



Rural Economy and Land Use Programme

Harnessing the social and natural sciences for sustainable rural development

RELU NEWS

January-March 2006

New wave of RELU research

2006 sees the launch of a new wave of major RELU research projects. The projects are addressing three major themes: The Integration of Land and Water Use; the Environmental Basis of Rural Development; and Economic and Social Interactions with the Rural Environment.

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/People&RuralEnvironmentRP.htm>

New national stakeholder forum to advise RELU research

Coinciding with its new wave of research, RELU has inaugurated a second national stakeholder forum. The "People and the Rural Environment Forum" brings together key individuals from public, commercial and voluntary organisations to help disseminate and evaluate the implications of RELU research.

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/about/PREforum.htm>

Enabling knowledge exchange

RELU held its annual conference "Enabling Knowledge Exchange" in Manchester, January 2006. The conference explored approaches and mechanisms for exchanging information and knowledge between research, policy and practice, as well as the role of knowledge brokers in this exchange.

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/Janconf06/confjan2006.htm>

RELU hosts the UK Rural Economy and Land Use debates

As part of the ESRC's Social Science Week and the British Association's National Science Week 2006, RELU invited opinion leaders, policy makers, academics and members of the general public to the Royal Academy of Engineering, London to discuss four key issues facing the rural economy: Energy crops running out of steam?; Were any lessons learned from Foot and Mouth?; Farming's no place for wildlife; and Food miles - should we be buying food from abroad? Reports and presentations from the debates are available at:

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/sciweek06.htm>

Complementing the national debates, the RELU Sustainable Uplands team at Leeds University offered secondary and higher education groups a series of guided walks in the Peak District National Park entitled "Moorland Perspectives", involving discussions with researchers and land managers about how land is managed. See:

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/about/CI/events/SSW/review/>

Researching the Uplands: RELU projects launched in the Peak District

February 2006 saw the joint launch of two major RELU projects (based at the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds) exploring land use and landscape change in the Peak District National Park. Stakeholders and local people attended the launch to hear about the projects and how they are helping to explore what policy changes mean for the future of rural livelihoods and the countryside. For information on the projects visit:

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/SecondCall/Armsworth.htm>

<http://www.env.leeds.ac.uk/~mreed/sustainableuplands/>

Pesticide risks in our food

The RELU-RISK project “Integration of Social and Natural Sciences to Develop Improved Tools for Assessing and Managing Food Chain Risks Affecting the Rural Economy” held two workshops in March on pesticide residues in food. The workshops, held in London, involved stakeholders, members of the public and consumer organisations and explored attendees’ views on pesticides, and processes for their participation in risk management. A second series of workshops will be held on 30 June.

<http://www.relu-risk.org.uk>.

Working together across disciplines with the British Academy

With financial support from the British Academy, the Warwick University based RELU research team are organising a one day workshop at the British Academy, Friday 12 May, on “Working Together Across Disciplines: Challenges for the Natural and Social Sciences”. Participants from RELU research teams are welcome. For more information contact w.p.grant@warwick.ac.uk

Life Cycle Assessment for Food Chains

Dr Llorenç Milà i Canals, from the RELU research team “Comparative Assessment of Environmental, Community and Nutritional Impacts of Consuming Vegetables Produced Locally and Overseas”, is organising an expert workshop at the University of Surrey 12-13 June 2006 on indicators for soil quality and biodiversity in Life Cycle Analysis. For more information see:

<http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/ias/workshops/DEFNBEST/cfp.php>

