

11.08.2022 Upland Pathways to Success

Attendees: [REDACTED]

Agreed Next Steps:

- Provisional meeting forward look
 - 20/09 – *cancel if we don't want it nearer the time, or can share thoughts/check in
 - 04/10 – provisional slot to discuss data (dependent on relevant clearances, as discussed)
 - 18/10 – alternative provisional slot to discuss data (dependent on relevant clearances, as discussed)

We will **cancel the next two meetings of this Working Group** (23/08, 06/09) and **provisionally keep 20/09** in the diary to catch up or share any updated thoughts. In the meantime, [REDACTED] is continuing to develop the analysis – with a provisional view at bringing it back to this group in early October. In the meantime, the Working Group will think about other data we can use to complement [REDACTED] modelling. We will also look at including some analysis we have already done around gross margins and how they have been affected by changes in output prices and input costs.

We will be attending the Westmorland Show (7-8 September). **We are keen to arrange more site and farm visits, and would welcome any suggestions of nearby farms that we could visit on Tuesday 6th September before the show.**

If there are any questions or issues to raise between now and the next meeting, please feel encouraged to reach out to [REDACTED]. We remain committed to this project and look forward to picking these meetings back up in due course.

Actions

- **Defra** to circulate a provisional timetable of next steps in terms of the work around data and this project going forward
- **Working Group** to think about the data we can use that already exists that we can use to compliment the modelling when it comes
- [REDACTED] to look at sharing CLA response to Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan
- **Working Group** to think of suggestions for potential farm/site visits nearby to the Westmorland Show, for 6th September
- **Defra** to send a representative to next UA meeting (17/08)

Reflections on recent steer

- [REDACTED]: huge amount of work, both from UA and Defra has gone into this. Has to be a level of trust – not sharing the data puts into question what the data is saying. We are not here to tell people how to run their farm businesses, we're here to enable people to make informed choices. Thriving uplands businesses. We would like to move forward in a productive way – if that means a pause until the data comes in, that is the preference. We can't rubber stamp a document from Defra telling people to farm without that idea of data
- [REDACTED]: Equally reluctant to put something out telling people what to do – could be seen as an endorsement of direction, if things go wrong, we'd have a problem. All about getting to a stage where we can give people the data to make informed decisions – everyone slightly different, different decision making process for different farmers
- [REDACTED]: hugely disappointed – the work was going really well and we were looking for a positive result to utilise and make the most of. Something like a leaflet doesn't tick the box of what we were going to do – don't see what it will add to the uplands community

- [REDACTED]: Currently drafting the CLA response to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan. They are telling farmers how to farm – clearly saying they will oppose any new farm buildings that will ‘intensify’ agriculture (not defining intensify). They will support any farming that leans towards rewilding – they should not be telling farmers how to farm
- [REDACTED]: Keen to look at getting some value out of where we have got to. Clarity (in an uplands scenario) of what is out there – even if we can’t put the data to it. Farmers are starting to realise BPS funding is reducing – esp. over the last few weeks
- [REDACTED]: Defra impression is to not stop this work altogether – just a case of waiting for the political situation to settle. Re ‘no news = bad news’ – not the case, but appreciate how it appears
- [REDACTED]: Access to Ministers is always more challenging during summer recess and particularly so this year given the leadership contest. Important we make sure Ministers are happy with what we put out into the public environment – sensitivities around that. This delay is just ensuring those who need to see it have seen it – as well as some additional requests from Janet Hughes in developing the data further first. Regarding not telling farmers how to farm – Defra does not have the blueprint for farming. We use FBS data (rich at sector) individual region/farms – reach limitations around specificity. Results we will hopefully be sharing in due course are averages, giving an idea on how things might play out. Even the analysis we share won’t be the blueprint to follow – but rather a useful guide
- [REDACTED]: Useful to have a timeline to make the best use of resources. How do we make the best use of people’s time over the next few months? What’s a realistic time for when Ministers can comment on this?
- [REDACTED]: view to share the analysis back with Janet soon after she returns from leave. Expectations to share with Ministers soon after that. May then soon after that have different Ministers – we would then have to put it in front of them again if it was a change of Ministers. Beginning of October is a realistic time where we should be in a position to bring the data back to the group.
- [REDACTED]: options 1) have a pause and reconvene mid-September or 2) what do we have now that we could include in something? Sounds like anything we could produce now, with the current info, we couldn’t produce anything that useful – **the group agreed to pause**
- [REDACTED]– never had as many upland farmers as have done in the last 2 weeks contact me, concerns around when BPS money will arrive because they can’t pay for the fuel bill. Huge concerns as we get later into the year – at that point, events will have gone beyond how the data can support people. Meaningful opportunity will have gone. Still seems to be the feeling of a promise of everything being developed around the SFI and LNR – nothing actually out there for people to engage with. The Moorland and Peatland is such a small amount, it doesn’t apply to a lot of farmers. Black hole in policy development
- [REDACTED]: might be helpful recognising the reality of how things are going to change. Take [REDACTED] figures from the Hill Farm Report and put in new input costs (e.g. fuels and fertilisers) to that, what would they look like? Also recognise we may need short and long term actions to improve business viability
- [REDACTED]- impact of trees and rents - structural issues - can we add in the short and medium term actions upland farmers could take using current and forward look variable and fixed costs?
- [REDACTED]– can look into the work done around gross margins and how they have been affected by changes in output prices and input costs – can include that as our package of analysis to put in front of Ministers