

Relu news



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1 Relu programme helped to shape Foresight approach

The Government's Foresight project has produced an evidence base which will help Government and other policy makers understand whether existing land use patterns and practice are fit for the future. They worked with leading experts to assemble the latest evidence and research on land use topics and to investigate the land use challenges that the UK could face over the next 50 years. Relu made a major contribution to this process and Project Leader for Foresight Land Use Futures Nicola O'Connor said: "The Relu Programme had a significant influence over the approach to Foresight's Land Use Futures Project. Their multidisciplinary approach to exploring the impact of land use and management change is crucial to helping to create a more sustainable land system." <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/LandUse/lufoutputs.asp>

2 OECD Secretary launches water resource report

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Secretary General Angel Gurría launched a report by Joe Morris and colleagues from Relu's *Integrated Management of Floodplains* project: 'Sustainable Management of Water Resources in Agriculture', prepared for the OECD. The report is available together with supporting material at http://www.oecd.org/document/55/0,3343,en_2649_37401_44753399_1_1_1_1,00.html

3 Innovative approach to research impact

"Telling stories: Accounting for knowledge exchange" describes an imaginative new approach to impact assessment being trialled by Relu. It describes how the programme is investigating the nature of stakeholder involvement, and how we can show that different types of involvement have different outcomes for the research itself and the impact it has. Read it on line <http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/briefings/Brif10.pdf> or email relu@ncl.ac.uk for hard copies.

4 Future of the uplands debated

The Future of the Uplands was debated at a joint Relu/Northern Rural Network seminar in Mickleton, County Durham, with over 90 delegates and contributions from the Commission for Rural Communities, Natural England, farmers and other practitioners. The paperback edition of "Drivers of Environmental Change in the Uplands", edited by Aletta Bonn, Tim Allott, Klaus Hubacek and Jon Stewart and featuring contributions from Relu researchers was launched at the event. <http://www.northernruralnetwork.co.uk/archive/future-of-the-uplands>

5 Can floodplains deliver everything we need from them?

From the 1930s to the 1970s we thought that floodplains were there to produce more food and many were drained to increase production. Since the 1980s environmental concerns have come to the fore and now flood management is rising up the agenda. How can we balance these competing demands? A new policy and practice note from Relu "Integrated Management of Floodplains" takes a look at how an ecosystem services approach can help policymakers to understand the synergy and trade-offs that have to be made. Download it from <http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/policy%20and%20practice%20notes/Morris/Morris.pdf> or email relu@ncl.ac.uk for hard copies.

6 Paying for upland ecosystem services

Would a new system of incentives, based on the provision of ecosystem services, mean a more secure future for the uplands in the UK and for the vital functions that they perform, such as carbon storage and supplying water to towns and cities? This is what researchers from Relu's *Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change* are proposing in the programme's Policy Practice Note No 14. It may be downloaded from <http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/policy%20and%20practice%20notes/Reed%20Hubacek/PPN14.pdf> or contact relu@ncl.ac.uk for hard copies. The project is also organising a two day event "Carbon in the Uplands: threats and opportunities, in partnership with the Heather Trust, the Southern Upland Partnership and the Crichton Carbon Centre, on 20 and 21 April 2010 in Moffat. For details see <http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/2010/CarbonintheUplands.pdf>

7 Relu sponsors CAP reform briefing

Relu has sponsored a short course on CAP reform for local and regional policy makers and stakeholders from the private and third sectors. Held under the auspices of the Northern Rural Network, speakers included Elena Saraceno, Bureau of European Policy Advisers, Prof Allan Buckwell, Country Land and Business Association, John Goddard of the Land Use Foresight Expert Panel, Alistair Johnson of Defra and David Harvey of Newcastle University.

8 New Relu/LWEC projects to launch in July

A 4th call of joint research projects, on the theme of "Adapting Rural Living and Land Use to Environmental Change" will be launched jointly by Relu and the Living With Environmental Change programme on 1 July. Details of the successful projects will be announced in the next Relu newsletter.

9 Crossing political and biological science

Relu researchers Justin Greaves and Wyn Grant explore their experience of interdisciplinarity in 'Crossing the Interdisciplinary Divide: Political Science and Biological Science' in *Political Studies*, Vol 58, No 2, pp. 320-339. This is a special issue to celebrate 60 years of the Political Studies Association. <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/123277175/abstract>

10 Shadows and fellows celebrate success

Vital links between research and practice were forged in 2009 by Relu's work shadowing and visiting fellowship schemes. For the Commission for Rural Communities, hosting a Relu shadow led to "Improved analytical capabilities within the strategic analysis team in relation to GIS network analysis", while for Deputy Chief Veterinary Officer Alick Simmonds it provided a "challenge to the accepted ways of working from an alternative perspective". Visiting fellowships also brought benefits. Spending time with the Understanding Environmental Controversies project helped Kathryn Monk from the Environment Agency Wales to increase her "awareness and understanding of these areas of current science developments" while Frances Rowe found her fellowship "brought new knowledge into One North East [Development Agency] that will enhance my role as Strategic Policy Manager." A report is now available on the Relu website at

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/gettinginvolved/WorkShadowsVisitingFellows/Work%20Shadow%20report%202009.doc>.

11 Are we doing enough to safeguard gardens and woodland from *Phytophthora*?

The UK Government's response to pathogens threatening familiar garden and woodland plants has been rapid and efficient, but more still needs to be done to combat the invasion of *Phytophthora ramorum* (the cause of the disease sometimes known as Sudden Oak Death) and its distant relative *Phytophthora kernoviae*, according to researchers from Imperial College London. And the public could be playing a more positive role. The team is working on the Relu project *Lessons from Dutch elm disease in assessing the threat from Sudden Oak Death*. They have carried out a wide-ranging review of the UK Government's response to the threat, and their report has now been published <http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/Animal%20and%20Plant%20Disease/Phytophthora.html>

12 NERC study highlights benefits of Relu approach

The Natural Environment Research Council has just published a scoping study on the Valuation of Natural Resources. The report notes numerous references to Relu and says that during interviews with leading researchers "The Relu programme was referred to as an exemplar that demonstrated success in the integration of the sciences in ways that appealed to a range of stakeholders including policymakers."

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/research/themes/tap/reports/2008/documents/scoping-study2.pdf>

13 Environment Agency draws on flooding research

The report "The Costs of the 2007 Floods" published by the Environment Agency (EA) was produced by Joe Morris, following on from Relu's *Integrated Management of Floodplains* project, in collaboration with Middlesex University Flood Hazard Research Centre, and included results from the survey of agricultural impacts. The report, executive summary and press release may be found at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/news/115038.aspx>. The team is now working on updates to guidance on flood risk appraisal. This important manual is sponsored by EA and Defra and will be used to support appraisals of flood risk management investment.

14 The rural dimension at Science Week event

During Science Week a joint seminar held by the Commission for Rural Communities, the UK Data Archive and Relu's Data Support Service looked at how existing survey data can be used to produce evidence about rural households and rural communities, to inform wider public policy and service delivery debates. Chaired by Michael Winter, presentations and discussion ranged over the availability of suitable data, how it can be analysed for the benefit of rural areas and how this knowledge can be applied. Read a report of the day at

[http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/2010/CRCnewsRelu%20\(2\).doc](http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/2010/CRCnewsRelu%20(2).doc)

15 Researcher presents tick research in Montpellier

Sarah Randolph from the Relu Assessing and Communicating Animal Disease Risks for Countryside Users project will be presenting their research at a special Relu session at the Emerging Vector-borne Diseases in a Changing European Environment project in May 2010 at Le Corum, Montpellier. <http://international-conference2010.eden-fp6project.net/>

16 Bovine TB under scrutiny

Relu researchers are organising two one-day workshops on Bovine Tuberculosis at Warwick: Bovine Tuberculosis: People, Politics and Culture on 12 May and "Bovine Tuberculosis: Hosts, Pathogens and Environments" on 13 May. They are also running poster sessions on both days and will welcome any PhD students wanting to feature their research in this area. See

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/whri/newsandevents> for more information. BLOG?

17 Researchers contribute to debates on future of Scottish agriculture

Relu projects have been contributing extensively to current debates about Scottish agriculture. James Bullock who is leading the Relu project *Improving the Success of Agri Environment Schemes* <http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/SecondCall/Bullock.htm> and Mark Reed who co leads *Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change* took part in a seminar with the Scottish Government in February. Mark Reed and colleagues also helped to formulate a response to the Inquiry into Future Support for Agriculture in Scotland. <http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/SecondCall/Hubacek%20consultation.doc>.

18 Can interdisciplinarity break down animal and plant disease silos?

Animal and plant diseases are regulated in separate “policy silos” but the two fields could learn valuable lessons from each other in a time of change, according to Relu’s policy and practice note no 16: “Policy making for animal and plant diseases: a changing landscape?” Katy Wilkinson (Newcastle University), with Graham Medley and Peter Mills (Warwick University), sets out the current position, looks ahead at new proposals for responsibility and cost sharing and makes the case for looking more coherently at the questions raised. The authors argue that interdisciplinarity is key to addressing questions such as who should be involved in policy formation, who should bear risks and costs, and how stakeholders can be involved in formulating policy.

Download the note from

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/policy%20and%20practice%20notes/Wilkinson%20no%2016/PPN16.pdf> or email relu@ncl.ac.uk for hard copies.

19 IUCN's peatland review

Following successful bids to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, members of Relu’s *Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change* project are leading three of the UK Peatland Programme Technical Reviews. Fred Worrall is leading on Climate change mitigation and adaptation potential and Impacts of burning management on peatlands, while Mark Reed is leading on Policy measures for sustainable management.

<http://www.iucn.org/>

20 Sport trumps venison dinners say stalkers

Relu’s *Collaborative Deer Management* project has investigated whether higher prices for venison could influence the way in which Scottish estates manage their deer. But the evidence shows that this would have little effect, because revenue from stalking is much more important to them. Stalkers suggested an expansion of commercial stalking of hinds to increase culls, but managing the herd in a way that maximises the number of stags available for shooting is important. Each sporting stag can add up to £22,000 to the capital value of the land. It does not seem realistic therefore to improve financial returns for deer management through promotion of venison. <http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/SecondCall/Irvine.htm>

21 Inside story on NFU conference

Science Communications Manager Anne Liddon wrote a blog from the NFU Conference 23 and 24 February 2010. You may read an edited version and some comments from Relu readers at

<http://www.relu.ac.uk/gettinginvolved/WorkShadowsVisitingFellows/ALblog.doc>

22 Relu people:

- **Alan Poots** who was a PhD student with Relu’s *Implications of a Nutrition Driven Food Policy for the Countryside* project has successfully completed his PhD with a thesis on “Modelling inter-relationships between biodiversity, land-use, and landscape: Quantifying ecological and economic value of land-use patterns in the Chilterns”. He has now graduated and is working for the South West Tourist Board.
- **Gareth Clay** who was a PhD student on the Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change project has completed his PhD and is now working with the team as a post-doc.
- **Joe Morris** has just retired from his post heading the Natural Resources Management Institute at Cranfield University but continues to be active in research. With the Relu *Integrated Management of Floodplains* team he contributed to the Second International Conference on Drought Management, sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN in Istanbul, concentrating on the economics of drought www.iamz.ciheam.org/nemedca/istanbul2010/second%20announcement.pdf
- Relu stakeholder forum member **Tamsin Cooper** is one of the authors of the recently published report "Provision of Public Goods through Agriculture in the European Union" carried out by the Institute of European Environmental Policy for the European Commission. http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/public-goods/index_en.htm
- **Ian Bateman** who is leading Relu’s *Modelling the Impacts of the Water Framework Directive* has been asked to head the economic analysis team for the UK National Ecosystem Assessment. **Joe Morris** who led Relu's Integrated Management of Floodplains is also part of the economics panel, focussing on wetlands and floodplains <http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/>
- **Katy Wilkinson** who has been working with Relu on animal and plant disease policy has now been awarded her PhD and will be moving to Hull University in June to take up a post as Research Associate in Cultural Geography on an ESRC-funded project: *Robotic and information technologies in livestock agriculture: new relationships between people, cows and machines.*

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