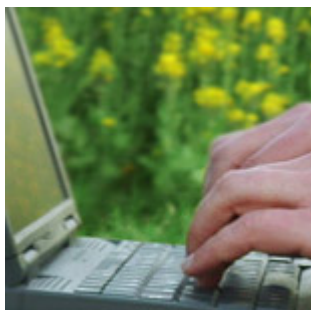


relu

Rural Economy and
Land Use Programme

Harnessing the social
and natural sciences
for sustainable
rural development



Relu news

January 2012

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1. Who should run the countryside?

Delegates attending Relu's national conference "Who should run the countryside?" in November found themselves at an event that was far from the usual academic mix of powerpoint presentations and posters. Instead they were able to take part in some sparky debates and panel-led discussions, get involved in interactive activities and even hear a song and storytelling about possible futures for upland Britain. Relu Assistant Director Jeremy Phillipson said: "Relu has always done things differently and we didn't want to put on a traditional academic conference. The research from the Relu programme has important messages for everyone: land managers, farmers, rural communities, policymakers, consumers and visitors to the countryside. It isn't just for academics. Stakeholders have been involved throughout the research and continue to make a vital contribution." [More information about the event](#) may be found on the Relu website.

2. Upland science makes an "X Factor" impact at Gateshead

A team of natural and social scientists showed that they have got what it takes to make an impact when they were presented with a Relu Award at The Sage, Gateshead in November, after a vote by business people, policymakers and scientists to decide the winner. The scientists from Leeds, Aberdeen, Durham, Sheffield and Sussex universities worked with Moors for the Future and the Heather Trust. Their [Sustainable Uplands, Learning to Manage Future Change](#) project was designed to help upland communities understand the social and environmental changes that are happening in our hills and what the options are for the future. They narrowly beat finalists [Comparative Merits of Consuming Vegetables Produced Locally and Overseas](#). Films about both projects may be found on the website ([view films here](#)).

3. Innovative methods involve residents in flood research

Interdisciplinary research requires innovative methods and researchers from the Relu programme have developed some fascinating new approaches. Now the [Understanding Environmental Knowledge Controversies](#) team from Oxford, Durham, Newcastle and UEA has won a Relu Award for best example of innovative methodology for their project which brought together scientists and residents to investigate problems of flooding in Ryedale and Uckfield. The Award was presented at Relu's Who Should Run the Countryside? conference after an "X Factor" style vote by delegates who viewed films ([click here to view](#)) about the projects. Runners up [Catchment Management for Protection of Water Resources](#) also received a high number of votes. Their team has been invited to take part in two high level Defra workshops: one on the Strategic Evidence and Partnership Project, and a Payments for Ecosystem Services Expert Workshop.

4. Relu leads the way on change and innovation

The Relu awards winners have scooped some beautiful awards to display on their windowsills, but they don't tell the full story. A large number of Relu projects entered, with impressive results. You can read about them in the Relu briefing paper: [Changing Landscapes: Some Achievements of the Relu Programme](#) and in the Relu Data Support Service's publication: [Innovation in Interdisciplinary Methods – The Relu Experience](#).

5. Landscape scale proposals spark debate

Relu's Policy and Practice Note 33: "[Could protected landscapes have a leading role to play in the sustainable management of natural resources?](#)" has provoked considerable interest, particularly amongst aspiring Nature Improvement Areas. In December Terry Carroll who wrote the policy and practice note for Relu was invited to take part in a ministerial round table seminar on the uplands with Defra Minister Jim Paice and selected representatives from statutory and third sector organisations. He was also asked to contribute to a panel debate at an English National Parks Association workshop on sustainable development.

6. Peatlands vital for people and wildlife

The [International Union for Conservation of Nature](#) has published the report from its Commission of Inquiry on Peatlands. The report represents the culmination of 18 months of focused collaboration between peatland experts from land management, science and policy from across the UK, including many researchers and stakeholders from across the Relu Programme, and reveals the enormous importance of our peatlands for people and wildlife.

7. Relu evaluation to influence future programmes

The Relu programme has been chosen for an independent research council evaluation of its impact on policy and practice and its processes of knowledge exchange and stakeholder engagement. The councils have appointed Dr Laura Meagher to undertake the review. Over the coming months she will be undertaking interviews and surveys so that we can learn fully the lessons from Relu and how these might feed into future research programmes. The evaluation will feature in the research councils' reporting to Government.

8. Looking for adventure?

Interdisciplinary research can be a bumpy ride, but it's worth it, according to Relu's "[Adventures in Science](#)" briefing paper. This tells the story of Relu, from stakeholder forums and work shadowing to data sharing and interactive events. The whole Relu experience has been an experiment in interdisciplinarity and it can provide some useful lessons for the research councils and other research funders.

9. How should the EU spend your money?

Did you know that every person of working age in the EU contributes an average of £200 a year to manage the countryside? Do you think the money is well spent? Things could change when the Common Agricultural Policy is reformed from 2013. If you would like to find out more about how your money is spent and what the options for change could be, follow this link <http://www.survey-xact.dk/LinkCollector?key=WXJR89RJ351J> to try Relu researcher Martin Dallimer's questionnaire and decide where and how you would like to spend your £200.

10. Lords discuss rural economy

In November Sir Howard Newby, Chair of Relu's Strategic Advisory Committee organised an event for interested peers to discuss aspects of the rural economy, hosted by Lord Wade. Assistant Director Jeremy Phillipson gave a presentation about the achievements of the Relu programme and there were contributions from David Raffaelli on ecosystem services and Terry Marsden on rural planning.

11. More support still needed for rural business

Relu welcomed measures announced on 29 November as part of Defra's Rural Economy Growth Review but called for a more comprehensive plan to realise the contribution and growth potential of rural economies. Relu's Assistant Director, Jeremy Phillipson, said "Up until now rural areas have been neglected by urban focused economic policy. These are helpful proposals for rural businesses, particularly moves to establish Rural Growth Networks and increase broadband and mobile telephone coverage, but we would have liked to see more support for rural enterprise, tailored to reflect the diversity of economic activity in the UK countryside and the potential it offers." [Read the Relu recommendations.](#)

12. Animal disease conference has international dimension

"Living with uncertainty in animal disease management", a conference organised by Relu's [Assessment of Knowledge Sources in Animal Disease Control](#) project showcased the project findings and recommendations to a wide international audience across policy and practice. Keynote contributions from Martyn Jeggo (Australian Animal Health Laboratory), Katinka de Balogh (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) and Andrew Stirling (University of Sussex) added a valuable multidimensional and international perspective. The project brings together expertise across the natural and social sciences to provide an interdisciplinary understanding of the social, technological and natural dynamics of animal disease management across a range of policy scales.

13. Going with the flow

An event in Durham organised by Relu's [Building Adaptive Strategies for Environmental Change in River Catchments](#) project in December provided an opportunity to focus on the experiences of scientists and stakeholders working together. Speakers from this project and from the [Flood Management in Borderlands](#) project compared notes and addressed some of the issues that arise when different kinds of expertise are combined in catchment management. [Powerpoint slides from the event](#) may be found on the Relu website.

14. Games planners play?

The battle to protect the green belt and the countryside can now be fought out on a board game which Relu researchers from the [Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe](#) project have developed as a decision-making teaching tool. Rufopoly is an interactive game that enables people to journey through the fictitious county of Rufshire which is under constant change from new pressures for development within the region's growing population. The game was showcased at Relu's "Who should Run the Countryside?" conference in November and can be experienced at "Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe", an event being held in Birmingham on 29 February, along with other outputs from the project. Contact Alister.Scott@bcu.ac.uk for details and booking.

15. Sustainable uplands on ecosystem services

The [Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change](#) team has been awarded £50,000 for a NERC valuing Nature Network to investigate the value of peatland ecosystem services across Britain and are part of a new Defra project to develop best practice

guidelines on payments for ecosystem services.

16. Uncovering the mysteries of stakeholder engagement

A foundation of active knowledge exchange is now seen as essential to getting research into policy and practice but do we know how this works? "Stakeholder Engagement and Knowledge Exchange in Environmental Research", by Jeremy Phillipson, Philip Lowe, Amy Proctor and Eric Ruto and published in the *Journal of Environmental Management*, (95 (1), 56-65 published 2012) reports on a survey regarding the involvement and perceived impact of over a thousand stakeholders in Relu research. It is now [available online](#).

17. Researcher gives evidence to EU

Laurence Smith, Principal Investigator on Relu's [Catchment Management for Protection of Water Resources](#) project, gave evidence to the House of Lords Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment EU Sub-Committee in October at the first evidence session of the Committee's inquiry into EU freshwater policy.

18. POSTnote on animal disease cites Lowe report

The Parliamentary Office of Science [POSTnote 392](#) examining disease threats to UK livestock, outlines prevention and control measures, and looking at factors likely to contribute to future disease, and cites the report "[Unlocking potential: a report on veterinary expertise in food animal production](#)" by Relu Director Philip Lowe.

19. Making a policy out of a crisis

In the [LSE British Politics and Policy blog](#) Katy Wilkinson draws on Relu research to argue that times of crisis can often be good for policy making, as experts from many disciplines are consulted on the basis of need, rather than through their traditional roles in the policy-making process.

20. Relu on Facebook

Relu has a [Facebook page](#) and will be using this to promote publications, events and other outputs during 2012. If you are on Facebook do sign up to join the group and be first to hear our news. We also welcome your comments and contributions.

21. Relu people

- Relu Director **Philip Lowe** would like to thank everyone who has sent cards and good wishes during his recent illness. Philip is now at home and recovering well.
- **Tim Benton**, Co PI on Relu's [Effects of Scale in Organic Agriculture](#) project, has been made UK Champion for [Global Food Security](#).
- Relu Interdisciplinary Fellow **Angela Cassidy** has been appointed Research Associate on the *One Medicine? Investigating human and animal disease, 1850-2015* project, at the Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, Imperial College London. She will continue to be a visiting fellow at the School of Environmental Science, UEA.
- The EUFP7 large scale collaborative project coordinated by **Dave Little** and **Francis Murray** from Relu's [Warm Water Fish Production as a Diversification Strategy for Arable Farmers](#) project was shortlisted for a Times Higher Education International Collaboration of the Year Award.

- Later in the year **Mark Tewdwr Jones** will be leaving his post as Professor of Planning in the Bartlett at University College London to become Professor of Town Planning at Newcastle University.
- Researchers from Relu's [*Role of Regulation in Developing Biological Alternatives to Pesticides*](#) project contributed to the Informa conference on Biopesticides in Amsterdam in December: **Wyn Grant** spoke about "Regulatory Innovation and Looking at the Impact of 1007/2009 on Biopesticides" and **Dave Chandler** chaired the second day and presented on "Combining Biopesticides with Conventional Pesticides".
- **Alister Scott** who leads Relu's [*Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe*](#) gave a keynote presentation at the Westminster House Briefing Biodiversity 2020 event in December.
- **Paulette Posen** who worked on Relu's [*Modelling the Impacts of the Water Framework Directive*](#) project is now using her interdisciplinary expertise as a GIS Analyst in the Fisheries Division at the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, Lowestoft.
- Relu Science Communications Manager **Anne Liddon** brings science and fiction writing together to explore a possible future with carbon rationing in her short story "What if...." on [*Durham University's Celebrating Science*](#) blog.
- Relu Assistant Director **Jeremy Phillipson** gave a presentation on the Relu experience and the Stakeholder Impact Analysis Matrix to the G8 Heads of Research Assessment in November.