



A MANIFESTO FOR THE UPLANDS

**All Party Parliamentary Group
for Hill Farming**

February 2019



**APPG
HILL
FARMING**



FOREWORD

Britain's hills and upland areas are some of the most beautiful in the world. They deliver crucial public goods – beautiful landscapes for us all to enjoy and underpin our vital visitor economy, maintaining and developing biodiversity, protecting population centres from flood risk, providing drinking water for our towns and cities and preserving our heritage to name just a few. Most crucially of all, our hills provide food for people up and down the country.



Farming is at the heart of all activity in the uplands. Without a viable farming industry there would not be the people, food production nor the 'world class' beautiful landscapes on which the uplands and many nationally recognised sites are based. The Government's proposed "clear vision" for upland areas needs to reflect this and ensure that farming and food production are sustainable and successful there.

Uplands farmers face unique challenges. Farming on the hills is a tough life, and farmers incomes have been challenged by volatile prices and rising variable costs and rents. Access to housing and broadband is particularly difficult and it can be challenging to diversify and install modern farm infrastructure - vital in a competitive international market – in the uplands. All of this within a context of uncertainty over the future trading and regulatory environment as well as government support.

It is vital the government recognises the strategic importance of the uplands and the huge array of public goods and benefits that upland farming provides. The uplands are a living landscape, home to people and wildlife, and farming and environmental delivery must be completely intertwined.

We should be clear that it will not be possible to provide this vast array of public goods in the absence of an active farming community in the uplands to deliver them. Therefore the best thing we can do to preserve and enhance public goods in our uplands is to make sure that they continue to be farmed.

When designing future agriculture policy, the unique environmental value of specific areas such as the uplands should be recognised. Support measures should be tailored to the needs of farmers in these areas, allowing productive, profitable agriculture to thrive maintaining, sustaining and enhancing the natural environment in these special places.

Tim Farron MP
Member of Parliament for Westmorland and Lonsdale,
Chair, APPG for Hill Farming



UPLANDS MANIFESTO

Livestock farming is the principal industry of the uplands, underpinning rural economies. The uplands are home to 44% of breeding ewes and 40% of beef cows in England and 85% of beef cows and 75% of breeding ewes in Wales. For centuries the uplands have been a living working landscape, shaped by grazing livestock and the farmers that look after them, delivering for the environment, our food and our rural communities.

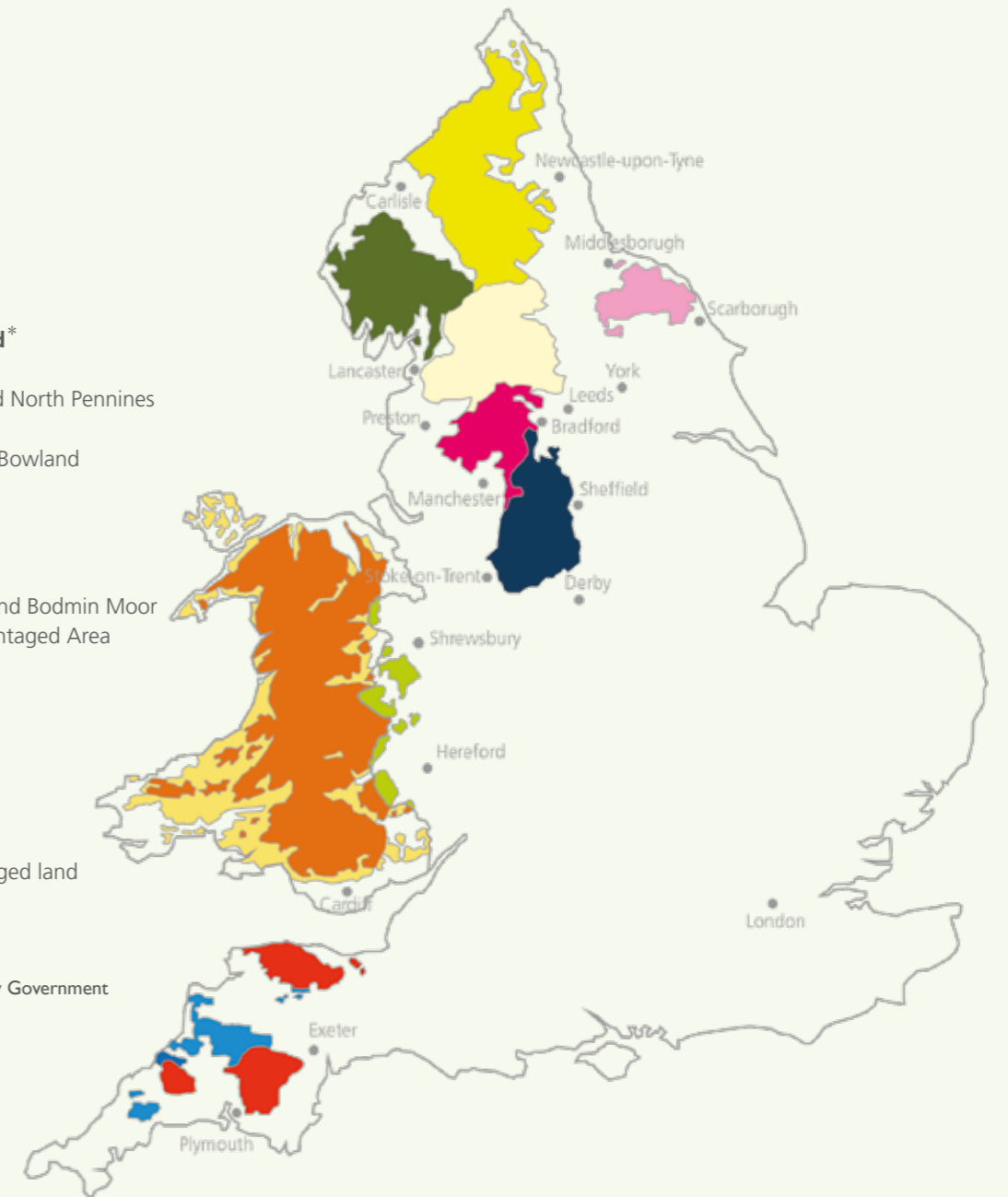
Upland regions in England*

- 1. Northumberland and North Pennines
- 2. Lake District
- 3. Yorkshire Dales and Bowland
- 4. North York Moors
- 5. South Pennines
- 6. Peak District
- 7. Welsh Borders
- 8. Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor
- 9. South West Disadvantaged Area

LFA Status in Wales**

- 1. Disadvantaged land
- 2. Severely, Disadvantaged land

* As defined by DEFRA
** As defined by Welsh Assembly Government



“Farming is at the core of rural communities in upland areas of England and Wales and has played a crucial role in delivering safe, traceable and affordable food for the nation for decades. Working alongside nature is vital to our role as food producers and we take great pride in the cherished countryside we protect. From grazing livestock to maintaining footpaths for the millions of visitors to our land, the environment is at the centre of all we do. As we look ahead, it has never been more important to ensure that new policy decisions recognise the contributions of the uplands to the country.”

Thomas Binns, NFU Uplands Forum Chairman



KEY ASKS

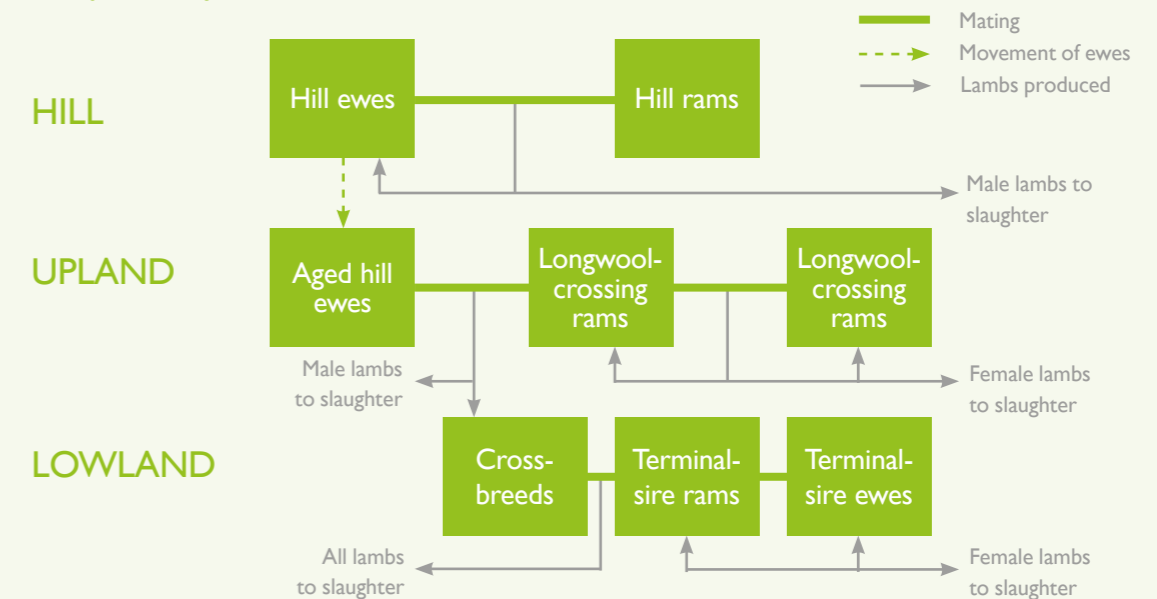
To maintain a profitable upland and hill farming sector, that also delivers public benefits, policy decisions must recognise the unique challenges faced by upland farmers. Productive farming delivers the infrastructure, economy and the people that produce these beautiful landscapes, for which the uplands are recognised today.

1. Agriculture underpins the uplands’ vibrant rural economy and community. Future policy should recognise that a thriving agricultural sector is part of a wider agri-food and fuel industry that is economically, environmentally, socially, culturally and strategically important.
2. It is vital that the Government secures the right trade outcome for hill and upland farmers. UK lamb exports equate to one third of production and go primarily to France (54%) and Germany (12%). Tariff-free access to the EU market is crucial for the UK livestock sector.
3. Farming and environmental delivery is completely intertwined and has created the beautiful grazed landscapes which characterise the uplands. Future policy has to ensure environment schemes build and develop this relationship to allow productive, profitable agriculture alongside maintaining, as well as enhancing our natural environment.
4. Future environment schemes must be simple, with quick and efficient delivery mechanisms that provide a fair payment on time. With hill and upland farmers delivering so much for the environment, the nation’s health and wellbeing and other public goods, providing fair and timely levels of funding for this work is crucial.
5. Hill and Upland farmers must be involved in the development of the new policies to support farming and the environment, including the new Environmental Land Management Scheme for England and the Land Management Programme in Wales. It’s vital to ensure future policies deliver for hill and upland areas, recognising the complex land management relationships, such as common land arrangements.



PRODUCING FOOD AND FIBRE IN THE HILLS AND UPLANDS

Sheep Industry Stratification



Hill and Upland livestock are not only responsible for shaping iconic landscapes and habitats but are also a key part of our food networks and supply chains, helping to feed the nation.

The hills and uplands are a vital part of our livestock industries, ensuring healthy, sustainable and genetically sound replacement livestock. These production systems allow for British lamb to be produced all year round, with the UK being the 6th largest producer of sheep meat globally.

Sheep reared in the British uplands spend a majority, if not all of their lives outside at grass.

These extensive production systems create a fantastic product; grass-fed red meat which, as part of a balanced diet, holds a huge range of health benefits. Red meat is highly nutritious and contains a very high concentration of iron, zinc and B Vitamins, including B12, which is not naturally found in plant-based foods.

Additionally, wool production for England and Wales totals 21.7 million kilos every year. This renewable fibre is sustainable and versatile, being used in the production of carpets, soft furnishings and knitwear.



THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF FARMING IN THE HILLS AND UPLANDS

Hill and Upland farmers are central to both protecting and enhancing our natural environment, both for current and future generations, through:

- Thriving plants and wildlife**
 53% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest land is found in the uplands, with 96% of upland SSSI's being in favourable or recovering condition. Appropriate grazing is key to conserving many priority habitats such as limestone grassland and upland heath.
- Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment**
 From Dartmoor to Derbyshire, the Pennines to the Peaks, upland and hill farming plays a pivotal role in helping to enhance our much-loved landscapes, with over 70% of the uplands within designated landscapes. Almost every aspect of the hills owes its existence to generations of livestock farmers and their animals. Farmers' craftsmanship ensures miles of stone walls, hedges and buildings that characterise these landscapes. This is delivered alongside open access Moorland, creating a key national asset for health and well-being by providing these green and open spaces.

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change**
 Upland peat soils and blanket bogs are the largest stores of carbon in the UK, accounting for over 200 million tonnes in England's uplands alone. Efforts by farmers to protect these habitats are ongoing through sustainable grazing, avoiding erosion, and managing wildfire risk, which helps protect the carbon locked in peat soils. In addition, grassland soils are managed by farmers to maintain the carbon stored, alongside improving the productivity and therefore environmental footprint of the livestock.
- Clean and plentiful water**
 70% of the UK's drinking water is sourced from the uplands and best farming practice enhances water quality at source rather than relying on expensive treatment units. Upland farmers are also key to 'slow the flow' initiatives, helping to mitigate against flooding in high rainfall periods.

Upland and hill farmers have generations of expertise and local knowledge. This should be harnessed to develop and deliver enduring local solutions, with clarity about what is required and why, where farmers are rewarded by government and/or the market directly and fairly for their actions.



SOCIOECONOMIC BENEFITS DELIVERED BY FARMING IN THE HILLS AND UPLANDS

A viable and profitable upland farming sector delivers a wide range of social, economic and cultural benefits in addition to food and environmental goods and services.

Economy
 Farming is the driving force behind the uplands' economy and has an employment multiplier effect, contributing through purchases of inputs such as feed and machinery as well as the processing, distribution and marketing of food products through the supply chain. Within the South West, each direct livestock farming role supports an additional three jobs linked to the industry.

Community
 Upland farming areas have a renowned sense of community, with the Exmoor Forward Farming Group' as part of Exmoor Hill Farm Network or the Dartmoor Farmers marketing agreement with a major retailer, being just some examples of the success which can be achieved through collaboration.

Tourism
 The very landscape created by farming is part of what brings over 3 billion visits to the countryside every year. This in turn supports local jobs and businesses. Such attractions include the treasured landscapes of the National Parks, with 9 National Parks being in upland farming areas. England's upland National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty receive nearly 70 million day visits every year, with visitors spending £1.78 billion.

Value for Money
 Investing in the public benefits provided by upland and hill farming provides immense value. Annual government payments to upland farmers in England currently are £230 million, equating to just £3.30 per public visit; less than a day's parking in the city centre.

People come from all over the world to visit the iconic landscapes of our upland areas – from the Lake District to the Brecon Beacons. These landscapes simply would not exist without farming.

ABOUT THE APPG FOR HILL FARMING

The role of the APPG for Hill Farming is to promote and protect hill farming interests and the communities that depend upon hill farming throughout the United Kingdom. Raising issues of concern with government ministers, departments and relevant national assemblies.



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