



## Rural Economy and Land Use Programme

*Harnessing the social and natural sciences for sustainable rural development*

# RELU NEWS

October-December 2005

### Researchers turn to the handling of animal and plant diseases

An excellent response to the RELU Third Call for proposals meant that 99 concept notes involving integrated contributions from natural and social scientists were submitted on Animal and Plant Diseases and Rural Sustainable Development. These notes are currently being assessed.

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/vacancies/thirdcall.htm>

### RELU joins DFID delegation to China

Sponsored by the UK Department for International Development and the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, RELU Director Prof Philip Lowe and project leaders Angela Karp and Jon Finch were part of a UK delegation to China, led by Sir Gordon Conway, DFID's Chief Scientist. Discussions were held with Chinese officials and scientists on the scope for research collaboration and exchange on appropriate science and technology for sustainable rural development. Considerable interest was expressed in learning from how RELU research is helping understand the socio-economic contexts in which environmental constraints and technological options are understood and acted upon. We would like to hear from any projects keen to host a short visit from interested Chinese scientists.

[http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/RELUgoesEast\\_rev.pdf](http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/RELUgoesEast_rev.pdf)

### Wild mammals and the human food chain

The Mammal Society's Autumn symposium, supported by RELU, hosted 150 delegates to consider the latest scientific evidence and ideas on the interactions between wild mammals and the human food chain. The symposium was organised by RELU grant-holder Piran White and included papers from RELU researchers on the costs to agriculture of the depredations of wild mammals, novel ways in which humans and wild animals interact through the food chain and infectious diseases at the wildlife-livestock interface.

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/mammalsummary.pdf>

### Sustaining upland landscapes: major project launch

On 27 February, two major RELU research projects 'Managing Uncertainty in Dynamic Socio-Environmental Systems' and 'A Landscape-scale Analysis of the Sustainability of Hill Farming', are holding a joint project launch hosted by the Moors for the Future Partnership in the Peak District.

Information and booking details are available at:

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/RELUmoorslaunchflyer.pdf>

### RELU debates CAP reform with Brussels

In December Director Philip Lowe and project leader Michael Winter debated with European Commission official Peter Berkowitz the importance of CAP reform to rural development. There was agreement that farming made a significant contribution in maintaining landscapes and cultural heritage and provided many desirable environmental services on which a thriving rural economy would depend. Mr Berkowitz, who has played a leading role in designing the Agenda 2000 and Mid-Term Review reforms of the CAP, explained how the new European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development would address some of the issues raised.

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/RELUgoestoBrussels.pdf>

## RELU Publications

**'Interdisciplinary environmental research and biopesticides'**. Paper by Wyn Grant to major US conference:  
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/biopesticides/papers/reluphil.doc>

Final report from the scoping study **'Data resources for rural sustainability research'**:  
<http://reludata.csl.gov.uk/index.cfm>

**'Response to Defra's consultation on its Heather and Grass Burning Code'** from Leeds-based scoping study:  
<http://www.env.leeds.ac.uk/~mreed/sustainableuplands/RELU%20project%20response.doc>

**'Holistic approaches to understanding diffuse land management issues'**. Report from the capacity building project led by Louise Heathwaite, University of Lancaster:  
<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cre/publish/discussionpapers/pdfs/discussionpaper2.pdf>

**'Good practice guide for participatory research with farmers'**, from RELU scoping study project led by Fergus Lyon, University of Middlesex:  
<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/www/ceedr/ESRC/brefing%20note.pdf>

## RELU People

**Ekram Azim** recently joined the RELU team 'Warmwater Fish Production as a Niche Production and Market Diversification Strategy' as a funded Marie Curie Fellow. He will work on activated suspension techniques, investigating microbial flocs as fish food and how they affect water quality and fish welfare. Contact Dr Azim at [meua1@stir.ac.uk](mailto:meua1@stir.ac.uk).

**Maggie Gill** has been appointed to the post of Chief Scientific Adviser for the Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department. Prof Gill is currently director of the Macaulay Land Use Research Institute in Aberdeen and is a member of the RELU Strategic Advisory Committee.

**Sir Howard Newby** has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West of England. Sir Howard, currently chief executive of HEFCE, chairs the RELU Strategic Advisory Committee.

