

# THE UPLANDS:

## A VISION FOR PROSPERITY, STEWARDSHIP AND RESILIENCE







40%

of female breeding sheep  
in England are on  
uplands farms.

Source:

Farm Business Survey: Hill farming in England  
2023/24, Defra/Promar, Dec 2024



49%

of uplands farm business income  
was from agri-environment  
schemes between 2013 and 2023.

Source:

Farm Business Survey: Hill farming in England  
2023/24, Defra/Promar, Dec 2024



27%

of beef cows in England  
are on uplands farms.

Source:

Farm Business Survey: Hill farming in England  
2023/24, Defra/Promar, Dec 2024



82%

of England's common land  
is in the uplands.

Source:

High ground, high potential – a future for  
England's uplands communities, Commission for  
Rural Communities, June 2010



75%

of the uplands are in  
Protected Landscapes

Source:

High ground, high potential – a future for England's  
uplands communities, Commission for Rural  
Communities, June 2010



13%

of England's agricultural  
workforce is employed  
in uplands areas.

Source:

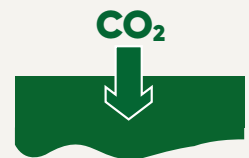
Numbers of commercial holdings and key land  
areas/livestock types by Less Favoured areas at 1  
June each year: England – Defra, April 2025

Estimated

OVER 3 BILLION TONNES OF CARBON  
STORED IN UK PEATLANDS

the majority of which are in upland areas – equivalent to all carbon stored in the  
forests in the UK, Germany and France together.

Source: UK natural capital: peatlands, Office for National Statistics website, July 2019



25%

of England's woodlands are  
found in uplands areas.

Source:

Rewilding in the English uplands: policy and  
practice, Sandom et al, Journal of Applied  
Ecology, October 2018



53%

of all Sites of Special Scientific  
Interest in England are in  
uplands areas.

Source:

Rewilding in the English uplands: policy and  
practice, Sandom et al, Journal of Applied  
Ecology, October 2018



86%

of open access land is  
in the uplands.

Source:

National Upland Outcomes: A framework to help  
develop local partnership outcomes – Defra,  
December 2013

# INTRODUCTION

Upland farmers are the guardians of some of England's most iconic and cherished landscapes. These spectacular and diverse areas are rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage.

From the rugged hills of Northumberland, through the rolling hills of Shropshire and Staffordshire, to the open and historic moors of Bodmin and Exmoor, these landscapes are internationally recognised, from the UNESCO World Heritage site in the Lake District to the National Park of Dartmoor.

We stand at a pivotal moment for the future of our upland farms. These family-run businesses are at the heart of vibrant rural communities, supporting our national food security, biodiversity, and cultural heritage through generations of sustainable land management.

They have weathered extraordinary challenges in recent years, from increasingly volatile weather conditions and global market disruptions to the aftershocks of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. At the same time, they are navigating a profound transformation in how agricultural support is delivered.

Despite the challenges of farming in remote and demanding environments, upland farmers continue to lead in environmental delivery, food production, and landscape stewardship. Their role has never been more vital, delivering nature recovery, climate resilience, and rural prosperity in tandem with high-quality food.

Now is the time to unlock the full potential of upland farming and recognise the true value of the public goods delivered by these farms. From carbon sequestration and rich biodiversity to healthy soils, flood mitigation, and the foundation they provide for a thriving rural tourism industry, upland pastures offer vital services that benefit the whole nation.

The transition to new Environmental Land Management schemes presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure the future of upland farming and properly recognise and reward the services it provides. With the right vision, policies, and investment, upland farms can thrive as productive, resilient businesses while continuing to provide the public goods our society depends on.

Our vision for the uplands demonstrates how government, farmers and partners can work together to achieve a confident, sustainable future for the businesses at their heart.

We envision a future where upland farms are vibrant, productive, and resilient businesses, producing high-quality sustainable food, conserving nature, and supporting thriving rural communities. These farms will continue to shape the iconic British landscapes we all treasure, while driving green growth and providing opportunity for generations to come.

Empowering tenant farmers, who are the backbone of upland agriculture, is central to this vision. With the right support, we can strengthen family-run businesses, rebuild capital, and ensure that environmental schemes work with – not against – the realities of livestock farming in these areas.

It's time to fully value and invest in our remarkable upland farming sector and to champion a bold vision of the future that secures its place at the heart of our rural economy and natural environment.



**Dave Stanners and Mat Cole**  
NFU Upland North and South Group Chairs

## OUR VISION FOR UPLANDS FARMING

**Prosperous upland farm businesses that support both environmental sustainability and quality food production.**

**Upland family farms and policymakers sharing a common ambition, with farmers fully recognised, valued, supported, and actively involved in shaping and delivering environmental outcomes.**

**Resilient, diverse and innovative farm businesses run by farming families.**

**The rich culture, enduring traditions, and unique heritage of our upland landscapes forms the foundation of thriving, resilient communities where people are proud to live, work, and visit.**

**Upland farm businesses delivering healthy ecosystems, climate mitigation and national environmental priorities.**

# FARMING & LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION

Upland farms are a cornerstone of the red meat supply chain, both nationally and internationally, and play a vital role in ensuring the UK's food security.

They support a thriving livestock sector that contributes significantly to our economy and our global reputation for high-quality, sustainable produce.

It is essential that both government and industry prioritise the development of upland farming systems that enhance agricultural productivity while supporting biodiversity.

Currently, around 40% of England's breeding ewes and 27% of beef breeding cows are based in upland areas and their fringes<sup>1</sup>. These animals produce offspring that are sold to lowland farms, where they are finished on richer pastures, supplying the market with premium, climate-responsible beef and lamb.

After their breeding years, upland livestock continue to deliver value through domestic and export markets. Mutton, for example, is a prized product for halal, North African, and Middle Eastern consumers.

Without the breeding base provided by the uplands, the UK's livestock sector, worth an estimated £5.5 billion<sup>2</sup>, would face significant disruption.

However, upland farmers face growing pressures, particularly from policies that incentivise reduced livestock numbers through environmental schemes and designations.

In some cases, the most financially successful farms in these areas are those with the lowest stock levels and greatest reliance on public payments. We need to end this binary choice between livestock keeping and conservation and develop systems where farmers are fairly rewarded both for the food they produce and for the complementary environmental benefits they deliver.

Upland areas have historically had formal recognition (delivered via the Less Favoured Areas designation) for the physical and regulatory constraints that limit intensification. Poorer soils, challenging weather conditions, and multiple land designations including Protected Landscapes and Sites of Special Scientific Interest restrict development and farm diversification.

For these reasons, it is essential that upland farms are given the opportunity to modernise, meet compliance requirements, and invest in innovation. This will allow them to improve efficiency and remain productive contributors to the food system.

Building a future-ready upland sector requires policies that enable profitable, productive, and sustainable farm businesses. With the right investment, regulatory approach, planning flexibility, and skills development, upland farmers can continue to lead in delivering high-quality food, thriving ecosystems, and resilient rural economies.





## CASE STUDY

# RICHARD MOORE

NORTH PENNINES

## OUR VISION AND HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE IT:

**Prosperous upland farm businesses that support both environmental sustainability and quality food production. To achieve this, we want to work with government and stakeholders to develop and deliver policies that:**

Champion farming and food production alongside environmental stewardship, with support schemes that recognise this synergy and use impact assessments to examine effects on productivity and viability.

Ensure land designations and regulation enable, rather than constrain, sustainable upland livestock systems and business development.

Provide long-term stability through a blend of public investment and private finance that rewards the full range of ecosystem services delivered by upland farms.

Expand access to advice, skills, and investment to drive innovation, productivity, and collaboration, encouraging and supporting a thriving next generation of upland farmers.

Strengthen supply chains and infrastructure while embedding fairness and recognising the valuable contribution of upland livestock to national food security.

**Richard Moore farms within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a stone's throw from Alston, where he proudly produces top quality livestock and Michelin star worthy lamb.**

"Me and my wife Jenna, and our two children, are the latest of the Moore family to work this farm on the Knarsdale Estate, an association that dates back to the 1700s.

"We run 600 Swaledale ewes, 60 Galloway cows and some mule ewes across 1,000 acres of traditionally managed moorland, in tandem with 200 acres of in-bye grazing and meadow ground. The farm also has a Higher Level Stewardship agreement and SFI23 in place.

"Together with the landlord, we recognise the interdependent relationship grazing and managing the moor has for successfully raising healthy livestock. We work closely on animal health and environmental delivery.

"In a more recent diversified venture, we fatten and butcher Mule x Texel lambs. A portion are sold to nearby residents, with the remainder supplied to a local pub that promotes locally reared, pasture-grazed meat.

"Our mule gimmer lambs are marketed annually via the famed Alston Moor sale at Lazonby Auction Mart. They're renowned for their hybrid vigour and are much sought after.

"I'm as proud to produce quality sheep and cattle for customers down the hill, where they're bound to thrive given the environment where they begin life, as I am to see our lamb on the menu at the local fine-dining spot.

"I'm concerned about the agricultural transition and the uncertainty that remains. Clarity is critical in the short term to secure business continuity and to give the next generation the confidence that there is a place for them as sustainable food and livestock producers, while managing our treasured upland landscapes for public good."



# ENVIRONMENT & NATURE

Upland areas, shaped over centuries by traditional farming, are not just places of beauty. They are living, working environments where nature and agriculture are deeply interconnected. Upland farmers play a pivotal role in managing these landscapes.

Hosting a range of important habitats, from mountain and moorland to peatland, heath, and woodland, the uplands have evolved over thousands of years.

Upland farmers are stewards of these areas, contributing directly to nature recovery and climate resilience through their long-standing engagement with agri-environment schemes<sup>3</sup>.

Upland farms contribute to the management of the UK's natural capital. Around 70% of our drinking water comes from the uplands<sup>4</sup>, where land use practices can influence water quality.

Well-managed grasslands and peatlands in these areas can function as natural filtration systems and help regulate water flow, potentially reducing flood and drought risks and supporting more stable water levels for nearby communities.

Pastoral grazing with sheep, cattle, and ponies has long shaped the upland landscape. Their continued presence maintains the character and accessibility of these areas while protecting biodiversity and reducing the risk of wildfires. Their role in managing vegetation and preserving open habitats is irreplaceable.

To secure a vibrant uplands, it is essential all those involved in their future – including farmers, landowners, commoners, Natural England, and environmental NGOs – share a common ambition.

Many farmers are tenants and it is through strong, positive partnerships and shared responsibility that we can ensure both productive land use and environmental enhancement. Upland farmers are ready to work with all stakeholders to develop integrated landscape management approaches that deliver for food, nature and people.

The opportunity is clear: with the right policies and partnerships, upland farms can continue to deliver for food security, climate action, biodiversity, and vibrant rural communities – all from the same extraordinary landscapes.

**53%**  
of England's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are in the uplands<sup>7</sup>.

Engagement with agri-environment schemes in the uplands has been higher than in all other farming sectors – between 2013 and 2023,  
**49%**  
of uplands farm business income was from agri-environment schemes<sup>8</sup>.



The uplands are home to

**25%**  
of the country's woodland<sup>5</sup>.

**75%**  
of the uplands are in Protected Landscapes<sup>6</sup>.



## CASE STUDY

# CHRIS WEBBER

SOMERSET



**For Chris Webber, who farms just outside Minehead in Somerset, soil regeneration and grass growth are the cornerstone of his farming system.**

"I'm a National Trust tenant and run two herds of cattle, Aberdeen Angus and Belted Galloway – about 100 sucklers in all – along with a small flock of sheep, across 2,000 acres.

"They are outwintered to keep inputs low and maximise outputs as much as possible. Nothing is put into the soil, apart from what is added by the livestock, and I use a mob grazing system to move the cattle around the farm.

"They're adding nutrients, getting enough time on each bit of grass to get what they need out of it. Then the grass is getting a long rest period afterwards, so it's got plenty of time to grow, plenty of time to set seed, and plenty of time to increase that root mass.

"If I can improve the environment, I know that everything else will follow. I will get that ripple effect, and it starts down in the soil.



"If I can get that right and I can get healthy, thriving soil, I'll get better plants, more diversity, and then that cascades into the insects, bugs and larger wildlife. All of that will work into a healthier system and better livestock for me.

"Getting environmental schemes right needs to be a priority and is key to the survival of uplands farms. We're still waiting for something to come through that is simple and has options that work for everyone.

"You can't do anything but farm livestock and support the environment, so that has to be a profitable system. We need the government to recognise this."

## OUR VISION AND HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE IT:

**Upland family farms and policymakers sharing a common ambition, with farmers fully recognised, valued, supported, and actively involved in shaping and delivering environmental outcomes. To achieve this, we want to work with government and stakeholders to develop and deliver policies that:**

Strengthen collaboration between farmers, landowners, commoners, Natural England, the Environment Agency, NGOs, and specialists, building on the Fursdon Review<sup>9</sup> to deliver joined-up, locally informed outcomes.

Draw on the knowledge, skills and expertise of farmers, graziers and landowners to achieve environmental and nature recovery targets so that they have a direct role in shaping and influencing policy and practice.

Ensure agri-environment schemes reward the full range of ecosystem services upland farms deliver, including biodiversity, water quality, and soil health, supported by ongoing research, tailored advice, and fair, accessible payments.

Establish a national multifunctional land use strategy that balances priorities and avoids conflicting pressures on upland areas.

Fully consider the socio-economic impacts and livestock numbers on upland farms, are grounded in transparent evidence, and ensure these factors are clearly communicated.



# RURAL ECONOMY & COMMUNITY

Upland farms play a key role in the rural economy and are central to the sustainability of rural communities. They create secure employment which promotes growth in some of England's most remote areas, supporting 13% of the national agricultural workforce<sup>10</sup>.

Upland landscapes attract millions of visitors every year, with nearly 37 million visits in 2017 alone<sup>11</sup>. They are celebrated for their tranquillity, quiet enjoyment, inspirational nature and recreation.

Tourism in rural areas is estimated to contribute £11.5 billion to the economy<sup>12</sup>. Without upland agriculture, the landscapes, communities, and cultural heritage that attract visitors would significantly change. Upland farming businesses play a key role in maintaining these iconic places.

These family businesses provide the foundation of upland communities. They support local services year-round, their children attend rural schools, they spend in shops, use suppliers, and sustain rural pubs and services.

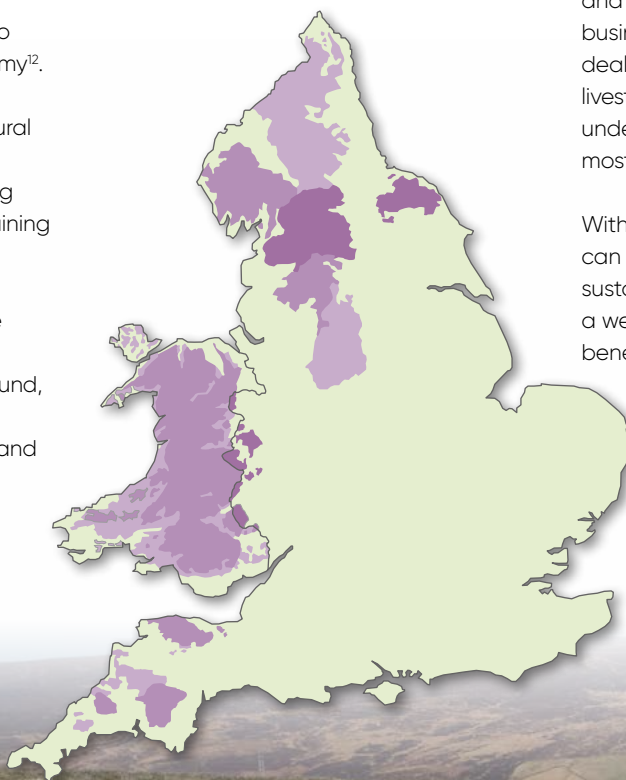
Beyond their economic contributions, farmers are community minded, providing vital help in emergencies, maintaining access, and retaining skills and knowledge that are unique and irreplaceable.

To ensure these businesses thrive and continue to deliver for people, nature, and the economy, government policy must be shaped in close consultation with those who live and work in the uplands.

Undermining the critical mass of upland livestock locally and regionally presents real risk to the iconic landscapes that attract visitors and help support the rural economy. Livestock are not only integral to the landscape and its ecology, but have irreplaceable genetics and represent significant capital investment, particularly for tenant farmers.

Upland farms are dynamic rural businesses, creating skilled employment and supporting a wide network of local businesses – from vets and machinery dealers to butchers, contractors, and livestock markets. These businesses underpin the economy in some of the most isolated parts of the country.

With the right support, upland farms can continue to fuel vibrant economies, sustain resilient communities, and deliver a wealth of environmental and cultural benefits for the nation.





## CASE STUDY

# GEMMA & ANDREW BLAND

PEAK DISTRICT

## OUR VISION AND HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE IT:

**Resilient, diverse and innovative farm businesses run by farming families.**

**To achieve this, we want to work with government and stakeholders to develop and deliver policies that:**

Enable upland farms to generate sustainable returns that support investment, innovation, and business diversification.

Facilitate agricultural development in planning decisions within National Landscapes and designated areas, meeting regulatory requirements, unlocking opportunities for growth and modernisation.

Guarantee equitable access to government schemes and capital grants for all farm businesses, removing financial and administrative barriers.

Deliver essential rural infrastructure, including reliable broadband and mobile coverage, to boost farm productivity and connectivity.

Encourage responsible tourism that helps support local economies and helps visitors understand the vital role of farming in maintaining upland landscapes.

**Andrew and Gemma Bland are tenants, farming across 670 acres of United Utilities Peak District Estate between the high uplands and moors of the Dark Peak and urban Greater Manchester.**

"Our farm is home to 45 suckler cows and 550 Swaledale ewes. Store cattle are marketed and mule lambs sold via Skipton and Bakewell Auction Markets.

"We travel to market stock at auction where we think the best prices can be found. Live sales put a bottom in the market, the auction is where we share and compare experiences and enjoy seeing customers and farming friends alike," Andrew said.

"The impact of our farm business on the rural economy extends further than you might think. We do business for sundries in Glossop, equipment in Gisburn, and our vet practice is based in Whaley Bridge.

"We've made use of United Utilities Sustainable Catchment Management Programme to deliver moorland restoration, by reducing sheep grazing on the moor and limiting it to summer months. A new shed provides alternative accommodation for the sheep over the winter and fencing has provided watercourse protection.

"The work we did to deliver these changes generated substantial spend with local businesses to buy the equipment and services we needed.

"We're adapting to changing government support as well as other challenges," Andrew said. "For the last few years, we've focused on cutting cost and improving efficiency. We've made changes to our cattle enterprise and breeding policy too, something we hope will have multiple benefits."

"I strongly believe that the improvements we've made using stewardship schemes must be recognised and valued," Gemma added.

"For us, continued access to agri-environment schemes is key. We provide many public goods on this farm, supporting the rural economy across county boundaries. We need to see policy makers recognise this with fair reward."





# CULTURE, HERITAGE & TRADITION

Upland farming is central to the cultural identity, heritage, and traditions of upland communities. Agricultural practices have shaped these landscapes over generations, contributing to historical land use and community life.

Future policy will affect how these cultural and heritage landscapes are preserved while environmental and economic objectives are met in upland regions.

Upland farmers use traditional skills – shepherding, dry-stone walling, hedge laying, and the maintenance of stone-faced banks and field boundaries – which are passed down through generations. These practices support wildlife, enhance biodiversity, and sustain the landscape's visual character, reflecting decades of careful stewardship.

Upland farms are deeply rooted in place and community. Many have remained within the same families for generations, through both ownership and long-standing tenancies.

The traditional stone barns and farmhouses that dot these landscapes are physical markers of continuity, while local dialects, folk song and poetry speak to the social and cultural richness of the uplands. These contributions to national heritage must be recognised, celebrated, and preserved.

The uplands are home to 82% of England's common land<sup>13</sup>, which has been shared and managed through the rights of commoners for centuries. It continues to underpin sustainable land management and community collaboration.

A "hefted flock" refers to a group of sheep that are accustomed to grazing within a specific, often communal, area of land, without the need for physical fences.

This practice, common in mountainous or hill regions, is achieved through generations of sheep being taught the boundaries and resources within their "heaf" (the area they graze). The sheep learn, through observation and experience, where to find good grazing and shelter at different times of the year.

The practice of keeping hefted flocks was instrumental in the Lake District receiving UNESCO World Heritage Site status<sup>14</sup>. Yet it is under threat. Destocking of the uplands undermines its continuation, despite its cultural significance.

With the right support, upland farmers can continue to protect and enrich these extraordinary landscapes, sustaining the traditions, identity and legacy of the British countryside for generations to come.





## CASE STUDY

# JON WATSON & JO MCGRATH

CONISTON

Jon Watson has been a National Trust tenant near Coniston since the early 2000s and Jo McGrath joined him a decade later. With her added vision, the business is now having undeniable impact on the many people who visit.

"Before moving to the Lake District I'd never had anything to do with the Herdwick breed, but after being challenged to try it, something told me the meat had superior flavour," Jon said.

"By knocking on the doors of local restaurants, 'Herdwick hogget' gained a following and Heritage Meats was born. The growth seen means all our lambs are finished and we buy 1,000 store lambs from neighbouring farms.

"Along with our Galloway beef, via the farm butchery we supply locals at the farm gate, many more by mail order, and a partnership with Udale Speciality Foods gets us into high-end markets.

"We now have a flock of 170 Herdwick ewes which graze alongside 25 Belted Galloway cows across 700 acres of Less Favoured Area ground."

Jo said: "As a professional artist specialising in animal paintings, I've developed a Herdwick Experience that works to cross-market every other aspect of the business. Visitors can learn about the significance of the breed to the Lake District, Yew Tree Farm's history and the heritage and culture of fell farming.

"The visit involves meeting our super friendly Yew Tree Farm Ambassador Herdwick flock, something that we're discovering has significant benefits for health and wellbeing.

"Having come from a farm education background, the importance of helping interpret and educate others about what we do and why we do it is a passion of mine."

"We're strong advocates for culture, heritage and tradition," added Jon. "There's more we can do to develop the business, but to have the confidence to do so we need recognition for the wider benefit we deliver for society."

## OUR VISION AND HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE IT:

The rich culture, enduring traditions, and unique heritage of our upland landscapes form the foundation of thriving, resilient communities, places where people are proud to live, work, and visit. To achieve this, we want to work with government and stakeholders to develop and deliver policies that:

Embed cultural heritage, traditional skills and business realities into the design and delivery of schemes that reward public goods.

Recognise and retain, within schemes and protected sites, the unique role of hefted flocks in sustaining traditional upland farming systems.

Ensure common right holders have fair and equal access to environmental schemes, reflecting their essential role in managing shared landscapes.

Accept upland farming as a sustainable land use that supports food production, environmental delivery, and the cultural identity of rural England.

Provide long-term support for livestock grazing as a key tool in conserving the historical integrity of upland landscapes.



# NET ZERO, CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY

The UK has set a bold target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with an interim goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 81% below 1990 levels by 2035.

Upland farms are uniquely positioned to help meet these targets, offering powerful opportunities for both climate mitigation and adaptation. With vast areas of species-rich grassland, peatlands, and semi-natural vegetation, the uplands hold exceptional potential for carbon sequestration and environmental recovery.

Approximately 355,000 hectares of England's deep peat soils lie in upland areas<sup>15</sup>. Peatland in the UK is estimated to hold three billion tonnes of carbon – more than the combined forests of the UK, Germany and France<sup>16</sup>.

In 2017, upland landscapes removed atmospheric carbon equivalent to £130 million in value<sup>17</sup>, a figure expected to rise significantly as carbon markets develop. With targeted support, upland farms

can play a leading role in peatland restoration and long-term climate resilience.

Through sustainable grazing systems, upland farmers actively improve soil health, increase biodiversity, and enhance carbon capture across grasslands, moorlands, woodlands, and peatlands. In doing so, they deliver a wide range of ecosystem services, including water regulation, habitat conservation, and cultural stewardship.

Upland farming makes optimal use of marginal land to produce high quality, nutrient-dense beef and lamb with minimal chemical inputs, exemplifying circular, low-carbon food production.

Beyond food, these farms contribute to a wider green economy – generating wool and fibre, serving direct-to-consumer and niche meat markets, and supplying products for value-added sectors.

The uplands are also well suited for renewable energy generation, natural flood management, and water quality protection, helping to build climate resilience for both rural and urban communities. As extreme weather events become more frequent, targeted investment is essential to support upland farms in delivering these critical public goods.

By combining sustainable land management with environmental delivery, upland farms can lead the way in tackling climate change while continuing to produce food and support thriving rural livelihoods. Their contribution to a low-carbon, nature-positive economy must be fully recognised, valued, and supported.





## CASE STUDY

# LEWIS BARRACLOUGH

NORTH YORK MOORS

**Lewis Barraclough is a tenant farmer in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. His farm comprises 450 hectares of moorland and 300 hectares of improved grassland and permanent pasture.**

"I farm in partnership with my wife and parents, operating a traditional stratified system. The core of my sheep enterprise is based on a Swaledale ewe bred to a Blue Face Leicester ram to produce mule lambs, which then move down the hill to produce a store lamb when crossed with a Suffolk ram.

"I've embraced performance recording, starting eight years ago with purchased rams and expanding to include my rams and ewes. Performance recording means that we can make informed decisions and breed off traits we value, such as the 21-week weights and mothering ability.

"I'm considering introducing Cheviot sheep to the hill areas to streamline lamb production. This would complement the existing Swaledales, which will remain integral for managing the moorland's extensive grazing. I'm hoping the Cheviot will produce a 'market-ready' lamb off the moor.

"The decision to integrate the Cheviots was driven by a desire to reduce inputs in my system, my standard driver for on-farm choices. We're just trying to make the farm more efficient by lowering purchased inputs.

"I also run a 30-head suckler herd, predominantly blue-grey cattle. I'm contemplating transitioning to an Angus-type system, which aligns with my low-input farming ethos. This strategy is part of my broader aim to reduce inputs and enhance sustainability.

"I've also been proactive in improving my pasture management. I've trialled reseeded meadow ground with festulolium grasses, which are more resilient and efficient in changing climate conditions. I also carry out soil testing and use organic fertilisers, including farmyard manure.

"My biggest challenge is the economic pressures of maintaining a sustainable farming system while remaining profitable. But I believe my commitment to climate-friendly practices, such as low input systems and improving soil health, will help make my farm resilient in the face of climate change."

## OUR VISION AND HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE IT:

**Upland farm businesses delivering healthy ecosystems, climate mitigation and national environmental priorities.**

**To achieve this, we want to work with government and stakeholders to develop and deliver policies that:**

Recognise and support upland farms to deliver peatland restoration and long-term carbon storage.

Strengthen farm business resilience to climate change and extreme weather variations through targeted investment in infrastructure, sustainable practices, and environmental management.

Reward upland farming for protecting and sequestering carbon, with clear incentives for greenhouse gas audits, baseline data, and harmonised accounting tools across the sector.

Apply robust, standardised metrics and verified reporting to demonstrate the environmental benefits of livestock systems, including carbon capture, soil health, and biodiversity.

Provide fair access to private environmental markets and finance for all farmers, including tenant farmers, ensuring equitable participation in regulated and voluntary environmental markets, while safeguarding tenancy rights.



## HOW OUR VISION FOR THE UPLANDS FITS WITH GOVERNMENT POLICY

	Farming and Food Production	Environment and Nature	Rural Economy and Community	Culture, Heritage and Tradition	Net Zero, Climate Change and Sustainability
Agricultural Transition Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Global Biodiversity Framework		✓			✓
Government Food Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Independent Review on Dartmoor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Nature Recovery Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Land Use Framework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Adaptation Programme	✓	✓			✓
Net Zero Strategy	✓	✓	✓		✓
Plan for Water	✓	✓	✓		✓
Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
25 Year Environment Plan	✓	✓	✓		✓
30x30	✓	✓			✓



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## APPENDIX: Government policies/targets

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- **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** – Convention on Biological Diversity, December 2022
- **Government food strategy** – GOV.UK, June 2022
- **Government response to Independent Review on Dartmoor** – GOV.UK, April 2024
- **Local nature recovery strategies** – GOV.UK, June 2023
- **Land Use Consultation, Defra** – GOV.UK, closed April 2025
- **Third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3)** – GOV.UK, February 2024
- **Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener** – GOV.UK, April 2022
- **Plan for Water: our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water** – GOV.UK, April 2023
- **Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework** – GOV.UK, January 2024
- **25 Year Environment Plan** – GOV.UK, February 2023
- **Environment Improvement Plan 2023** – GOV.UK, February 2023
- **30by30 on land in England: confirmed criteria and next steps** – GOV.UK, October 2024





# THE UPLANDS:

## A VISION FOR PROSPERITY, STEWARDSHIP AND RESILIENCE

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