

Press Release

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Initiative enables knowledge sharing for rural professionals

[Landbridge](http://www.relu.ac.uk/landbridge/), an experimental knowledge sharing initiative for rural professionals, is launching its new website today.

Landbridge provides a platform for interprofessional learning and debate and opportunities for knowledge exchange with the research community. It has been set up by the Rural Economy and Land Use programme, and is supported by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Living With Environmental Change Partnership.

Over the past few years the challenges facing farmers and land managers have been exacerbated by pressures such as climate change and food security. Farmers are being expected to provide many more services from the land, including flood management, clean drinking water, carbon storage, energy generation and wildlife conservation, as well as producing food. Thus, improving the skills and knowledge of the people who provide them with specialist advice has become a key imperative for the UK Government and for the industry.

Farm business and project planning is now a very complex process and research has shown that rural advisors such as land agents, vets, ecologists and agronomists need increasingly to work together to provide an efficient service to their clients. They also have to update their knowledge as new research becomes available and to absorb the latest findings into their practice.

A panel from the rural professions has assisted with planning and implementing the initiative and continues to advise on its development.

Sue Steer, Chairman of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Countryside Policy Panel said: “For those of us working in the private sector, there is an inevitable tension when it comes to sharing knowledge – it’s our specific expertise that earns us our fees. On the other hand, we are often addressing increasingly complex problems for our clients and no one individual can have all the skills needed. We do have to find ways of working together and bringing our own perspective to the table. That can be a very positive experience and I am continually learning from colleagues in different professions.

“The link with research is also extremely important and keeping up to date is essential for any adviser. I particularly welcome the emphasis that Landbridge is putting on two-way communication. It’s refreshing for professionals to have our views and input into research appreciated and valued. That hasn’t always happened but when it does the outputs from the research are likely to be much more valid for us as practitioners and more useful to our clients.”

Notes for editors:

1. The new Landbridge website may be accessed at <http://www.relu.ac.uk/landbridge/>
2. The [Rural Economy and Land Use Programme](http://www.relu.ac.uk/) is an interdisciplinary collaboration between the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), with additional funding provided by the Scottish Government and Defra. Follow Relu’s latest news on twitter @Reluprogramme or website [www.relu.ac.uk](http://www.relu.ac.uk)
3. Sue Steer is a member of the Landbridge Advisory Panel, a fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors( RICS) and Chairman of the RICS Countryside Policy Panel. She has her own firm of rural chartered surveyors and is also director of 3D Rural Surveyors Ltd. She lives in Cheshire on the family organic farm.
4. For any further information contact [anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk) , tel 0191 222 6880.

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