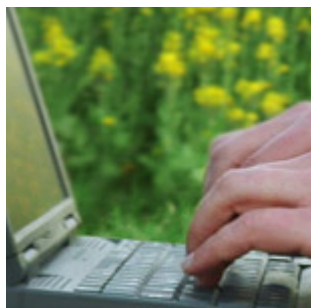


## Relu news



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### **1. Better coordination needed to combat *E coli* in the countryside**

There are some relatively simple measures that could help to reduce the risk posed by *E coli* O157 in the rural environment, according to Relu researchers. But all agencies need to be involved and the authorities should be disseminating clear messages about where the risks lie. Relu's latest policy and practice note [Managing \*E Coli\* O157 disease risk in the British countryside](#) suggests action that could help.

### **2. Follow Relu on Twitter**

Tweeps can keep up with the latest news and publications by following [@Reluprogramme](#).

### **3. Relu approach gives FSA food for thought**

Relu Director Philip Lowe presented ideas and developments from Relu to the [Food Standards Agency's](#) General Advisory Committee on Science in March. GACS wanted to know how the FSA can develop innovative ideas for their research, working across disciplines and within other organisations. They specifically asked Relu about their experiences because they want "to do better at identifying more innovative ideas and approaches".

### **4. Deep in the heart of Defra**

Relu research is feeding into Defra on several fronts, with some innovative work shadow placements. Alister Scott who is leading [Relu's Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe](#) project has been contributing to Defra discussions on the ecosystems approach. This sharing of expertise has enabled the Relu team to further tailor their research briefings to the needs of the policy community. Researcher Mark Reed is also work shadowing at Defra. He leads Relu's [Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change/Sustainable Learning Project](#) and has joined a team developing best practice guidelines on Payments for Ecosystem Services.

### **5. What can land-based professions learn from each other?**

Relu's project [Science in the Field: Understanding the Changing Role of Expertise in the Rural Economy](#) led by Assistant Director Jeremy Phillipson has been awarded a follow-on grant by ESRC for a one year project to establish an interprofessional learning network for the land-based professions: vets, ecologists, land agents, agronomists etc. A [policy and practice note](#) about the project is available on the Relu website.

### **6. Is animal disease research lost in translation?**

Is there a problem about getting research on animal disease into policy and practice? Research from Relu's [Assessment of Knowledge Sources in Animal Disease Control](#) project tells us the findings are too often "lost in translation" because of the different perspectives and priorities of stakeholders. The researchers call for the criteria that drive the priorities of different organisations in managing disease to be made more transparent and argue that this would facilitate a more coordinated response. [Policy and Practice Note No 36](#) outlines some principles that would help.

### **7. Find out how to improve the success of agri-environment initiatives**

Relu's [Improving the Success of Agri Environment Schemes](#) project has followed a group of farmers in the eastern counties and south west England who are enrolled in Entry Level Stewardship. They have explored farmer motivations for enrolling in ELS, their concerns about complying with management guidelines and how the provision of a bespoke training package can influence their approach to agri-environmental management. At the same time they have engaged in an extensive programme of ecological monitoring.

Two stakeholder events on 17th and 18th April (in Bath and Peterborough respectively) provide an opportunity to learn about the results. Events are free to attend but booking is required. Contact [M.Lobley@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:M.Lobley@exeter.ac.uk).

#### **8. Demonstration Test Catchments launch new briefing note series**

The Demonstration Test Catchments Knowledge Exchange Project has launched a new series of electronic Policy and Practice Notes. Practical experience and scientific research come together in the first note on [information resources for catchment management](#). It examines how different kinds of knowledge can contribute to addressing the problems of diffuse pollution and suggests ways in which the DTC teams can feed their research results into the everyday practice of Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers

#### **9. Ministers take key research messages on board**

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has just launched a new [policy brief](#) on the Kyoto Protocol and national accounting for peatlands that builds on the work of the [Sustainable Uplands/Sustainable Learning](#) project. Mark Reed was invited to give [a presentation about the key messages](#) to Scotland's Environment Minister Stewart Stevenson and the IUCN has also discussed these with Defra minister Richard Benyon.

#### **10. Defra takes on Relu advice on animal disease management**

In January Katy Wilkinson, who has been involved in a range of knowledge exchange activities with Relu's animal and plant disease projects, began a nine month fellowship in Defra's animal health and welfare team. Her role involves promoting the use of social science evidence in policy-making as well as providing advice on the social and economic impacts of disease outbreaks. Katy is drawing on the research done by many of the Relu projects and enabling maximum uptake of their results by policy-makers.

#### **11. Short cuts a false economy for agri environment schemes**

Researchers from Relu's [Sustainability of Hill Farming](#) project have concluded that designing payment schemes to encourage farmers to improve the environment is much harder than it might first appear. The researchers combined detailed economic surveys of farms with studies of how different species responded to farm management actions. They were also able to calculate the costs of 'producing' extra wildlife on farms, and how this cost varied across farms. Worryingly, the researchers found that various short cuts common in scheme design undermined environmental performance. [They call for schemes](#) that are more closely tailored to specific areas and required outcomes.

#### **12. Research will enrich Nature Improvement Areas**

Following the Government's Natural Environment White Paper twelve Nature Improvement Zones have been announced. The new NIAs will be able to draw on research carried out by the Relu and LWEC, as Relu has set up communication channels with the successful applicants and is now developing a policy and practice note targeted at their information needs, drawing on work from Relu and other programmes such as NERC's [Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services Sustainability Programme](#).

#### **13. Community involvement experience flows into pilot catchments**

The Lancaster University team from Relu's [Testing a Community Approach to Catchment Management](#) project is currently working for NERC's [Water Securities Knowledge Exchange Programme](#). They will be helping the Environment Agency/Defra pilot catchments to involve a broad spectrum of stakeholders in catchment management. This will include organising a workshop and producing recommendations based on insights from the Relu project.

#### **14. Stronger voice for social science in Defra & DECC policy development**

Relu Assistant Director Jeremy Phillipson, Sarah Whatmore who led Relu's [Understanding Environmental Knowledge Controversies](#) project and Julie Barnett who was Co-investigator on Relu's [Assessing and Communicating Animal Disease Risk for Countryside Users](#) have all been appointed as members of the new joint Defra and DECC Social Science Expert Panel. This is intended to be a multi-disciplinary panel which will support social science within the departments and ensure its role in the policy development process.

#### **15. Research project findings flood in**

In January, Liz Oughton and the [Flood Management in Borderlands](#) research team welcomed stakeholders to a dissemination meeting in Newcastle. The project has explored aspects of knowledge exchange across different agencies, scientists and lay publics concerned with or affected by flooding. The meeting covered a wide spectrum of interests including land managers, representatives of the regulatory agencies and government as well as academics. More information on the project can be found at [the Tweed Forum website](#).

#### **16. Relu experience fuels LWEC knowledge exchange**

The [Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change/Sustainable Learning](#) project has worked closely with the LWEC partnership to identify lessons from the Relu programme and elsewhere that could enhance knowledge exchange and the impact of LWEC accredited research programmes. A series of knowledge exchange guidelines is being developed that will inform the design of all future LWEC activities. [View a short film about the guidelines](#).

#### **17. Give PES a chance**

Payment for Ecosystems Services is of increasing interest to policymakers. Relu is to synthesise the implications of its research to inform their thinking. This will also draw on expertise within other key LWEC programmes, such as the new [Valuing Nature Network](#).

#### **18. Rural urban fringe benefits from video briefs**

In February Relu's project [Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe](#) held a dissemination conference at Birmingham City University. The event attracted 160 participants with some making use of the Cisco Web Ex platform to enable them to watch and participate from across the globe. The programme featured a series of [video policy briefs](#), keynote presentations and plenaries. There was also the revised version of the project's [Rufopoly](#) game available so that delegates could address planning challenges within the hypothetical rural urban fringe of Rufshire.

#### **19. Ecosystems services move to a higher level**

Relu's [Market Based Mechanisms for Protection of Water Resources](#) project team has presented the implications of the research for payments for ecosystems at several high level events at home and abroad. These included the Royal Society of Chemistry Water Science Forum in Birmingham, and "Water Management in Europe" at the World Trade Centre, Lille.

#### **20. Government Chief Scientific Advisers Discuss Social - Natural Science Collaboration**

The Government Chief Scientific Adviser Sir John Beddington invited Relu Assistant Director Jeremy Phillipson to address a meeting of the Departmental Chief Scientific Advisers and senior scientists on experiences of

building partnerships between social and natural sciences. The participants discussed how an interdisciplinary approach can better define strategic research challenges and inform policy, and how this may impact on government/academic relations.

## 21. Relu people:

- Director General of the National Trust **Fiona Reynolds** is moving on from the Trust to become Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge from September 2013.
- **Tony Burton**, member of Relu's People and the Rural Environment Forum, is leaving Civic Voice to take up a new role as Director of Policy and Communications at the Design Council.
- **Caspian Richards**, from the Scottish Government's Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division has moved to a new post as a Policy Adviser in the Strategy and Performance Division.
- Relu Assistant Director **Jeremy Phillipson** has been appointed an [LWEC](#) Strategic Challenge Fellow. He will be advising the LWEC programme and exploring a number of initiatives to link LWEC accredited activities into contemporary rural land use policy and practice.
- **Mark Shucksmith** has been appointed as Director of the newly-established [Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal](#).
- **Alister Scott** who leads Relu's [Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe](#) project has been named as the West Midlands Planning Personality of the Year by the Royal Town Planning Institute.
- **Sophia Latham** and **Rob Christley** from Relu's [Assessment of Knowledge Sources for Animal Disease Control](#) project gave a presentation about the project at the [GRF One Health Summit 2012](#).
- **Steve Yearley** who worked on Relu's [Collaborative Deer Management](#) project has been appointed Executive Chair of the [Edinburgh Consortium for Rural Research](#).
- **Wyn Grant** who led Relu's [Role of Regulation in Developing Biological Alternatives to Pesticides](#) project is chairing the [Warwick Commission on Elected Mayors](#) which is undertaking comparative international research on the subject, looking at the arguments for and against elected mayors.

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