

Co-ordinating landscape-scale sustainable activity: farm advisers as facilitators?

A Sustainable Intensification Platform workshop hosted by landbridge and AHDB

Date: Wednesday 4th October 2017

Location: Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board, Stoneleigh Park, CV8 2TL

Some desirable environmental benefits such as protecting natural resources or enhancing biodiversity can only be achieved through activities that cover large geographical areas. These require cooperation and coordination between land managers. Collaboration between farmers is not new. Machinery rings and abstractor groups already exist to help share resources between farms. As well as physical coordination of farming activities, farmers can collaborate to their mutual advantage through information-sharing and learning. One aim of the Sustainable Intensification Platform (SIP) is to explore when coordination is necessary to achieve environmental, economic and social goals and how this can be encouraged. But in moving beyond the farm to develop landscape-scale interventions, there is a need for collaboration between farmers but also, in some cases, some form of coordination of this activity. Who is facilitating this type of activity? Many advisers have considerable experience of coordinating landscape-scale activity such as through Commons Agreements. How can we draw on this existing expertise in in guiding future landscape-scale co-operation? This workshop will focus on the potential role of advisers as key facilitators/intermediaries of landscape-scale activity for sustainable intensification.

Workshop aims

- To reflect on the key issues and challenges of coordinating sustainable activity beyond the level of the farm
- To explore how decision-support tools, including a new landscape typology tool, can be used to support landscape-scale activity
- To consider what role advisers can play in coordinating landscape-scale activity and how to do this effectively
- To generate some practical recommendations to feature in a policy note targeting advisory professionals

Audience

This event will be of interest to advisory professionals including land agents, ecologists, and environmental consultants working across the public, private and third sectors.

Workshop Programme

10:00-10:30	Registration and coffee
10:30-10:40	Welcome and introduction – Chair (Susannah Bolton, Knowledge Exchange Director, AHDB)
Session 1: Beyond the farm: Collaboration and coordination	
10:40-11:10	Keynote – Carol Morris (University of Nottingham) addressing the benefits and barriers to collaboration (drawing upon the findings from the SIP baseline survey and case study work)
11:10-11:15	Q&A
11:15-12:00	Facilitated small group discussion exploring the key issues and challenges of coordinating activity beyond the farm including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What SI goals can only be achieved through coordinated activity? • What are the benefits of such activities? • What are the social and economic barriers and how can these be overcome?
12:00-12:30	Feedback of key findings from each table and opportunity for open discussion
12:30-13:15	Lunch
Session 2: Tools to support landscape-scale activity: introducing the landscape typology tool	
13:15-13:45	Amy Thomas (CEH) presents on the landscape typology tool and its potential for helping to support landscape-scale decision-making
13:45-14:30	Small group demonstrations (via laptop on each table) to test out the tool and discussion reflecting on the potential application of the tool and other approaches in coordinating landscape-scale activity
14:30-14:45	Feedback
Session 3: Encouraging and influencing landscape-level activity: drawing on adviser experience and expertise for better coordination	
14:45-15:45	Chloe Palmer (farming and environment adviser and Director of Trent Rivers Trust) to chair open panel discussion including Prysor Williams (Bangor) and Ross Cherington (WRT) to explore the potential role of advisers as key facilitators/intermediaries of landscape-scale activity for sustainable intensification and to reflect on some of the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the practicalities involved in coordinating such activity? E.g. inter-professional working, negotiating multiple stakeholder interests etc. • How do you coordinate this effectively? • What scale can farmers self-organise? • What scale can be covered by a coordination in any given location? • What are the challenges of coordination? • What are the benefits – personally, professionally etc.
15:45-16:00	Concluding remarks and next steps - Chair
16:00	Close