised around two highly interdisciplinary research themes—
  - diet and health
  - land use and the rural environment

Figure 1. Research project framework



WP3: Production and nutritional assessment of phytochemical-rich soft fruit and lettuce

- Assessment of a new generation of plastic films on lettuce and soft fruit for beneficial phytochemical content
- Assessment of potential health benefits
- Impact of post-harvest supply chain and comparison with imports
- Estimates of the impact on production costs

WP4: Assessment of extensive ruminant production systems and nutritional consequences

- Effect of forage species diversity on unsaturated fatty acids in ruminant food products
- Nutritional assessment of the consequences for human health
- Estimates of the impact on production costs

LIPGENE: Assessment of intensive animal production systems and nutritional consequences

- Research undertaken by Reading RELU WP4 researchers in an ongoing EU funded project
- Information will feed into this project

(nutritional composition, health impact, production costs)

WP2: Consumer attitudes and behaviour

- Assess consumer attitudes and behaviour with respect to healthy eating and their willingness to pay for specific healthy food products
- Assess the effectiveness of healthy eating messages and other policy interventions for specific socio-economic groups

WP1 Effect of Policy Scenarios on Demand and Health

- Economic modelling of consumer demand
- Impact of following healthy eating recommendations
- Effect on consumption of new healthy food products
- Policy experiments—impact on demand
- Assessment of health impacts

WP5: Land use change, landscape, biodiversity, the rural environment and economy

- Using production cost estimates from WP3, WP4 and LIPGENE
- Using demand estimates and effects of policy experiments from WP1and WP2
- Modelling the effects on land use and employment
- Assessing attitudes to landscape change

Stakeholder Platform (SHP)

- A SHP will be established to
  - Maintain policy relevance (fine-tuning of methods and scenarios)
  - Aid in dissemination to a non-scientific audience