



**Research Councils UK**  
**RURAL ECONOMY AND LAND USE (RELU)**  
**PROGRAMME**

**RELU Rural Futures Workshop**  
**Royal Institution, London, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2004**

**Introduction**

There should be considerable value early on in the RELU Programme in establishing some consensus on the long term prospects for rural economies and land use in the UK, including key areas of risk and uncertainty. This could help provide

- common understandings between disciplines and between projects of major social, environmental and technological challenges;
- clarification of key choices facing society in the future;
- a basis on which to discuss some of the long-term implications of RELU with stakeholders.

There is a good deal of work going on in the broad field of futures studies of relevance to RELU, being conducted by Think Tanks and academic researchers. The Office of Science and Technology and the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit have advised on how scientific advice and policy making should take account of risk and uncertainty. Various government departments, including Defra, are running Horizon Scanning programmes. Recent work has also been done by the Countryside Agency and the Foresight Panel for the Food Chain (see Annex). Much of this work is within the 20-year time horizon for RELU research, though some seeks to look further.

**Objective**

To introduce RELU researchers to current futures work in the rural field. The aim will be to inform researchers of the significance of this work, review its use in public and commercial organisations, and consider the relevance of the results for RELU research.

**Audience**

- RELU Principal Investigators
- Key stakeholders
- Members of the Strategic Advisory Committee of the RELU Programme

**Possible Outputs**

- A briefing note for researchers and practitioners on key societal challenges and choices for the future of rural economy and land use.
- Special issue of a rural/futures journal

## **PROGRAMME**

Coffee and Registration (09.00-09.30)

### **Session 1 (0930-1200) Futures Research and its Uses in Government and Corporate Planning**

Chair: *Sir Howard Newby*

Introduction: *Professor Philip Lowe*

Recent Developments in Rural Futures Research

*Professor Neil Ward, Centre for Rural Economy, University of Newcastle upon Tyne*

The Use of Horizon Scanning in Government

*Rohit Tolwar and Rupert Lewis, Defra Horizon Scanning Programme*

Scenarios Building and Horizon Scanning in Corporate Planning

*Professor James Curran, Scottish Environment Protection Agency*

Discussant1: Futures Research and its Uses in Government and Corporate Planning

*Margaret Clark, Countryside Agency*

Discussion

Lunch (1200-1300)

### **Session 2 (1300-1500) Futures Research: Themes and Methodologies**

Chair: *Professor Maggie Gill*

The Future of Rural Living

*Melanie Howard, Future Foundation*

Future Landscapes: Modelling Concepts, Approaches and Tools

*Dr Robin Matthews, Leader Landscape Change Programme, Macaulay Institute*

The Future Food Consumer

*Dr Michelle Harrison, Henley Centre*

Exotic Species and Diseases: Anticipating Risks; Avoiding Crises?

*Professor Jeff Waage, Imperial College*

Tea (1500-1515)

### **Session 3 (1515-1645) Facilitated Discussion**

Chair: *Professor Maggie Gill*

Identifying issues of relevance for RELU research

Discussant 2	An International Perspective	<i>Graham Harris</i>
Discussant 3	Rural Futures and Uncertainty	<i>Professor Stuart Lane</i>
Discussant 4	Constructions of Time	<i>Dr Martin Phillips</i>

Discussion

Summing up (1630-1645) *Professor Philip Lowe*

Close (1645)

### **ANNEX: Future Studies of Relevance to RELU**

OST : Food Chain and Crops for Industry

Countryside Agency: Tomorrow's Countryside – 2020 vision

Defra Horizon Scanning Studies:

- Biosecurity Scoping Study
- Trends in the Management and Detection of Biosecurity Risks
- Future Landscapes
- Rural Futures: Meeting People's Future Needs
- Stabilisation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Potential Impacts of Future Energy Policy in UK Biodiversity

Defra/Department of Health:

- Future of the UK Food Chain

MAFF/Defra

- Scenario-based strategic planning for the future of food, farming and rural areas (Henley)

Defra

- The Future of Rural Services in England