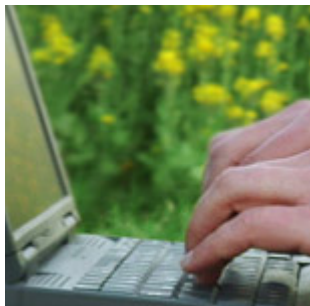


Relu news



**October 2009
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1 Adapting Rural Living and Land Use to Environmental Change: Call for Proposals

The Relu Programme, with additional funding from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), invites applications under a fourth call on the theme of "Adapting rural living and land use to environmental change". The call, co-designed with the Living With Environmental Change Programme, has two objectives. The first is to build networks and capacity for creative knowledge exchange and learning between researchers and policy makers, businesses, practitioners, local communities and the wider public. The second is to explore and promote novel approaches and partnerships for interdisciplinary research and analysis on living with environmental change in rural contexts. The call specification document and further guidance are available at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/current_funding_opportunities/RELU.aspx. The deadline for applications is 4pm 28th October 2009.

2 Chief Scientific Adviser to launch ground-breaking new book

Government Chief Scientific Adviser Professor John Beddington will be speaking at the launch of "What is land for? The food, fuel and climate change debate" at 5 pm on 19 November in The Atrium, Westminster. The book, published by Earthscan, has been edited by Relu researchers Michael Winter and Matt Lobley and includes contributions from across the Relu programme. If you are interested in attending contact relu@ncl.ac.uk for details. Copies of the book will be available at the launch.

3 Relu project influences agri-environment policy at home and abroad

Presentations from Relu's Improving the Success of Agri-environment Schemes project team, have informed Natural England's current work to enhance the advice they provide for farmers on Environmental Stewardship. James Bullock who is leading the research was also invited to speak at a special symposium of the European Congress of Conservation Biology and findings from the project have been discussed as far afield as the Netherlands, Austria and New Zealand. <http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/SecondCall/Bullock.htm>

4 Rural data evidence for policy makers

The Relu Data Support Service is carrying out a review of holdings of the UK Data Archive for the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), to identify datasets that have potential for use in rural analysis. The CRC is keen to develop its evidence base by using existing national scale survey data. Analyses of urban and rural data enable the CRC to provide advice and information for local, regional and national level policy makers on the needs of people living and working in rural England. One of their major outputs from this work is the biennial State of the Countryside report (<http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/projects/stateofthecountryside2008/overview>). For further information contact Veerle Van den Eynden at the Relu Data Support Service <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/relu/>.

5 Research contributes to Foresight on future land use

Researchers from across the Relu programme are contributing to the Government's Foresight project on land use futures, and the land use challenges that the UK will face over the next 50 years. A paper compiled by land use analyst Alan Woods, <http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/Relu%20Findings%20for%20Foresight%2030-07-09.pdf> which draws on results from across the programme, finds that better communications with stakeholders and understanding of land managers motivation, and an appreciation of the variable scale for effective implementation of policies, could help to achieve multi functional land use. <http://www.foresight.gov.uk/OurWork/ActiveProjects/LandUse/LandUse.asp>

6 Relu provides model for the science of marine spatial planning

Relu Assistant Director, Jeremy Phillipson, has given advice to the new Marine Management Organisation that is to be set up under the Marine Bill. There is interest in learning from Relu's integrated approach to research and analysis of rural land use, and possible parallels for marine spatial planning.

7 Regulating Infectious Disease in the 21st Century: Who is Responsible?

Animal and plant diseases are high in public consciousness and this is a critical time in the development of policy on disease management. A number of Relu projects are exploring this topic, and Relu PIs Graham Medley and Peter Mills arranged a joint workshop at Defra's Innovation Centre in Reading in September to explore the regulation and management of infectious diseases of plants and animals, posing the question who is responsible and why. A feature of the workshop was to encourage animal and plant disease researchers and stakeholders to learn from each other. The overall aim was to understand how roles and responsibilities are changing and with what potential consequences for disease incidence, control and costs.

8 Does rural living equal deprivation for lower income families?

Rural inhabitants are positive about their environments, but there are perceptions of inequality around problems such as affordable housing or accessibility for people on low incomes. But dependency on others, for example, relying on lifts to access services, can also be interpreted as fostering community spirit, much valued by local people. These topics were all discussed at an event in York, marking the culmination of Relu's Social and Environmental Inequalities in Rural Areas project. Details may be found at <http://www.sei.se/relu/seira/end%20of%20project%20event.html>

9 Rethinking the role of farm veterinarians

The veterinary profession needs to rethink its relationship with farmers and with the government, and play a more positive role in ensuring food safety, according to an independent report to the UK government, the veterinary profession and the farming industry, authored by Relu Director Professor Philip Lowe. "Unlocking potential, a report on veterinary expertise in food animal production" draws on the deliberations of a working group that brought together Defra, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, the British Veterinary Association and the Royal Veterinary College. The report has attracted a lot of attention in the veterinary and farming media and is already stimulating discussions within the profession. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/policy/animalhealth/vservices/index.htm>

10 Lessons from UK uplands for UN efforts to counter desertification

Lessons learned by the team working on the Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change project will be feeding into the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The aim is to develop a knowledge management system for land degradation monitoring and assessment. The methodological framework developed within the project has been refined with follow-on funding from the EU. <http://www.unccd.int/convention/menu.php>

11 Food production for healthier eating

Relu researchers took part in a workshop organised by the Food Standards Agency, "Future food production for healthier eating - opportunities and challenges". Christine Williams and Richard Tiffin (Implications of a Nutrition Driven Food Policy for the Countryside) from Reading University gave presentations at the workshop and several other Relu team researchers contributed to the discussions. A report will be available shortly from the Food Standards Agency. <http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/First%20Call/Traill.htm>

12 Will energy crops change the UK landscape?

Energy crops could help the UK to achieve carbon savings and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but could they also change familiar landscapes, and what might they mean for wildlife and for the rural economy? Research carried out by Angela Karp and an interdisciplinary team from Rothamsted Research, the universities of Exeter and East Anglia and The Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at Wallingford on the project Impacts of Increasing Land Use Under Energy Crops has investigated the wider implications of growing the biomass crops short rotation coppice willow and miscanthus grass. Relu's new policy and practice note: "Assessing the social, environmental and economic impacts of increasing rural land use under energy crops" is now available and may be downloaded <http://www.relu.ac.uk/news/policy%20and%20practice%20notes/Karp/Karp.pdf>. Or email relu@ncl.ac.uk for hard copies.

13 Carbon accounting goes global

Gareth Edwards-Jones, who led the Relu project Comparative Merits of Vegetables Produced Locally and Overseas was awarded a scholarship by The Agricultural and Marketing Research and Development Trust, to spend 12 weeks in New Zealand investigating greenhouse gas emissions from horticulture and agriculture. He took the opportunity to engage in informal discussions with grower groups and the meat industry, to hold seminars with staff at the New Zealand Ministry of Agriculture and to speak at a range of national and international conferences. The World Bank has also become interested in this research and commissioned reviews on the impact of carbon labels on developing countries and a report on the footprints of some tropical commodities, which includes formulating some 'development friendly rules for carbon accounting'.
<http://www.relu.ac.uk/research/projects/Edwards-Jones.htm>

14 Reinventing the rural

Relu researchers were prominent in organising and presenting papers at the XXIII Congress of the European Society for Rural Sociology, held in Vaasa, Finland in August (<http://www.esrs2009.fi/>). The theme of the Congress was 'Re-inventing the Rural: Between the Social and the Natural'. Five hundred rural scientists attended from across the world. Relu Director, Philip Lowe, was the Scientific Chair of the Congress. His opening keynote address was entitled 'Enacting rural sociology: or what are the creativity claims of the engaged sciences?'
<http://www.esrs2009.fi/pdf/presentations/Philip%20ESRS%20Congress%202009%20powerpoint%20v16.pdf>

15 Getting research results to farm advisors

The National Conference of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group held a session on the Relu Programme. Presentations were made from Relu's Catchment Management for Protection of Water Resources, Sustainability of Hill Farming and Improving the Success of Agri-environment Schemes projects. Workshops then explored the translation of the research results into practical advice for farmers.
<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/Events%20and%20Meetings/Relu-FWAG%20event%20note%202001-10-09.doc>

16 Valuing ecosystem services

How can we put a value on all the benefits of land and ecosystem services? It's a problem that government and researchers struggle with every day. Nine Relu projects took part in a wide-ranging joint Relu/Foresight workshop on Land Valuation and Decision Making, organised by Joe Morris and the Integrated Management of Floodplains project team in July. A report about this work "Valuation and Decision-making" is available <http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/Events%20and%20Meetings/relu-foresight%20workshop-valuation%20final%20v1.pdf>

17 Stakeholder participation in environmental management: what works?

Relu researchers from the Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change project are taking part in a £120K research project investigating what makes stakeholder participation in environmental management work. They are investigating why different approaches work in different contexts. Their aim is to help people design participatory processes that are more likely to deliver the desired outcomes. The project is co-ordinated from the University of Aberdeen, with collaborators from the University of Leeds, the University of Leuphana at Luneburg in Germany and members of the EU-funded DESIRE project.
<http://homepages.see.leeds.ac.uk/~lecmsr/involved/news.htm>

18 Relu supports conference on human-wildlife conflict resolution

Relu is supporting a conference "Human-wildlife conflict resolution", hosted by the Mammal Society at London Zoo on 20/21 November 2009. For details and booking see
<http://www.relu.ac.uk/events/2009/TMS%20Symposium%20Programme%20%20Booking%20form%20.pdf>

19 Relu people

- Land use policy analyst **Vicki Swales** who produced Relu's paper Future Challenges for Land Use Policy in Scotland has been appointed head of land use policy for RSPB Scotland.
- **Ian Baker**, who represented Advantage West Midlands on Relu's Food Forum, has just taken over as head of rural policy at Defra.
- **Mark Reed** who co-leads Relu's Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change project has been invited to join the UN Environmental Programme's Mountains, Moors and Heathlands team as a lead author for the National Ecosystem Assessment.

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