



# Challenges Facing Farmers

A report into upland farming and farming families in Teesdale

Funded by



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## Further Information

For further details about this project and/or if you are interested in the work of UTASS, please contact Diane Spark by email [diane@utass.org](mailto:diane@utass.org) or telephone 01833 641010  
Website: [www.utass.org](http://www.utass.org)

# Summary

Teesdale is a rare and beautiful landscape which has been formed through animal husbandry and land management techniques through generations. Ensuring the viability of upland farmers so that they can continue as producers of food and stewards of these valuable natural resources has been an ongoing concern for policy-makers, public bodies, businesses, charities, rural communities and environmental groups. All recognise that it is harder for upland farmers, who are highly dependent on livestock, to make a living out of agriculture alone.

The purpose of the 'challenges facing farmers' project was to consider the issues facing upland farmers in Teesdale, the livelihood strategies that they implement to maintain or increase their income and the organisations that support them in ameliorating some of the financial difficulties that they face. The project was carried out between 2011 and 2012, at a time when some farmers were experiencing a rare recovery in prices, with global demand for meat leading to much needed increases in lamb and beef prices. At the same time, costs were going up (e.g. feed, fertiliser and fuel), farm support payments changing and public sector spending being reduced; meaning conditions going forward remain difficult. These circumstances had been further exacerbated by the recession, particularly in terms of its impact on the ability of farmers to generate off-farm incomes.

The project took an in-depth look at the lives of 20 individual farmers, the majority of them in the tenanted sector. It considered not only their farm business but also took into consideration wider aspects of their livelihoods. This was supplemented by interviewing community/stakeholder organisations that support farmers through challenging times. The project team included a researcher who spent a period of time living in the local community, visiting key meeting and social interaction points used by farmers (e.g. auction mart, community centres, post office, retail and leisure outlets).

## Key findings

- Farmers described how their farm income fluctuated, often due to circumstances beyond their control. For many upland farmers, their pattern of income relied upon two payments: (1) when they received their Single Farm Payment – with farmers anticipating receiving this annually each November/December (but for some the money failing to arrive until the following June); and (2) what they were paid for their livestock at back-end sales.
- These income circumstances led to situations where farmers couldn't afford to pay bills or mend broken equipment, had to forgo basics (such as food) and lower their input costs (e.g. reduce the amount or quality of feed given to livestock).
- While the widely accepted definition of poverty is having a household income which is 60% less of the average, and the Minimum Income Standard 2012 found a single working-age adult living in a village needed to earn at least £19,820 (compared to £16,383 in an urban area); upland farmers in Teesdale had an income of £12,600 (with some earning much less, just £8,000 a year).
- Those farmers finding themselves in farm poverty exhibited a number of characteristics. They were often operating without adequate insurance, unable to pay into a pension scheme, had no or few savings to draw upon and depended upon off-farm income to balance the farm budget. Many farmers felt vulnerable to decisions made by their landlord and bank, and some were exhibiting mental health and personal well-being issues.
- Farmers undertook a range of livelihood strategies to try and lessen the financial pressures they were under. These included: arranging and using an overdraft facility, taking out a loan, asking family members to help out on the farm, prioritising the payment of bills and generating some income off-farm.
- The livelihood strategy chosen by farmers depended upon: (i) cost – whether they could afford the overdraft fees or loan repayment schedule, (ii) time – how long the gap in income was predicted to last, and (iii) climate and seasonality – e.g. wet weather presenting additional animal feed costs.
- A number of support 'strands' underpin farmers livelihoods and ameliorates some of the financial challenges that they face. UTASS was seen to play a significant role, acting as a 'one stop shop' in providing services directly and in signposting people to other organisations. Accessing free and confidential advice from the local Citizens Advice Bureau (to resolve money issues and/or check benefits entitlement), receiving small grants from agricultural charities and being able to turn to other 'trusted' local organisations in times of hardship and distress were all seen as important.

## Conclusions

This research illuminates how poverty is a severe and stifling condition that is becoming more intense amongst farmers in the Teesdale area. One way of thinking about poverty is on a continuum: from free will (at one end) to having no life choices (at the other end).

The challenge for organisations seeking to ameliorate some of the negative impacts of poverty involves both joining up intelligence and actions to make their interventions as effective as possible whilst finding strategies to overcome the significant funding cuts that they face.

The research has, therefore, generated six project ideas or 'action plans' of relevance to farming organisations and other rural facing organisations. They are:

- To address the challenge of declining off-farm incomes on the sustainability of farming communities.
- To encourage the transfer of upland livestock farming skills to the next generation/new entrants.
- To identify how the type of support farmers require in the uplands is changing.
- To develop a list/directory of organisations whose activities align, complement, replicate or enhance local support for upland communities.
- To encourage young people to shape the activities of farming support organisations and expand young people's services (particularly around training and employment).
- To think through the unique needs of the upland geography in which local farming organisations operate.

There are three key issues that this report can help policy-makers to understand:

1. How to raise awareness and take-up of benefits by recognising the challenges that farmers face in claiming State Benefit as a mechanism through which low incomes can be enhanced.
2. How to improve skills development and the generation of off-farm income amongst farmers for whom there are increased costs and practical difficulties for them to access services (e.g. Jobcentre Plus).
3. How to address the problem of exclusion experienced by members of the farming community from mainstream healthcare (particularly mental health provision).

What is clear from this project is that farmers want to earn a living from the livestock they raise and are proud individuals who do not want to rely on handouts. However, for many farmers the present structure of the industry means that they do not feel able to invest in their farms or livelihoods, with many having to make ends meet just to get by.

# Introduction

*I spent a lot of time with hill farmers...realising that there could be a potential difficulty and a problem in the future, bearing in mind their low incomes. It wasn't just that; it was the knock-on effect...it was on visits...that I saw not only the problem but also the potential that could be there around hill farming and hill farming communities.*

Stuart Burgess, Chair, the Commission for Rural Communities. <sup>1</sup>

*The key to land management is balance. We are talking about finding ways to reward a different balance of outputs from the hills because if we simply carry on as we are, we will not change the poverty in the hills.*

Professor Alan Buckwell, Policy Director, Country Land & Business Association. <sup>2</sup>

*Supporting the retention of viable and sustainable upland livestock farming and promoting sustainable moorland management are vital factors in keeping the area special.*

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan. <sup>3</sup>

Teesdale is one of England's most special places – a stunning and iconic landscape formed by generations of agricultural endeavour. The future of this valuable landscape and the communities that live there continues to depend upon hill farming as a principle form of land management. Yet as the quotations above illustrate, farmers living and working the land are operating at the margins of financial viability, with low, or even negative returns. Many farmers rely heavily upon funding available through the Single Farm Payment and agri-environment schemes, with some diversifying or finding employment off-farm to support their income. Many have become isolated, overwhelmed by bureaucracy, confused by disjointed Government policies, unsure of their ability to continue farming particularly around securing their farm tenancy or planning for retirement.

We are also in a period of change. When Environment Secretary Caroline Spelman launched Rural and Farming Networks in 2012, she described how “for too long, little was done to address rural poverty or rural employment”. Although supporting and developing British farming is a policy priority within Defra, this needs to be reconciled with the impact of the recession and economic downturn, tax and benefits changes, reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, increasing farm input costs and rising food prices.

This report is based upon, and gives voice to, farmer's needs and circumstances of what it is like to farm in Teesdale amid these shifts. It highlights farmer's experiences of living on a low income and/or in poverty, the opportunities and barriers they face and the organisations that support them.

The rest of this document contains a statistical profile of farming and income for Teesdale, the causes of farm poverty, how farmers cope and what is being done to support those on low incomes and in poverty.

# What is farm poverty?

The widely accepted definition of poverty is having a household income which is 60% less of the average (median). But it is not merely about 'indicators' but also going without basics (i.e. lacking the latest gadgets, the ability to go on holiday, or attend a school trip).

Poverty is a complex, multi-faceted and ultimately personal experience. The use of statistics to describe it is constrained by the different geographical levels that they are collected at, the timescales that they cover and the implications that they have in terms of describing the wider impacts of poverty.

Studies of poverty in the UK have tended to focus principally on an urban agenda. Yet understanding rural poverty (including the opportunities and challenges around moving out of poverty in rural areas) is a key component of sustainable rural development. However, there is no clear understanding of what living in poverty in rural places is like and how that might differ from experiences of living in poverty in urban places.<sup>4</sup> Due to this, an increasing body of evidence has examined the characteristics of poverty and low incomes in rural England.

A report prepared for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>5</sup> (2009), for example, considered the distribution of poverty in rural England (using the 60% less of average household income definition). It found that 19% of the population in rural districts (some 3.4 million people) live in households with incomes below the government's main threshold of low income. Given that there are 11.2 million people in England living in low-income households, one-third of these live in rural districts.

25% of children (1,000,000 young people) live in households below the low income threshold. Two-thirds of these children live in families where at least one parent is working. 17% of pensioners (600,000 older people) live in households below the low income threshold. Half of all lone parents live in low-income households, as do almost half of those in social housing. 11% of working-age adults are in receipt of out-of-work benefits. A further 16% of working age households is in receipt of in-work tax credits over and above the standard family element.<sup>6</sup>

A Minimum Income Standard<sup>7</sup> for the United Kingdom (MIS) is an ongoing research programme by Loughborough University and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation defining what level of income is needed to allow a minimum acceptable standard of living today. Based upon household budgets and what members of the public think people need for an acceptable standard of living, MIS also explores how the needs and costs vary between urban and rural households. The MIS for 2012 found rural budgets to be higher than urban budgets, in part due to higher domestic fuel costs in rural places as well as rural residents requiring cars and having less access to public transport. In 2012, single working-age adults living in villages needed to earn at least £19,820 compared with £16,383 in urban areas.

So what does it mean to be a farmer living in poverty in England? According to the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), in 2010 one-quarter of farming households were living below the poverty line. The poorest 25% of farms had a household income of less than £20,000 a year and one-third of those had failed to make a profit over the past three years. The CRC found many farmers had diversified or found other ways to earn money away from the farm to survive. Interestingly, the CRC concluded that struggling farmers were more likely to be older people in upland areas:

While many farming households have successfully increased production, resilience and farm incomes, one in four are living in poverty. These struggling farms are likely to have grazing livestock and be located in upland areas. Many are left trapped in poverty without the resources or support to earn a living wage. Tackling poverty among farming households is long overdue. The Government should actively promote farm business support and the take-up of income related benefits to eligible farming households.<sup>8</sup>

Following the CRC's observations on farm business profitability, the 'Farming Lives' project looked at the position of hill farmers in the Peak District. Led by the National Farmers Network (and funded by Oxfam), practitioners used a Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (see Annex 2) to help them understand: (i) the complexities of people's lives, (ii) the circumstances within which they conduct their livelihoods, and (iii) how they overcome barriers to improve the sustainability of their livelihoods. The study found:

Financially most families were facing difficulties and relied on off farm income to supplement the business and on diversification. There was evidence of a high level of resourcefulness and a number of strategies had been adopted to adapt to the situation. Financial issues were compounded by the lack of ability to plan for retirement. In terms of human assets, health was seen as most important, although most carried on whatever their state of health. There was little evidence of mental health issues. There was failure to acknowledge and value the skills they had in relation to farming. Children were encouraged to become better educated which then led them outside farming. Access to clear information was highlighted as lacking by some. Overall, participants had confidence in running their own business and understanding the land and livestock. Most families demonstrated strong inter and intra generational linkages. This could, however, cause tension and breakdown because of close physical proximity both at home and at work, which could have a detrimental effect on the business. Community activity tended to be a female reserve as men claimed not to have the time. Isolation was becoming more of an issue as more family members worked away from the farm.<sup>9</sup>

Although mental health issues had been cited by only one participant in the project, stress and depression were evident, confirming the hidden danger of mental health problems not being readily recognised by the farming community.

The 'poverty amongst farming households' and 'farming lives' reports, while reflecting the picture for farmers up and down the country, illuminate some of the issues apparent among livestock and tenant farmers; many of whom struggle to make ends meet. Were it not for the support they receive in European subsidies many more would fall below the poverty line. What is it like to be a livestock, upland farmer in Teesdale struggling to make ends meet? Twenty face-to-face interviews with farmers were carried out to build a picture of their narratives of the opportunities, challenges and barriers to making a living off the land. This was supplemented by a series of interviews with key stakeholders, a desktop policy review and an analysis of statistics and datasets for the local area.

# Teesdale and Farming



Teesdale contains a significant proportion of the landmass of County Durham but has little of the overall population. Teesdale also contains less than 1% of that of the North East as a region.

It is rural in character. According to the Government's rural-urban definition, Teesdale has no formal urban components and more than 40% of its population live in small villages, hamlets and isolated dwellings:

Rural/Urban Classification	Percentage of Population		
	AAP	County	England and Wales
Urban	0.0%	56.5%	82.0%
Town and Fringe	55.8%	34.0%	10.0%
Village, Hamlet & Isolated Dwellings	44.2%	9.5%	9.8%

Source: Teesdale 2010 Area Action Partnership Profile <sup>10</sup>

Teesdale has an overall population of 24,600 and a working age population of 14,400. At 0.29 people per hectare, it is sparsely populated. With a population aged 65 years and over of 7,000, Teesdale has a skewed elderly demography.

Population 2010	Teesdale	North East (numbers)	Great Britain (numbers)
All people	24,600	2,606,600	60,462,600
Males	12,400	1,279,100	29,758,900
Females	12,300	1,327,500	30,703,700

Source: NOMIS official labour market statistics <sup>11</sup>

Teesdale has a higher proportion of manufacturing, construction and tourism jobs compared to the North East and Great Britain average, and a lower proportion of service sector jobs:

Employee jobs 2008	Teesdale (employee jobs)	North East (%)	Great Britain (%)	
Total employee jobs	8,300	-	-	
Full-time	5,900	71.4	68.2	
Part-time	2,400	28.6	31.8	
Employee jobs by industry				
Manufacturing	1,800	21.4	12.0	
Construction	700	8.3	5.6	
Services	5,300	64.1	81.0	
Distribution, hotels & restaurants	1,900	22.9	22.1	
Transport & communications	300	3.6	5.3	
Finance, IT, other business activities	600	7.7	16.6	
Public admin, education & health	2,100	25.1	32.2	
Other services	400	4.9	4.8	
Tourism-related <sup>†</sup>	800	9.9	8.4	

Source: NOMIS official labour market statistics <sup>12</sup>

Teesdale has a higher proportion of people employed as farmers than the North East Average –containing 16% of its farmers and 10% of its farmed area. The farming activities are predominantly livestock with some arable and cereals. Teesdale has 14% of the cattle, 13% of the sheep and pigs and 14% of all poultry production in the North East:

Activity	Teesdale	NE	%
F/PT Farmers	1130	7258	0.16
Hectares	58330	587480	0.10
Cereals	4833	108365	0.04
Arable	1426	34228	0.04
Grassland	49707	397162	0.13
Cattle	38870	285764	0.14
Sheep	254567	1935151	0.13
Pigs	10726	85319	0.13
Poultry	345000	2453565	0.14

Source: Defra (2007) Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture

Teesdale has significantly more farmers than the regional average: 1 farmer per 51 hectares compared to 1 farmer per 80 hectares. There is a tradition of small tenant farms.

Using the Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services (UTASS) database, twenty farmers were identified. These farmers varied according to age; location; whether they were on a farm business tenancy, succession tenancy or owner occupiers; and whether they regularly accessed support from UTASS, infrequently or not at all. The sample included some of the more marginalised and vulnerable farmers in the area (see Annex 1). The farmers were clustered in 3 Lower Super Output Areas covering Eggleston, Mickleton and Langdon Beck, with Middleton-in-Teesdale as the main settlement in the centre of the area.

The total population of this area is approximately 4,500 people. The following key statistics apply in each cluster:

**Number of JSA claimants:** Eggleston – 6, Mickleton – 5, Langdon Beck, Forest & Harwood – 11

**Number of Employees:** Eggleston – 140, Mickleton – 282, Langdon Beck, Forest & Harwood – 238

**Number of Working Age Benefit Claimants:** Eggleston – 60, Mickleton – 70, Langdon Beck, Forest & Harwood – 75

Source: NOMIS official labour market statistics.

The charts below indicate on each of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (domains) how these three clusters or areas relate to the English average (median). Where the blue line is outside of the red boundary the scores for the local area are worse, and where it is inside they are better.

The charts have varied results in terms of comparing the three clusters to the England average. The one common factor is poorer health scores. Individual indicators which are worse than the England average for each cluster include:

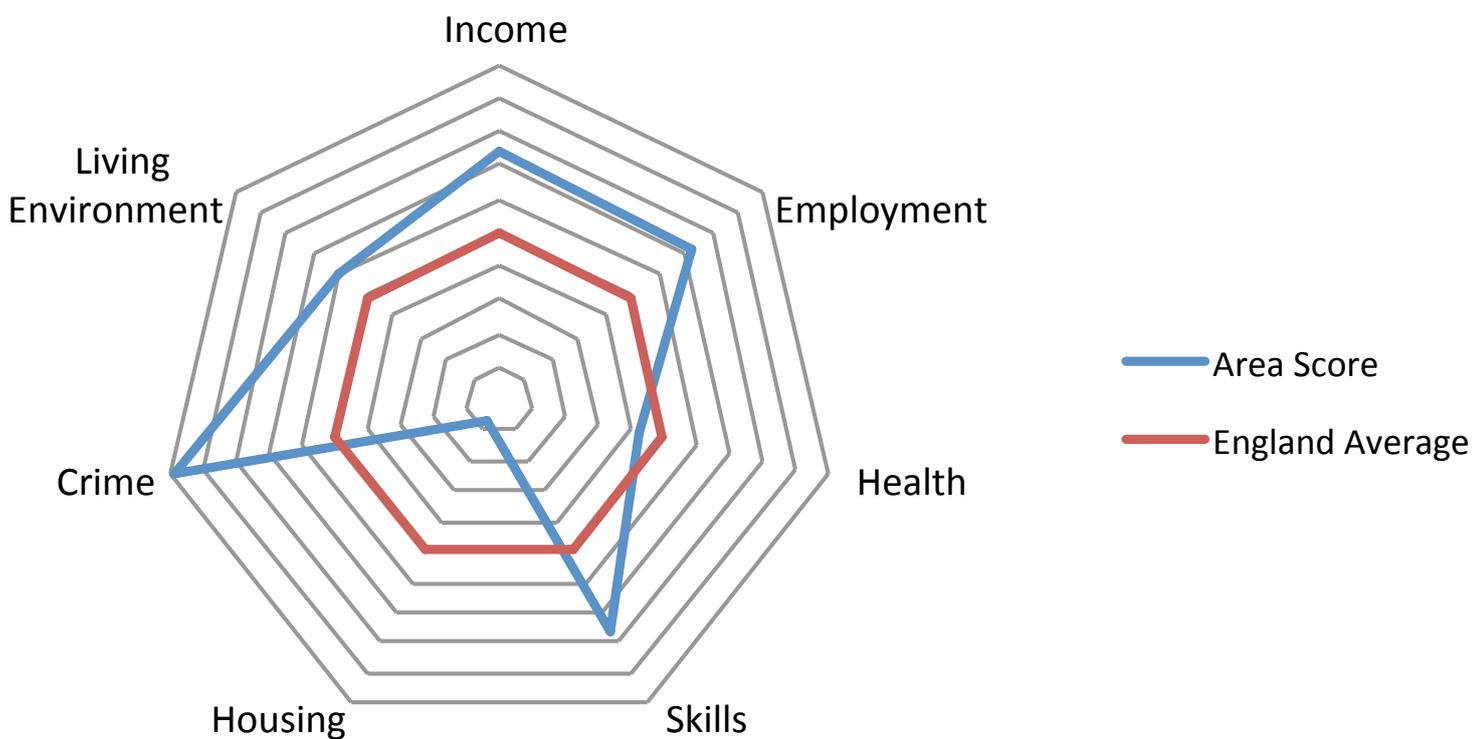
**Eggleston** – worse in income and health domains compared to the England average.

**Mickleton** – worse in terms of employment, health, housing and living environment compared to the England average.

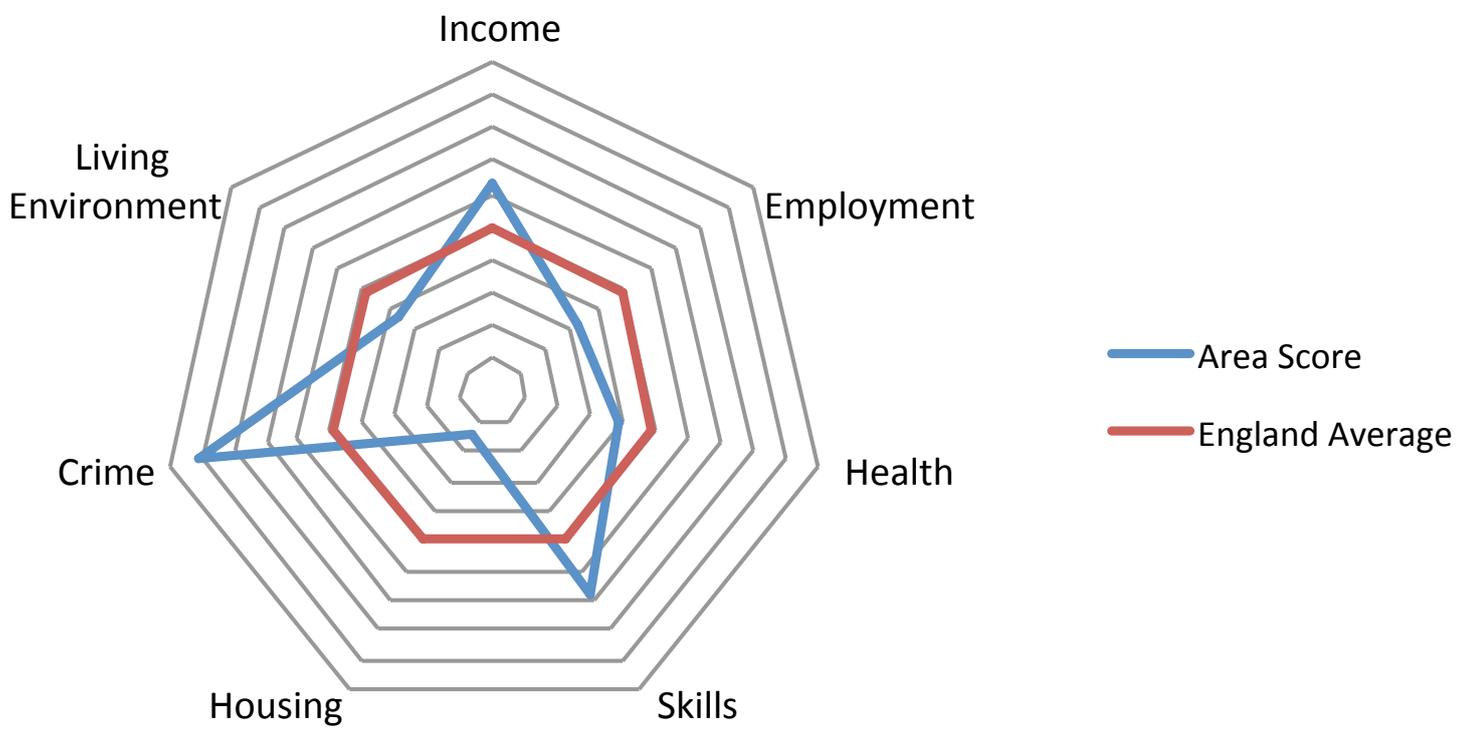
**Langdon Beck, Forest & Harwood** – worse in terms of housing, skills, health, living environment and income when compared to the England average.

Ultimately, the statistics presented above are constrained by the different geographical levels that they are collected at, the different timescales that they cover and the utility in describing the wider impacts of poverty. Only by engaging directly with farmers can a true understanding of the 'have nots' and what the actual lived experiences of poverty are.

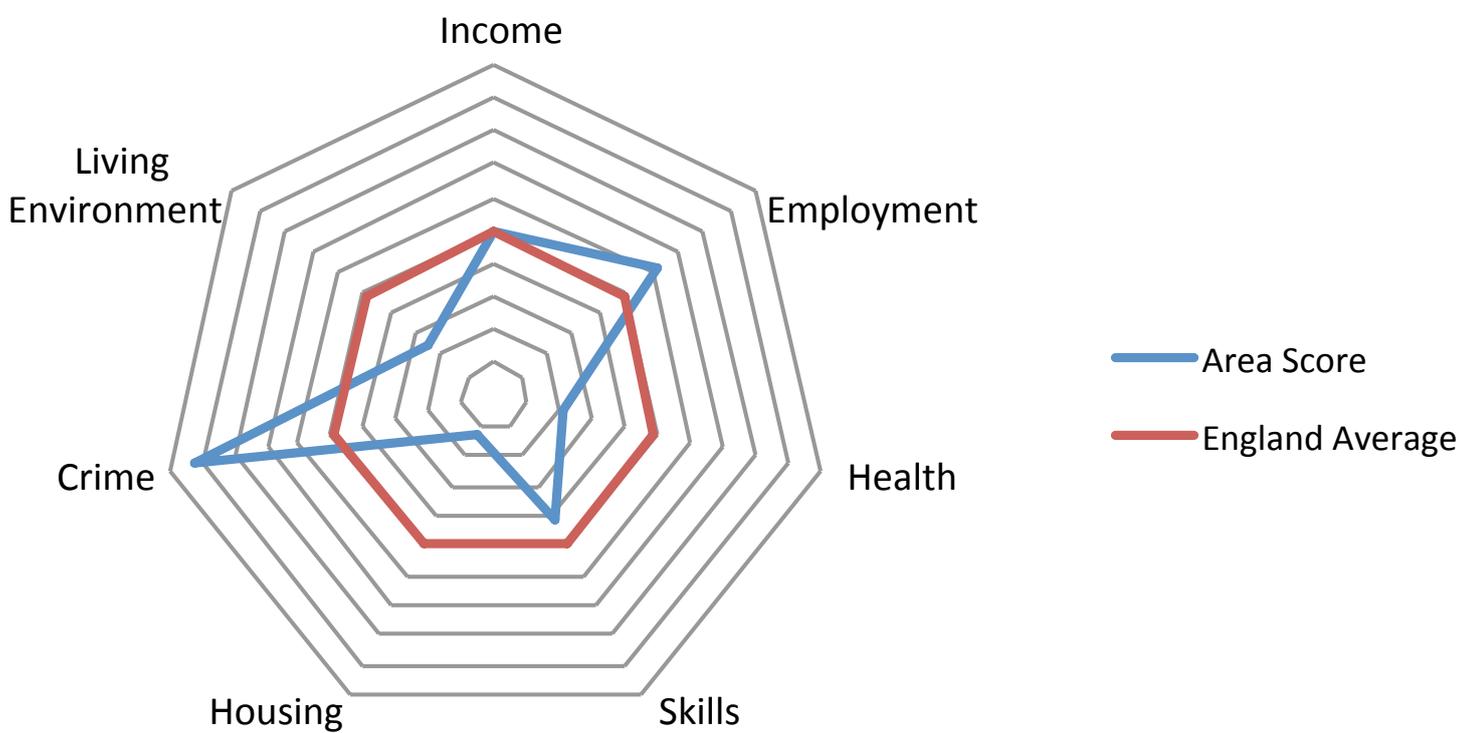
Eggleston



Mickleton



## Langdon Beck, Forest & Harwood



# What does it mean to be in farm poverty in Teesdale?

Twenty face-to-face interviews with farmers were carried out to hear about people's narratives and dialogues of their experiences of farming. This included finding out:

- How long they had farmed in Teesdale and how things had changed since they started farming.
- The main challenges that they faced at the current time and how, if at all, they were coping with these challenges.
- Information about any support that they had received from UTASS or other organisations over the last twelve months.
- Looking to the future, if they thought they would need to change their approach to farming.

A summary of the methodology used can be found in Annex 1. The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (which informed the data collection) is outlined in Annex 2.

During the interviews, farmers were asked to select all, part of, or none of four statements which best described where they are now:

## Statement 1:

You have built up your farm business and are reaping the rewards. Six farmers responded to all or part of this statement, with many citing "in the short term, while lamb prices are up".

## Statement 2:

You are optimistic about the future and looking to make long term improvements to your farm. Seven farmers responded to all or part of this statement:

I'm looking to do more of the same.

If you don't invest in it [the farm], it stands still... The Mart should look into holding a native breed sale twice a year...it would open up the marketplace for us.

Our ultimate aim is to improve the farm, make it tidier, the walls and lots of little projects like that, improve the stock...at my age I should be thinking about slowing down. I've got arthritis, and a bad back, but I'm not packing up.

I would like to make long term improvements but the cost of replacing old buildings for modern ones would run into thousands of pounds.

## Statement 3:

You are getting by, feel hindered by red tape and paperwork, but think that you will be okay. Fourteen farmers responded to this statement:

We're not in control of what we do anymore. We accept the scheme payments but there are restrictions. We're not farming for food anymore, more an environmental type of way.

It's been the worst two years of my life... [Natural England's] been the demise of my farm and reduced my stock...I feel as though I have to look over my shoulder.

I can't farm the land intensively; Natural England is a wage.

You have to keep on top of licences, record all medicines...if you make an innocent mistake I'm frightened they'll come down hard on you...you wonder if they're going to find something. Our biggest fear is what they will do with the nature payments and the Single Farm Payment. What comes in place.

If we only farmed we could live but not to a high standard...but its nice way to bring up a family.

We can't farm any differently because of the land, weather, and restrictions.

## Statement 4:

You feel life can be a struggle and you may need to keep working well into retirement age. Nine farmers identified with all or part of this statement:

We're not a viable business in our own right. I have to work virtually full-time [off farm]...farmers work on a shoestring. If we put costs in like other businesses it wouldn't add up... You keep plodding on until you drop dead.

We haven't anyone else in the chain to pass our costs onto...its marginal land so we can't diversify.

It's hard to get going now, especially for the young, and farmers are paying over the odds in rent.

We aren't making as much money as when we started due to expenses rising.

We'd still need to take a pull off the farm to retire. We haven't got any savings; everything's ploughed back into the farm.

I have seen too many old men die on farms.

The following quotations and case studies illuminate some of the underlying issues which affected the statement(s) selected by farmers:

“There’s little in the way of security... Various payments go into the bank account... It’s when things get tight that you start to panic a bit”. Andrew’s wife used to work part time but her hours have been reduced and “financially that’s an issue for us”.

Stephen works off-farm locally (on an ad hoc basis) and his wife works two days a week at a school: “Gets you out, gives you cash flow and a change of scenery...people don’t give their time for anything now. They ask how much will you pay?”

### **Kathleen and Robert**

Kathleen and Robert are both from farming backgrounds and took on the tenancy of a farm in 1994. They told us how farming is becoming more challenging in Teesdale and how managing their day-to-day costs are the main difficulty that they face: “the landlord wants more money from our farm but we are restricted in the types of farming we can and cannot do. It’s not easy to diversify; even if we did the landlord would want their share in any extra income generated”. Robert needs regular treatment at a hospital (a two-hour drive each way). They told us about the fuel costs of travelling to and from the hospital and needing a 4x4 vehicle on farm: “the cost of fuel is high, we need a pick up to farm here and a tank of diesel costs us £80”. Kathleen and Robert’s son helps out on the farm when Robert is not able to work. They frequently receive their Single Farm Payment late. “You just have to get on with it. We have a bit in the kitty”.

### **Anne and David**

Anne has been farming in Teesdale for more than 45 years on the same holding (140 acres). During Foot and Mouth Disease the farm lost £30,000 and she received financial support from RABI. Since Anne’s husband died her son David has been helping on the farm (combining this with a part time job at an auction mart). Anne explains how “things are dearer – feed, fertiliser, fuel. The price of stock has gone up to compensate but our accountant told us that prices are not in line with inflation. In the 1980s and 1990s we were receiving £40 per sheep, now its £70. Fertiliser cost £154 per tonne in 2000 but it’s now £380 per tonne. David has made the decision not to buy any more fertiliser until March. Diesel prices are dreadful and we spend £600 three times a year to fill our farm vehicles up”. Anne told us that last year her Single Farm Payment was late. She and David were already committed to buying a second hand tractor costing £24,000. They were expecting £11,000 from their Single Farm Payment and to sell cattle to cover the expenditure: “Instead we had to arrange a £20,000 overdraft with the bank”. They still have an overdraft facility in place which costs £60 a quarter. David told us that he had to continue to work on the farm with a broken arm and when he’s been sick.

“ If the Single Farm Payment comes late things are tight. You look at the bills...ask the feed merchant to wait...you can’t plan for that”.

“Money, income, it’s like balancing plates. It’s difficult to find money to invest and keep going...stocks up in value but the bills are through the roof...everything goes up and nothing comes down. You’ve got to use it [the land] to its best value. I’m not one for costing, there’s always a spanner in the works...you have to make a living...as long as I’ve been farming it’s been hand to mouth...I make nowhere near £500 a month...if you’ve got collateral behind you you’re halfway there”.

Many of the responses gained from speaking to key intermediaries and stakeholders also highlight issues around farmers relying upon subsidies to remain above the poverty line and how the most vulnerable and marginalised farmers tend to be tenants rather than owner occupiers. However, stakeholders also identified issues around defining and measuring poverty and in deciding whether they thought farm poverty had increased or decreased. Some stakeholders identified with the quotations and case studies above in describing an increasing lack of security. Other stakeholders thought poverty had declined as fewer farmers were prepared to live at those income levels and/or because livestock (lamb) prices had increased.

Upland farmers have been affected in the past [by poverty], not so bad in the last 16 months. Lamb prices are up. People will survive on small acreage, relying on Single Farm Payment. Some of them are asset rich in livestock and equipment. Some farming accommodation is in a pretty poor state... There are three or four farmers in Teesdale without access to utilities, electricity, gas, water...one of these farmers is 94 years old, living in one room, in a house that hasn't been touched since 1923, Durham County Council.

[farm poverty] is significant...those most under pressure are the tenant farmers of bigger estates...work on fuel poverty where there are some really significant examples of low rent, poor living standards, Durham Rural Community Council.

One of the problems we have is that markers of deprivation in the cities don't act as a mark of deprivation in the rural community. Take access to a car. Here they have access to 2 or 3 vehicles which makes them appear affluent. But they are essential. There's a lack of public transport. I see lots of farmers in the surgery. When a farmer presents at the surgery you generally know it's something serious not something trivial as they can't afford to come in for nothing as its lost time working, Medical Practitioner.

From looking at farmers trading accounts and how much or how little they are drawing from the farm accounts, how are they living? How do they find rent? All of their household expenditure needs to come from the farm too. But that's the way they've always done it and managed. It depends what you mean by poverty – they manage farming the way they've always farmed and they seem to do okay, Bank Manager.

There's the appearance of poverty but it's less prevalent than it was. Less people are prepared to live at these levels. The reality for some is that when they come to retire they can afford to buy a brand new bungalow. Some farmers are surviving on low incomes but have capital and assets, Land Agent.

Farmers tend to keep their problems to themselves and are reluctant to come and see me. They have a sense of pride. Single farmers with no other non-farming income face particular challenges...It's harder for farmers to claim benefits up here as they are self-employed. I saw more farmers when lamb prices were low. I only ask farmers for the minimum amount of financial information I need to work out if they are entitled to benefits, normally their pre-tax profit for tax credits, Citizens Advice Bureau.

The appearance of the house may look poor but its how they choose to live. They're in bed for 5 hours and then outside at work all day...it affects tenants more than owners, Police Officer.

The blip in prices means fewer farmers are struggling now... not sure how long it will last. Many farmers are on a tight margin...farmers need another job alongside farming so they're not in poverty, Auction Mart Representative.

Poverty is not about your income but about your quality of life...Some of the those with the lowest income have the newest vehicles because they don't want to be seen as poor...The appearance to the public world and to your peers is sometimes more important...The environment hill farmers exist in is on the margins of profitability, tittering on pluses or minuses, Farm Crisis Network.

All farmers are affected by it [poverty]. Tenanted farmers and people that own their own farms can be asset rich but in terms of cash what they have to spend can often be a lot less than the minimum wage. Farm profits will vary from farm-to-farm but some are hardly making anything much in the way of profit at all. You can see that people are unable to invest in pensions that you normally can if you have plenty or enough money. Many are keeping going and sustaining things rather than being able to put anything by...Some peoples income now might be less or scaled back by new agreements with Natural England so they have even less coming in. Some of the stock prices in the last couple of years may be buoyant to cover it but if stock prices ease and things tighten in, the feed and fuel costs and household food bills are all increasing...when you look at the bottom line it all eats into those extra prices, UTASS staff member.

# What are the causes of farm poverty?

The personal accounts and narratives above demonstrate how farm poverty is often a result of circumstances beyond an individual farmer's control. In the short term farmers may face a drop in their income linked to increasing input costs and/or personal circumstances relating to ill health. In practice, farmers have limited opportunities to prepare or change these matters at an individual, farm or community level (e.g. passing their costs onto the supply chain, being able to afford to employ contractors to help them to run their farm). Crucially, farming is one of the few businesses where it is difficult to estimate what you will get out (profit) from what you put in (input costs). In many cases farmers told us that they did not have a choice to not pay increased prices for inputs and were restricted in selecting another provider because of their remoteness:

Bills that were coming in for £200-300 are now coming in for £600-700.

Feed costs have doubled fertiliser and fuel as well. Our petrol bill last month was £400.

Last year it cost £600 to fill a diesel tank, this year it is £1,000.

We aren't making as much money as when we started. Oil was 14p per litre 14 years ago and now it costs 60-70p. Tractor diesel was £100 to fill a tank, now it is £900-£1,000. We only have small tractors and don't use much...fertiliser will reach £400 next year. Feed has come down a little but still doubled in two years.

My son has had health problems and needed hospital care. I was left to run the farm on my own...neighbours helped out for free...I've reduced my stock.

Last year snow came early and we had to start feeding them [sheep] sooner...silage and the price you pay to make it up [wrap a bale] has gone up from £1 to £2 per bale in four years and now you have to pay to get rid of your plastic, you can't just burn it on the farm...we also make our own feed, mixing pellets, that saves us £20-£30 per tonne.

Feed was £130 a tonne is now £250. I used to feed 10 cattle a bag of feed; I've reduced this to a bucketful. The straw to bed cattle used to cost £6 per bale, now it's £16. A plastic bale to make your own silage has gone up from £30 to £56. Heating oil was 16p a litre in 2002 is now 60p a litre, and that's reasonable at the moment compared to what it has been.

Fuel is 11-12p per litre more to buy locally – 149 per litre at the nearest garage...Heating is oil and solid fuel; you don't have a choice up here. Last winter there was an eight week waiting list for oil. Being at the top of the Dale, the winter is also long.

In the medium term some of the causes are often structural and related to farm subsidies, payment schemes and paperwork. Some farmers told us about situations where public bodies had inspected their farm and found some anomalies and therefore reduced their payments; and some farmers had received multiple inspections in a short time period from different agencies:

If the scheme payments don't arrive on time we are £10,000 in debt. We're owed £19,000 from Natural England...the stress this causes...I've had it documented by my doctor.

The number of records you need to keep – the movement book for sheep and tagging – is out of hand. You have to keep on top of licences, record all medicines.

Farm assurance paperwork has doubled in a year...I've been sent a 167 page document.

If the Single Farm Payment is late I need to use the overdraft facility at the bank.

My Single Farm Payment arrived in June 2011 [should have arrived in November 2010]. I approached the bank for an overdraft as we were behind with the bills...we had to leave a bill or two. My Single Farm Payment has not arrived again [by December 2011]. After asking the Rural Payments Agency about it, it won't be here until at least April [2012].

The importance of farm subsidies and European payments to farmer's incomes was also highlighted by stakeholders:

In the next ten years it's predicted that the Single Farm Payment will halve from what it is today. At the moment the farmers I work with depend on SFP for their income, Bank Manager.

With a big acreage, if you make a slight mistake or there's a mistake from the other side and the farmer gets blamed. They [public agencies/inspectors] dock the payment and that's their lifeline. It's like getting an inspection and finding a tag is missing...it makes farmers lives a misery and causes sleepless nights, Auction Mart Representative.

Farmers have a good quality of life because cars and phones and bits of equipment are part of the farm expenses. At the same time, they have very little free cash to spend on holidays and luxuries. Overall, profit is pretty flat, but the biggest factor [affecting whether or not they are in poverty] is whether they get subsidies and when, Medical Practitioner.

There's not a lot of margin for errors or mistakes, losing Single Farm Payment you become unviable. Very few farming business would stack up without SFP. During the last Common Agricultural Policy reform it was intended that farmers become viable and ready for the marketplace so they no longer needed SFP. We haven't got there, Farm Crisis Network.

There is longer term uncertainty among farmers around whether they are being asked to manage farm land to conserve and improve the rural environment through Stewardship Schemes, to deliver other wider public goods, and/or to produce more food for a growing population. However, the present structure and nature of farming means that farmers do not feel able to invest in their farms or livelihoods or indeed consider retirement:

The Government is trying to squeeze farmers out.

We're not in control of what we do anymore...There's little in the way of security.

Each Higher Level Stewardship/Entry Level Stewardship Scheme for each farm has different criteria. The schemes last 10 years but could change to 5 years. Not long enough to see any change. Got to talk to them [Natural England] to see how it will fit in with your farm, to see if it is compatible before you sign the agreement.

If farmers are older they cannot maintain the farm and dilapidation happens. Farmers put their heads in the sand...cauldron of wanting to retire but not wanting to give up the farm, Land agent.

There are lots of fingers in the agricultural pie...It's a full-time job at Trading Standards to keep up with Europe, Defra policy, to do all that; you can't expect somebody working on a tenant farm to get it straight away, Durham County Council.

Food prices are going to be higher...we need a fairer share of the cake...we're frozen into a farming system by agri-environment schemes...real risk is legislation could destroy this and turn Upper Teesdale into a museum, Farm Crisis Network.

It's like being told you have to speak Greek tomorrow or we're taking something away from you...There's uncertainty around Common Agricultural Policy and farm incomes and which road Natural England are going to push them [farmers] down. Lots of farmers feel they're not farming anymore with the new Government changes that may be brought in, UTASS staff member.

# How do farmers cope?

When faced with low incomes and challenges around poverty, farmers undertake a range of activities to mitigate these effects, including:

## *Transferring money from a savings account:*

I've transferred money from a savings account at the moment to keep us going.

## *Arranging and/or using an overdraft facility through bank/ financial provider:*

I want to pay off the overdraft but have no idea how I'm going to do this.

It cost £200 to set up a new [overdraft] facility...but we needed it. It costs us £50 a quarter to have the facility, up to £20,000...to increase the overdraft by £10,000 would cost us £200 in charges.

## *A loan from a family member:*

The farm has taken a lot of money to keep it going.

## *Asking family member(s) to help out on the farm:*

If I get sick I rely on my wife and son to help out, if I had to pay the son a wage it would be a non-starter.

Last year I tore the muscles in my leg, was on crutches and couldn't work on the farm. My children had to do jobs before and after school.

## *Prioritising bills:*

In 2006, the Single Farm Payment was in its infancy. The rent couldn't be paid exactly on time on the due date because the Single Farm Payment hadn't been received. We are often at the mercy of the Rural Payments Agency in that if we do not receive our payments on the due date, our own invoices cannot be paid and also the cash flow is affected along with any business plans we may have. One year we had a rent demand. I rang up and explained we wouldn't be able to pay on the due date because we had not received the Single Farm Payment. The landlord understood. I told them before we got into difficulty.

We had to leave a bill or two.

## *Generating income(s) off farm:*

We're not a viable business in our own right. I have to work virtually full-time [off farm].

I want to get some money behind me so I have no overdraft but I have no idea where that money will come from...

buildings I own in the village could be converted into housing.

*Forgoing what are perceived to be luxuries (e.g. days out, holidays, the latest gadgets and other personal items):*

Our kids don't get all the latest gadgets.

The mitigation approach chosen by farmers can depend upon:

- *Cost* – whether the farmer can afford to set up an overdraft facility or a family member can provide an interest free loan and/or help on farm.
- *Time* – how long the gap in income or additional income is required: whether it is for a short term issue (e.g. ill health), medium term (e.g. Single Farm Payment arriving late) or longer term (e.g. future viability of the farm).
- *Climate and seasonality* (e.g. snow and/or wet weather presenting additional animal feed costs).

People don't have a lot of spare cash, with a really wet summer and the ability to get a decent crop gone, they need to get supplementary feed which is a drain on any capital they might have spare. A really bad winter means they need to buy even more feed. Weather can pose difficulties on the cash. They tend to try and manage with poor quality feed that they have but then the stock starts to suffer and are not as healthy as they would be, UTASS staff member.

Some of these strategies can be a risk rather than an opportunity for those on low incomes. For example, one farmer described how "the bank is too keen to lend money". Other farmers told us how they struggled to meet bank charges and interest for setting up, keeping and/or extending an overdraft facility or loan. Many told us that they would like to pay off their overdraft but did not know where the income would come from for them to be able to do this. Finding local employment off-farm to generate income was seen as important but difficult and constrained by (i) the nature of farming itself which does not follow a fixed pattern of days and can involve long hours, therefore needing to be based near to your farm; and (ii) the types of jobs farmers told us they do off-farm can be temporary, seasonal and on a self-employed basis therefore providing little in the way of security. In many cases farmers perceived a stigma to be attached to approaching individuals and organisations for help and support.

# What is being done to support farmers on low incomes and living in poverty?

A picture of farmer's networks and the support available to them was collated from the farmer interviews and supplemented by information provided by the stakeholders (see Annex 3 for further explanation).

Farmers told us about the following groups, organisations, activities and places that underpin and shape their farming (and off-farm) practices:

- UTASS (help completing paperwork, training sessions, laptop loan scheme, regular agricultural and community briefings, the youth group, farm advice, liaising with landlords and other agencies).
- Family, friends and neighbours.
- Agricultural contractors (for gathering, shearing, hay making and silage).
- National Farmers Union (for legal assistance, form filling and paperwork).
- Country Land & Business Association (for farm insurance).
- Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (providing financial assistance for farmers facing hardship and in need).
- Addington Fund (financial assistance including emergency grants for farming families).
- Landlords/Estates (e.g. getting into difficulty paying rents, renewing tenancies, succession planning, works).
- Professional agricultural societies (e.g. Sheep and sheep dog Associations).
- Agricultural and specialist trade show organisations (e.g. tractors, rare breeds, horses, poultry, heritage).
- Outdoor activities and leisure (e.g. flamingo land, Metro Centre, shooting, rugby).
- Local schools, nursery, childminder and school transport.
- Social Committees (e.g. village hall committee, sports days, tea parties).
- Local employers (e.g. quarry, garage, school, medical centre).
- Banks (e.g. providing overdraft, loan and business planning facilities; farmers support the local branch to try and keep it open).
- Medical centre and hospital.
- Public transport (e.g. buses).
- Village hall.

- Church (e.g. hall usage).
- Auction Marts.
- Park and playing fields.

These activities are broad, with some providing services to the individual farmer (e.g. doctor/medical practice–health), others offering a social activity (e.g. UTASS – youth group), or about local governance (e.g. a social committee). Not all these things underpin every farm or farmer. Not everyone is involved in everything! The particular activity profile depends on factors such as age, location, time and approach to farming.

We have set out below sample activity profiles for four individual farmers:

## John and Sue

Neighbours help them to clean out cows and feed the sheep.

They receive regular briefings and emails from UTASS.

They ask staff at UTASS to check their Single Farm Payment scheme forms.

They have received financial support from RABI.

They have turned to the NFU for advice.

They attend the local Church.

They keep horses.

Vet comes out to treat horses and stock.

They have visited the Medical practice (about a stress related illness).



## Rachel

Her children help out on the farm doing jobs before and after school

The children also attend the UTASS youth club and the local rugby club.

UTASS supports Rachel with form filling and farm paperwork.

In her spare time she goes to the local Riding club.

Rachel is a tenant farmer and liaises with the landlord about the tenancy and rental payments.

Rachel would like local bus services to be retained.



The list of activities and individual farmer profiles above share a number of key characteristics including:

## UTASS

UTASS plays a significant role in the life of farmers and farming communities. It is a 'one stop shop' in supporting farmers directly by providing a range of activities, signposting to other organisations with a footprint in the local area and in making a wider contribution to the rural community:

Covers such a wide range... They were invaluable to me during Foot and Mouth, helping with different licenses so I could move stock.

The newsletters are informative...rules change, reminder of dates...We try to do a lot for ourselves and just phone for advice and occasional help filling forms in.

Our kids sometimes use the youth group.

UTASS is an unbelievable help, a place where they all know they can go, Police Officer.

UTASS is accessed by some farmers on a regular basis as a way of gaining help completing farm paperwork; by other farmers on an ad-hoc and specific basis (e.g. help completing the Single Farm Payment form); and by other farmers to cope with shocks and when they have reached a desperate stage (e.g. bereavement, debt, during Foot and Mouth Disease).

## Debbie

The UTASS minibus takes Debbie's children to and from the UTASS youth club.

Debbie uses the local bank for the farm business.

She uses the local Auction Mart to sell stock.

Debbie has received computer training at UTASS and takes agricultural queries to UTASS staff.

A company in Newcastle helps Debbie with form filling.

She is on the governing body of a local school.

Debbie is also a member of a Social committee which organises activities for local children and senior citizens.

In their spare time, Debbie's children train at a local rugby club.



## UTASS

**UTASS opened its office in May 2000 and aims to prevent problems from getting to the desperate stage by providing a wide range of support services to communities in the Durham Dales (specialising in agricultural matters). UTASS is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The organisation has more than 1,600 family members and is run by 9 local staff (1 full time and 8 part time - mainly farmers plus volunteers and managed by 11 local voluntary Trustees.**

*When we first started going and the first Foot and Mouth outbreak came along, it was licensing, keeping in touch with people, sorting out forms for them...People started bringing in other forms, then Single Farm Payment came in, photocopying forms for them, mapping, a whole raft of cross compliance and its gradually built up...sheep EID [Electronic Identification], cross compliance...it all comes back to the EU Commission and the civil service at Defra.*

*You can help people in the short term who have very little in the way of spare cash, who have a few things and come and ask what can I do? I can't go back to the bank or go back to a family member and borrow some more...UTASS would be one of the first places people would look to phone for help and if we couldn't help them we could look for organisations that could. Before UTASS farmers would be worried.*

Farmers that have approached UTASS on low incomes and/or in poverty include:

1. A farmer diagnosed with a long term illness with over 100 sheep on their farm and owing more than £50,000 to the bank. They were getting too old to run the farm but couldn't repay the borrowing. UTASS supported the farmer in running the farm and handing over the tenancy to the landlord.
2. A single farmer in his late 40's took over the family farm which is too small to make a living from. He is only maintaining solvency now through extremely careful living.

Examples of practical support that UTASS has offered to farmers and farming families:

*One family had borrowed vastly from a family member and were managing but they had one or two things go wrong: the washing machine had broken down and the livestock trailer wasn't road worthy and pulled up by Trading Standards at one of the Marts - a second hand one was going to be £1,000. They had an overdraft too that was maxed out. They were quite distressed. Money was awarded [from a Charitable Trust] to help them purchase that kit.*

*A lady in poor health had a double glazing window bill that she couldn't pay. We sent an application off to RABI and she managed to use that to clear it. She did seem to be a different person after that. The landlord had paid half and she was duty bound to pay the other half but couldn't afford to. She'd never had a holiday, farmed on her own and worked really hard.*

*With cash flow there can be short spells of dire need where payments don't manifest themselves as quickly as they could. I've had a local animal feed supplier ask me about a farmer and I pointed out the payments structure and that they could be waiting for it to come in. He [feed supplier] later phoned back to thank me for that; he stopped bombarding the family to pay the invoice. People get stressed because they want to pay but can't because they are waiting for that payment.*

*We had a farmer with no food so we [UTASS staff and volunteers] clubbed together and put some money in the kitty for more than one food parcel for him. We had a phone call from Social Services who had Googled and found us. They weren't immediately able to do something. He [the farmer] didn't have enough food for tomorrow.*

*We had a farmer that was struggling with a meagre existence at home. He lived on his own. We asked Age UK to go in, look at things and help him.*

*Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offers a really good outreach facility that helps point people in the right direction. People will ask when CAB are in but won't mention the issue and will turn up. They'll then make remarks about how difficult things are when they come in for other things.*

*We've always taken the view that we should be developmental, developing farmers to be able to do things for themselves. We're asking too much at times and they need someone else to check.*

## Life Domains

The activity in which an individual farmer and their household are immersed is spread over different life domains. That is, some activities relate to an employment domain (e.g. going to an auction mart to sell stock), some activities relate to a family/household domain (e.g. children helping their parents out on the farm), some activities are community domain based (e.g. agricultural shows) and some activities are related to a broader well-being domain (e.g. youth group).

## Place based

Opportunities for meetings and other community activities were highlighted. The local Auction Mart, for example, in addition to selling stock enabled farmers to informally support each other:

The Mart is really necessary, we sell a lot of stock...a social centre, we're working on putting a new meeting room and canteen down the Mart to replace the existing set up...a venue and social centre, not just for selling but for chat, Auction Mart representative.

The Mart site has also been used by UTASS to deliver training courses, provided outreach health facilities (e.g. blood pressure checks) and hosted a 'churches together' carol service. The primary school includes a Sure Start Centre and for some this facility was seen as an important focus for community life. Pubs were seen as an important social environment for farmers, playing a vital role in rural life.

## Addressing issues around poverty

Some farmers are engaged in networks where they are able to share resources including time (e.g. cooperatively gathering sheep thus saving money from needing to employ contractors) or information (such as local job opportunities). In some cases, farmers are learning or developing new skills to supplement their farm business (e.g. an interest in the local riding club has led one farmer to breed and sell horses). Often farmers did not want to discuss low incomes or poverty but accepted their situation put them on this side of the income spectrum.

## Non farming networks

Other networks which do not necessarily directly overlap with those of farming communities (e.g. church and faith based activities, village hall and social committees, policy and decision making forums used by Defra, Natural England and other public bodies) also had a key role to play in providing support for farmers.

## Inclusion and Exclusion

Some farmers wanted to be seen to be acting cooperatively, but on a number of occasions they could be seen as participating in networks to represent their standing in the local community; or to see if they could gain intelligence and commercial insights into the activities of neighbouring farmers and in some case competitors. Some farmers told us how they were reluctant to seek help (e.g. asking family members, neighbours or a local childminder to help them with childcare as this would be seen as a sign that they could not cope):

It's very competitive [farming]...anyone doing well, others want to pull them down. Farmers are their worst enemy at times; pay more for land than they will make from it just to take it, pushing prices up.

# Opportunities for growing and improving support offered to farmers

This is a close knit community.

The area is slowly depopulating. The farming unit is slowly going to increase. The community facilities available are going to slowly die; more than half the shops in the village are on the market, Medical Practitioner.

The quotes above give some insights into the motivations for farmer's involvement – or lack of involvement – in networks and cooperative activities from within and beyond the farm gate and some of the challenges going forward.

We have considered the processes by which farmers seek to take an interest, or a stake, in securing their own future by tapping into the local community.

First, there is linking and capacity building that has its basis in business interests. Estate owners have considerable influence on employment and housing; some farmers provide accommodation and food for visitors. There are further cooperative opportunities, for example, through direct sales "but it's finding time to sit down and work how to do it and if it's worth it"; and/or setting up buying groups to address rising input costs around feed, fertiliser and fuel (e.g. oil purchased collectively with the wagon delivering once a month to multiple addresses overcoming the eight week waiting list during Winter 2011). Farmers also raised the challenge of time and local expertise in seeking to grapple with the issue of broadband connectivity which is increasingly important to running an efficient farming business. Supporting new entrants into farming was seen as important.

Second, UTASS already develops and uses its contacts in the locality, regionally and nationally for the benefit of farmers. This is important as many farmers feel excluded or struggle to engage with policy and decision making processes around farming, particularly in terms of environmental stewardship schemes and setting stocking rates:

We're not in control of what we do anymore. We accept the scheme payments but there are restrictions.

It's spoiling the viability of farming, fell rights have been disappearing.

Many farmers told us about training evenings and visits from Natural England brokered through UTASS. Some farmers highlighted how wide ranging UTASS's role is and whether it is able to take on further contacts, with one farmer suggesting UTASS charge a nominal fee or subscription for helping farmers with paperwork completion (if/where a farmer was able to make a financial contribution).

Third, many of the organisations that farmers listed operate on a much wider basis than the farming community (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Durham County Council). Joining up intelligence among organisations operating an outreach service from UTASS, through UTASS, was seen as important by stakeholders. If it were to be done effectively there was a feeling it could make a significant improvement to the efficiency of the work of individual organisations, focusing their resources and helping to reduce duplication overall. This is particularly important with reduced public and voluntary sector funding available for support services for communities in general and farmers in particular.

Fourth, finding off-farm work in the formal economy was viewed as becoming more difficult:

It's a way of life and when the weather's nice and things are going well it's a nice way of living. What's the alternative? Jobs are few and far between. There is no Jobcentre Plus provision or career support nearby.

Many of our farmers have to juggle two jobs and it's challenging working on the farm and maintaining the farm business in terms of keeping it in good order whilst holding down another job as well. Some farms are at risk of dilapidation because of that. Some farmers have spread themselves quite thinly really, UTASS staff member.

Fifth, in terms of the provision of care, welfare and other public services, some farmers were caring for elderly relatives (who were often living on the same farm); other farmers were becoming increasingly frail and requiring support. The future of the local bus services, post office and health provision were all seen as important. Tackling issues around mental health was highlighted as particularly important:

If they have a bad back or neck, if it's stopping them from working, they come and see us. Mental health is different. They don't see you if they can avoid it, they think they should pull themselves together. There's depression and anxiety. Generally, up here, patients are getting less access to services, Medical Practitioner.

There was a perception among some farmers that people needed to be encouraged to use and shape local services that are already there: "you have to use local services or you lose them".

# Conclusion

Teesdale has a distinctive rural and farming community with a high incidence of small farm holdings, many tenanted. This report uncovers a number of narratives which illuminate how poverty is prevalent amongst some members of the farming community. Poverty (in UK terms) is mainly about people's relative wealth and well-being. It is a severe and stifling condition. This research indicates that it is becoming more intense amongst farmers in the Teesdale area both in terms of its general prevalence and in relation to its severity for some farmers.

One way of thinking about poverty in this context is on a continuum: from free will (at one end) to no life choices (at the other end). Farmers could be positioned on this spectrum from the explicit and implicit statements that they made.

Explicit comments about their experiences can be grouped around key factors, including the impact of:

- Access to services;
- Tenancy type and arrangements for their farm,;
- Legislation; and
- The weather.

Implicit within responses were issues linked to:

- Their geographical context (e.g. the upland environment);
- The impact of the economic forces on their farm businesses;
- The infrastructure that they are able to access in terms of their farm operation (e.g. getting to the Mart, the availability of farm contractors);
- The social environment that they operate in (i.e. levels of social capital and community capacity); and
- The traditions and personal history conditioning their individual position as a farmer.

Those who find themselves in farm poverty exhibit a number of characteristics, including:

- Farmers operating with no insurance;
- Farmers without any private pension provision;
- Farmers with no or very few savings;
- A significant dependency on off-farm incomes to

balance the farm and household budget(s);

- Farmers who feel vulnerable to the decisions made by their bank;
- Farmers working long hours and past retirement; and
- Farmers exhibiting mental health and personal well-being issues.

The challenge for organisations seeking to ameliorate some of the negative impacts of poverty involves both joining up intelligence and actions to make their interventions as effective as possible whilst finding strategies to overcome the significant funding cuts that they face.

Moving forward, three key questions emerge around farm poverty in Teesdale:

**1. What is the broader economic and social context that makes farming more than just a business and explains the personal and social motivations of those involved in it?**

**2. How can we make farming in this upland environment pay?**

**3. To what extent can this be done by building on and reinforcing local support?**

These questions have a broader resonance across England as a whole in terms of upland communities. Indeed, the 'challenges facing farmers' research and the 'Farming Lives' study offer a new platform for understanding the key issues facing farming communities. In particular, the findings of this research underline the importance of taking an integrated and holistic approach to public policy that takes into account the many challenges that farmers in poverty face. There are three key issues that this report can help policy-makers to understand:

## Access to benefits

Farmers, like any UK resident, can claim State Benefit assistance (depending on circumstances). Raising awareness and take-up of benefits is considered a useful mechanism through which low incomes can be enhanced. At a local level, farmers were aware of the support offered by the Citizens Advice Bureau (e.g. in helping them to see if they qualified for benefit). However, understanding the benefits system, including how payments are made and how to make a claim were seen as difficult by farmers who believed being self-employed and relying upon two income payment times (when they receive their Single Farm Payment and when they sell livestock) did not fit with claiming benefits. At a practical level, this means many farmers are not claiming benefits to which they are entitled (e.g. allowance attendance for caring for elderly relatives), because they are reluctant to disclose financial information and feel intimidated by form-filling and officialdom. Overcoming this requires the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to actively promote the take-up of income-related benefits to eligible farming households and recognise the issues that farmers face in claiming benefits to which they are entitled. This could be achieved by DWP working with local organisations that provide support to farmers and are trusted by them.

## Farm business development and off-farm income

Many farmers were existing on the margins of profitability. Some farmers were seeking to enhance their household income from sources other than conventional farming production through diversifying their business activities. Two obstacles to diversification were identified: (1) as they farm on marginal land, diversification options are limited; and (2) for tenant farmers, the landlord would want a share in any extra income generated. For other farmers, finding local employment off-farm to supplement their income was seen as essential but difficult. This is because farming does not follow a fixed pattern of days and can involve long hours; therefore farmers needed employment near to their farm. Further, if a job was done off-farm it tended to be temporary, seasonal and on a self-employed basis therefore providing the farmer with little in the way of security.

The recession and economic downturn had led to the reduction in opportunities to generate off-farm income. With a lack of employment support locally and increased costs and practical difficulties for farmers to travel to access services (e.g. Jobcentre Plus), there are opportunities around the Government's Rural Growth Networks (including Durham & Northumberland) for farmers access knowledge transfer, mentoring, training and skills development through 'enterprise hub clusters' to capitalise on new opportunities. Organisations that support farmers can also link to Rural and Farming Networks (e.g. North Eastern Farming and Rural Advisory Network), the Future of Farming Group (both led by Defra) and with the farming industry to improve skills development and diversification in upland farming.

## Isolation, health and well-being

Despite the commonly perceived strong rural community spirit, a number of farmers identified the increasing importance of social isolation, caused by farming family members taking up employment away from the farm and reduced ability to pay to get contractors in. Isolation was particularly characterised by mothers with young children, older single farmers with no other family member close by and farmers whom spend a large proportion of their working day alone or just with animals. Physical isolation and remoteness from services alongside issues of confidentiality and cultural stigmas were highlighted. Addressing the problem of exclusion experienced by members of the farming community from mainstream healthcare (particularly mental health) will need to inform the reorganisation of the health service, including the work of the NHS, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups. The National Suicide Prevention Strategy for England presents an opportunity to ensure mental health and well-being interventions are targeted at farmers (whom are considered a high risk occupational group).

# Where next? (Action Plans)

The 'challenges facing farmers' research has generated some project ideas of relevance to farming organisations (including UTASS) and other rural facing organisations that seek to ameliorate the effects of farm poverty. The project ideas are intended to assist organisations in identifying and supporting farmers struggling to make ends meet.

The Action Plans that follow are written from the perspective of taking an overview of the current (and future) issues facing farmers and farming charities and seeks to develop action and momentum rather than taking a top down approach.

Each idea in the Plan has been called an 'Opportunity'. The Plans that follow set out:

- A brief summary of the Opportunity;
- A description of some straightforward and practical actions required to develop it;
- An indication of the scale of resources needed (e.g. people and time required); and
- A relevant example from elsewhere.

The six Opportunities are:

1. To address the challenge of declining off-farm incomes on the sustainability of farming communities.
2. To encourage the transfer of upland livestock farming skills to the next generation/new entrants.
3. To identify how the type of support farmers require in the uplands is changing.
4. To develop a list/directory of organisations whose activities align, complement, replicate or enhance local support for upland communities.
5. To encourage young people to shape the activities of farming support organisations and expand young people's services (particularly around training and employment).
6. To think through the unique needs of the upland geography in which local farming organisations operate.

## Opportunity 1: Address the challenge of declining off-farm incomes



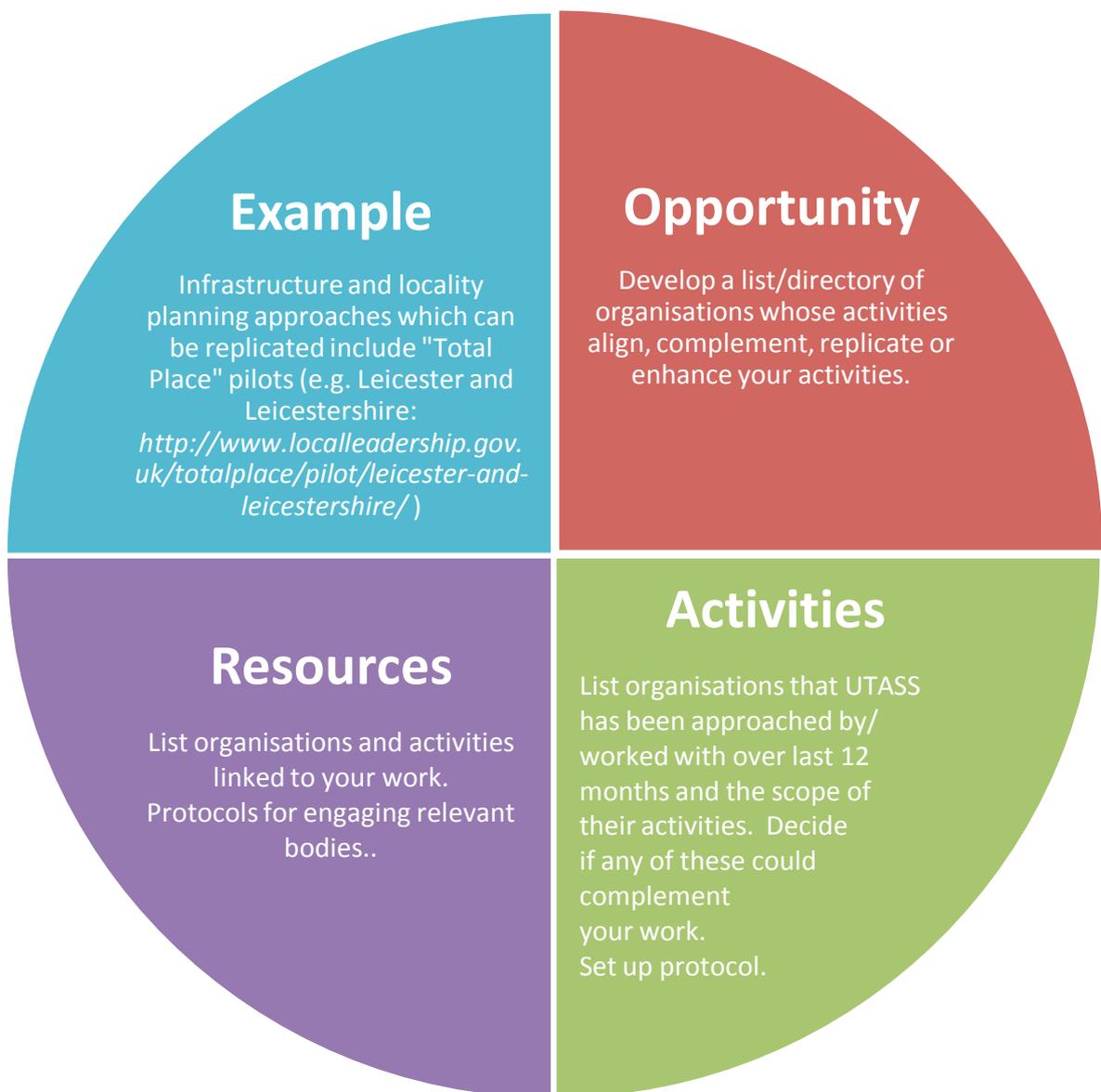
## Opportunity 2: Transfer of Upland Livestock Skills



### Opportunity 3: Changing farmer support



## Opportunity 4: Develop a local directory



## Opportunity 5: Encouraging young people (training and employment)



## Opportunity 6: Developing your offer



# Annex 1:

## A Note on Methodology

The 'challenges facing farmers' project took an in-depth look at the lives of individual farmers over a nine month period. The research considered not only their farm business but also took into consideration wider aspects of their livelihoods as well as the groups and organisations that work to support them through challenging times.

### Between October 2011 and May 2012, Rose Regeneration:

**1. Undertook a desktop study**, including sourcing quantitative and qualitative data and intelligence on poverty. A central repository of information about farmers' livelihoods, their incomes and rural poverty was compiled. This included:

- Developing a Profile for Teesdale using datasets on employment, economic activity and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) alongside statistics on health and well-being facilities, worklessness, transport and access available from Durham County Council.
- Reviewing a range of strategic plans and policy documents including UTASS annual reports and relevant briefings. National documents reviewed included: Uplands Policy Review, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Farming in the Uplands (February 2011), the Country Land & Business Association (CLA) 'High Hopes – report on the Uplands' (December 2010), Commission for Rural Communities 'Poverty amongst farming households: achieving sustainable livelihoods' (November 2010) and 'High Ground High Potential' (June 2010).
- Work carried out in the areas of social capital and building community capacity to ameliorate the effects and impacts of poverty (see also Annex 3).

Where possible, this information was collected and analysed at Lower Super Output Areas covering Eggleston, Mickleton and Langdon Beck, Forest & Harwood as this is where many of the farmers interviewed were drawn from (see Step 2).

It is important to note, however, that these datasets and policy documents provide 'point in time' figures and pictures of poverty. Indeed, these documents are often confined by the content of available data and what questions have been asked in surveys and consultation exercises. They also rarely pick up the role of the informal economy and informal networks within rural economies, how social capital and community capacity can be built, how it works and who benefits from the process.

### 2. Carried out a series of face-to-face interviews with:

- 20 farmers to hear people's narratives and experiences of farming and poverty. These farmers varied according to age; location; whether they were on a farm business tenancy, succession tenancy or owner occupiers; and whether they regularly accessed support from UTASS, infrequently or not at all. The sample included some of the more marginalised and vulnerable farmers in the area. Signed consent forms were received from farmers to enable their testimony to be reproduced in this report. At all stages of the work, farmers remained anonymous and unidentifiable.

### Farmer Interview Guide

How long have you farmed in Teesdale and how have things changed since you started farming?

What are the main challenges that face farming at the current time? How, if at all, are you coping with these challenges?

How do you deal with other unforeseen events (e.g. piece of farm equipment breaking down, if you become ill or sick, not receiving your single farm payment on time)?

How familiar are you with UTASS, and what kinds of support (if any) have you received from them?

Have you spoken to or received supported from any other organisations over the last 12 months?

Can you tell me a little about any non-farming activities that you do (e.g. community activities, social activities)?

Overall, which of the following statements best describes where you are now?

- You have built up your farm business and are reaping the rewards.
- You are optimistic about the future and are looking to make long term improvements to your farm business.
- You are getting by, feel hindered by red tape and paperwork but think that you will be okay.
- You feel life can be a struggle and you may need to keep working well into retirement age.

Looking to the future, do you think that you will need to change your approach to farming (e.g. are you diversifying beyond your core farm activities)?

Anything else not covered by the above/any other comments.

- 12 community members/stakeholders. They included representatives from: a Bank, a Chartered Surveying practice, Medical Practice, Farm Crisis Network, Mental Health North East, Citizens Advice Bureau, Durham Rural Community Council, Middleton-in-Teesdale Auction Mart Board, Durham Constabulary and Durham County Council.

### Stakeholder Interview Guide

About your organisation, role and responsibilities.

Any activities you have undertaken directly to support farmers

(I.e., is supporting farmers an integral part of what you do or does it have little relevance day to day?)

What do you think are the key challenges facing individuals associated with farming in Teesdale?

How prevalent is farm poverty and what type(s) of farmers do you think are affected?

Are you aware of any activities that have been undertaken by other organisations that have supported farmers?

Are there any activities that you do with other partners targeting farmers?

Are you aware of any potential/future activities or projects that may include working with farmers?

Any additional information to add / thoughts or comments that have not been covered in the discussion.

- 3 UTASS staff members.

### UTASS Interview Guide

What do you think are the main challenges facing farmers at the current time?

How prevalent do you think farm poverty is and what types of farmers are affected?

Information about the support that UTASS has offered to farmers in these circumstances.

Information about other organisations UTASS works with to offer farmers support.

Any gaps in support provision offered to farmers.

Emerging/future challenges and opportunities.

Any additional information to add / thoughts or comments that have not been covered in the discussion above.

These interviews uncovered first-hand experiences of poverty and provided information about organisations that have a footprint in the local area in helping people to get by.

**3. Spent two weeks living in the local community,** meeting as many farmers as possible, liaising with organisations that operate out of UTASS premises and visiting key meeting and social interaction points used by farmers (e.g. auction mart, community centres, post office, retail and leisure outlets).

**4. Held a triangulation workshop with UTASS staff, stakeholders and Oxfam** to present the emerging findings and capture their reflections.

Steps 1-4 were used to prepare the contents of this report and a separate internal 'Action Plan' for UTASS.

# Annex 2:

## Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is a way to improve understanding of the livelihoods of people living in poverty developed by the Department for International Development (DFID). Rather than starting from a negative view of what people in poverty lack, the SLA approach considers people's assets.

The SLA approach interprets financial well-being from the perspective of a framework of five categories of "capital": Human, Social, Natural, Physical and Financial:

**Human capital** represents the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that together enable people to pursue different livelihood strategies and achieve their livelihood objectives

There is much debate about what exactly is meant by the term '**social capital**' (see Annex 3). In the context of the SLA, it is taken to mean the social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of their livelihood objectives.

**Natural capital** is the term used for the natural resource stocks from which resource flows and services (e.g. nutrient cycling, erosion protection) useful for livelihoods are derived. There is a wide variation in the resources that make up natural capital, from intangible public goods such as the atmosphere and biodiversity to divisible assets used directly for production (e.g. trees, land).

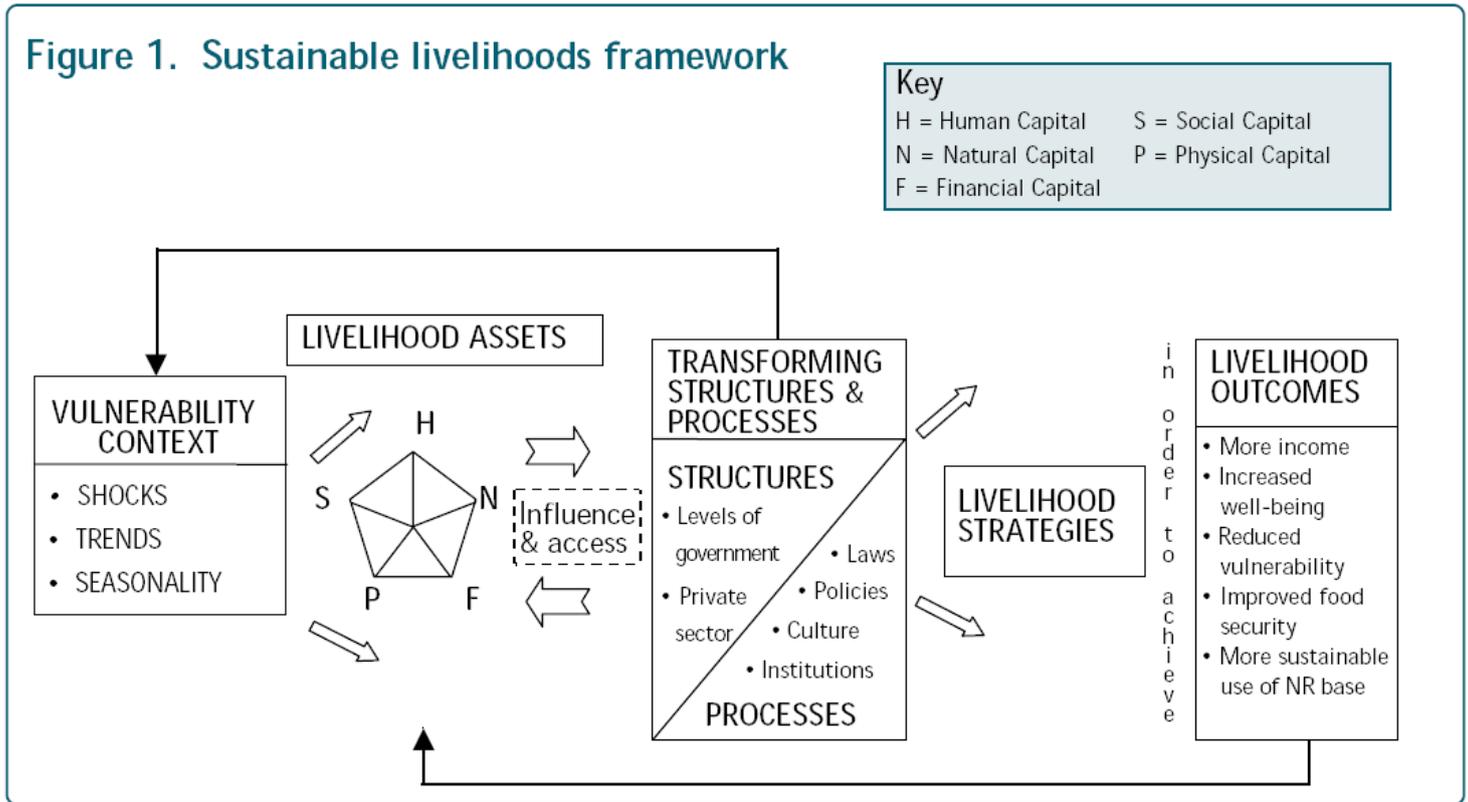
**Physical capital** comprises the basic infrastructure and producer goods needed to support livelihoods. Infrastructure comprises changes to the physical environment that help people to meet their basic needs and to be more productive. Producer goods are the tools and equipment that people use to function more productively.

**Financial capital** denotes the financial resources that people use to achieve their livelihood objectives. The definition used here includes flows as well as stocks and it can contribute to consumption as well as production. It has been adopted to attempt to capture an important livelihood building block, namely the availability of cash or equivalent that enables people to adopt different livelihood strategies.

The SLA approach offers a range of insights which indicate how the whole environment within which people live impacts upon their circumstances. A diagram summarising this approach is set out overleaf:<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 1. Sustainable livelihoods framework**

**Key**  
 H = Human Capital    S = Social Capital  
 N = Natural Capital    P = Physical Capital  
 F = Financial Capital



In April 2009, Oxfam and the National Farmers Network commissioned a study of 'farming lives in the Peak District' which used SLA.<sup>14</sup> This study was deemed useful in the establishment of the methodology for this report. The Farming Lives study was drawn upon to develop a questionnaire for farmers. Whilst the challenges facing farmers work was not commissioned to replicate the methods followed in the Farming Lives report, there is considerable benefit in being able to derive narratives and experiences from farmers which resonate with the approach followed in that study. The value of applying SLA principles is not simply in providing an interesting "read across" to some of the findings of the farming lives report, but rather it gives wider and additional insights into the issues facing farmers living in Teesdale.

The SLA tools used in the Farming Lives study involved the line of enquiry set out in the table below. The Table indicates how the Challenges Facing Farmers fieldwork reads across to that approach:

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Farming Lives Approach</b>	<b>Challenges Facing Farmers Farm Visits &amp; Interviews</b>
<i>Who's who in the house</i>	Participants identify who lives within their household, where they go when they leave the house and who visits the house.	Identical approach adopted.
<i>Timeline</i>	Participants asked to identify a significant point in their past and plot events from that point up until the present day.	"How long have you farmed in Teesdale and how have things changed since you started farming?"
<i>OK/Not OK</i>	A timeline is used with participants asked when their lives have been OK or not OK.	"What are the main challenges that you face farming at the current time? How, if at all, are you coping with these challenges?" "How do you deal with other unforeseen events (e.g. piece of farm equipment breaking down, if you become ill or sick, not receiving your farm payment on time)?"
<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	Using a framework of general topics for investigation. The conversation is two-way allowing participants to also ask questions and raise issues.	"Can you tell me about any non-farming activities that you do (e.g. community activities, social activities)?"
<i>Livelihoods Ladder</i>	The ladder has four stages: surviving, coping, accumulating and adapting. Participants are asked to identify where they see themselves on the ladder and the reasons why they think they are there.	"Overall, which of the following statements best describes where you are now?" You have built up your farm business and are reaping the rewards [accumulating]. You are optimistic about the future and are looking to make long term improvements to your farm business [adapting]. You are getting by, feel hindered by red tape and paperwork but think that you will be okay [coping]. You feel life can be a struggle and you may need to keep working well into retirement age [surviving]. Farmers asked why they had selected a statement(s).

## Annex 3:

# A Conceptual Note on Social Capital and Community Capacity

Tackling poverty and living on low incomes involves supporting farmers to improve their lives by showing them how things can change; and raising public and politicians' awareness of poverty and its causes to bring about change. This report underlines not only the importance of UTASS and other organisations with a footprint in the local area in supporting farmers and farming families during challenging times, but also the potential that farmers have to create resources and act collectively and cooperatively to ameliorate some of the impacts and effects of poverty.

According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Poverty Programme<sup>15</sup>, social capital encompasses 'resources for collective action (e.g. contacts, friendships, the ability to ask favours of people) which people access through membership in particular types of social networks'. This suggests that if you create structures for community participation, you create social capital from which the community will benefit. In this way, social capital becomes embedded in the everyday spaces of community life and can connect communities to power, resources, ideas and information within formal institutions.

The need to build social capital in agricultural systems specifically has been highlighted by Hall and Pretty (2008).<sup>16</sup> They found those farms where the farmers had the greatest social capital were those where sustainability was also greater. Social capital in Hall and Pretty's work is evidenced by large social networks with a great deal of face-to-face contact. However, they caution that social capital in the farming sector has been eroded since the late 1980's, with the lack of farmer input into policy-making which has made the implementation process harder and slower and has impeded sustainability on many farms. This resonates with Sutherland and Burton (2011)<sup>17</sup> for whom resources that farmers can access and exchange informally (such as labour and knowledge) becomes increasingly important amid the gradual erosion of farming incomes across the UK due to fluctuations in commodity prices and changes to the subsidy regime.

Specific work on hill farming and social capital for the University of Cumbria<sup>18</sup> revealed that as the number of farmers working the fells reduced (attributed by some, in part, to new policy and funding regimes implemented by bodies including Natural England), this impacted both on the activities of hill farmers and on succession issues linked to their farms. Six components of social capital underpinning the operation of hill farmers in this context were identified:

- (1) Informal "neighbouring" with farmers helping out with jobs and borrowing machinery;
- (2) Cooperation in the marketing of local foods;
- (3) Cooperation in the management of farm bed and breakfast enterprises;
- (4) Cooperative gathering of fell land, the type of cooperation considered most critical for traditional hill farming;
- (5) Cooperation in farming operations including hay and silage making, shearing and dipping; and
- (6) Involvement in community activities such as breed associations, local shows and auction markets.

We have been mindful in tracing the literature on poverty and social capital – from Gray (1998)<sup>19</sup> to Putman (2000)<sup>20</sup> and Defra's (April 2011) 'social impacts of policy framework'<sup>21</sup> – of the concept's utility in understanding individual farmer's experiences in Teesdale. Finding out how individual farmers are immersed in a network of relationships with other farmers and community members, local groups and organisations is important in developing a rounded framework of financial and informal community support mechanisms used by them. For whilst social capital is usually interpreted as a positive force we have to approach this with some caution and balance. For those farmers 'caught up' in networks of social capital, the relationships, trust and support, the processes of working together (e.g. farmers sharing labour to gather sheep off the fell or borrow equipment) may lead to excess pressure being placed upon an individual farmer and/or farmers being excluded (i.e., dependent upon the size of their farm, the number of stock he/she has, how much power and influence they are perceived to have). It is also important to note how a farmer's stock of social capital may increase or decrease over time (i.e., this may occur naturally such as if he/she chooses to retire, or through regulatory pressures setting out prescriptions for how a farmer can manage his or her land to obtain funding).

With this in mind, but taking a broadly positive interpretation of the concept, this project utilised a working definition of the informal/community support (**social capital**) available to farmers as **'the resources developed by farmers through networks and connectedness, membership of formalised groups, formal and informal volunteering and relationships of trust that facilitate cooperation'**.

When speaking with farmers about their experiences of farming and poverty, we asked them about the organisations that had supported them and any non-farming activities that they undertook (e.g. to support their local community) (see Annex 1).

Increasing community capacity has some clear benefits in terms of building social capital and bringing clear, tangible benefits to a local area. Community capacity has been defined in terms of 'activities, resources and support that strengthen the skills, abilities and confidence of people to take effective action in the development of their communities' (See Craig 2007<sup>22</sup> for an explanation of the term).

Factors which influence capacity building in rural areas include those relating to dispersal and accessibility (i.e. the location of people and facilities and issues such as transport and isolation), and the different needs and expectations which characterise the needs and aspirations of rural communities. In a detailed study of two rural areas – Teesdale and East Northamptonshire – the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) (see Yates 2002<sup>23</sup>) found twice the number of people volunteering than the national average for urban areas. In Teesdale 20% of people volunteered compared with 2-7% in urban areas. The study also found four times as many voluntary organisations in rural areas. NCVO accounted for the findings by explaining the traditional self-reliance of rural communities and a history of declining services. However, the study also revealed a lack of infrastructure, with 90% of organisations having no money for training and two-thirds not sharing information with other organisations in the voluntary sector.

These issues have been taken up more recently in a move from government towards the "Big Society". What is often overlooked here is the sheer number of rural residents already actively involved in their local communities before the Big Society concept was ever invented. Yet what is changing under this new guise is the scale and nature of what is expected of rural residents – from the days of helping out others on an informal and ad-hoc basis to taking on the tenure of actually running services. In this way, community capacity work overlooks how to enhance the capacity of agencies to engage more effectively with communities – thus failing to address the lack of infrastructure identified by NCVO in Teesdale and East Northamptonshire. It also fails to fully take up the implications of organisations facing reductions in resources and funding as a result of the recession and economic downturn.

Equally, increasing community capacity is seen as an important way of developing community resilience (i.e. the ability of a community to adaptively respond to change rather than simply returning it to a pre-existing state). In the Transition Handbook, Hopkins (2008)<sup>24</sup>

identified a series of activities that enhance resilience: from local composting to specifying local building materials; and from singing in the local choir to playing football.

It is important to recognise that the view of community capacity is predicated on the fact that a community already has a deficit of skills, knowledge and resources. This signals the importance in this report of recognising and not overlooking the wealth of talent within farming communities and how it can provide a useful means of addressing poverty and low incomes.

From speaking with farmers and stakeholders about their experiences of poverty, this project has found three main ways that building social capital and high levels of community capacity can address poverty:

1. Through the sharing of resources (such as labour to gather sheep or loaning equipment) and information (e.g. informing each other about local job opportunities, obtaining benefits advice, reading UTASS briefings).
2. By providing mutual support and opportunities to learn or develop new skills (e.g. gaining the IT skills necessary to submit farm paperwork to public bodies online, or taking a qualification to transport livestock).
3. Through harnessing collective and voluntary action to improve a local area (ensuring that local farming matters and decision making affecting local communities are raised with appropriate bodies).

These three mechanisms can take the form of paid employment (e.g. setting up a farmers' cooperative); take place at a family/household level (e.g. getting help with childcare from a neighbour or relative); take place within the community (e.g. attending meetings of the NFU local branch, organising agricultural shows and events); or take the form of a farmer's personal well-being (e.g. having a hobby).

The test in moving forward will be to consider how social capital and community capacity can be built upon to address the challenges facing farmers. This means considering the context that makes farming more than a business and the personal and social motivations of farmers; how farming in this environment can pay; and how the support offered by UTASS and other organisations with a footprint in the local area can be reinforced (building upon points 1-3 set out above).

- <sup>1</sup> House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee Farming in the Uplands. Third Report of Session 2010-11, Page 63. Further information available on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee website: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmenvfru/953/95301.htm>
- <sup>2</sup> House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee Farming in the Uplands. Third Report of Session 2010-11, Page 88. Further information available on the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee website: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmenvfru/953/95301.htm>
- <sup>3</sup> North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NPAONB) The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2009-2014 Part C – Action Plan, Pages 13-14. Copies available online at: <http://www.northpennines.org.uk/Pages/PublicationItem.aspx?DocRef=77>
- <sup>4</sup> McSorley, L., (undated). Special Study on Living in Poverty in Rural Areas. Scottish Agricultural College Research Report to The Scottish Government Rural and Analysis Research and Analysis Directorate (RERAD). Available online at: <http://www.sac.ac.uk/mainrep/pdfs/ruralpoverty>
- <sup>5</sup> Palmer, G., (2009). Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural England. A Report by The Poverty Site for the Commission for Rural Communities. Available online at: <http://www.poverty.org.uk/reports/rural%202009.pdf>
- <sup>6</sup> Palmer, G., (2009). Indicators of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Rural England. A Report by The Poverty Site for the Commission for Rural Communities. Available online at: <http://www.poverty.org.uk/reports/rural%202009.pdf>
- <sup>7</sup> Hirsch, D et al., (2012). A Minimum Income Standard for the UK in 2012. Available online at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/MIS-2012> See also: Smith, N., Davis, S and Hirsch, D., (2010). A Minimum Income Standard for Rural Areas. A Report commissioned by the Commission for Rural Communities and The Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The Executive Summary is available online at: [http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/downloads/MIS\\_rural\\_launch/findings\\_mis\\_for\\_rural\\_areas.pdf](http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/downloads/MIS_rural_launch/findings_mis_for_rural_areas.pdf)
- <sup>8</sup> Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), (2010). Poverty amongst farming households: achieving sustainable livelihoods. Report available from the National Archives at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110215111008/ruralcommunities.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/farming\\_poverty.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110215111008/ruralcommunities.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/farming_poverty.pdf) (Do see the Summary from page 16).
- <sup>9</sup> Ponder, V & Hindley, A., (2009). Farming Lives. Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in the Peak District Farming Community. A study prepared by the National Farmers Network for Oxfam GB. Available online at: [www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/ukpoverty/downloads/farming\\_lives.pdf](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/ukpoverty/downloads/farming_lives.pdf) (Please note, the quotation cited in this report has been taken from page 3).
- <sup>10</sup> Teesdale Area Action Partnership and Durham County Council., (2010). Teesdale 2010 Area Action Partnership Profile. A report produced by the Research & Information Unit, Durham County Council. Available online at: [http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/Teesdale\\_AAP\\_2010\\_Profile.pdf](http://content.durham.gov.uk/PDFRepository/Teesdale_AAP_2010_Profile.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> Nomis., (2010). Labour Market Profile: Teesdale. Data available online at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/2038432086/report.aspx>
- <sup>12</sup> Information about land use, livestock and labour on agricultural holdings is available from the Defra at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/landuslivestock/junesurvey/> Please note, this report draws on data contained in the June 2007 Survey of Agriculture and Horticulture as the 2010 Survey restructured its sampling frame to exclude smaller farm holdings therefore significantly reducing the number of Teesdale farm holdings counted.
- <sup>13</sup> Department for International Development (DFID), (1999) Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets. Available to download at: <http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0901/section2.pdf>
- <sup>14</sup> Ponder, V and Hindley, A., (2009). Farming Lives. Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach in the Peak District Farming Community. Research report for Oxfam GB. Available online at: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/farming-lives-using-the-sustainable-livelihoods-approach-in-the-peak-district-f-126026>
- <sup>15</sup> More information about Joseph Rowntree Foundation's 'Poverty in the UK' Programme can be found here: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/work/poverty> See also: Afridi, A., 2011. Social networks: their role in addressing poverty. Available online at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-social-networks-full.pdf>
- <sup>16</sup> Hall, J and Pretty J., (2008). 'Then and now: Norfolk farmers' changing relationships and linkages with government agencies during transformations in land management', *Journal of Farm Management*, 13(6), pp. 393-418.
- <sup>17</sup> Sutherland, L.A and Burton, R.J.F., (2011). 'Good farmers, good neighbours? The role of cultural capital in social capital development in a Scottish farming community', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 51 (3), pp.238-255.
- <sup>18</sup> Burton, R., Mansfield, L., Schwarz, G., Brown, K. and Convery, I., (undated). Social capital in hill farming. Available online at: <http://www.theuplandcentre.org.uk/Reference/Reports/MLURI%20Hill%20Farm%20Social%20Capital%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- <sup>19</sup> Gray, J., (1998). 'Family farms in the Scottish borders: a practical definition by hill sheep farmers', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14, pp. 34-356.
- <sup>20</sup> Putman, R.D., 2000. *Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- <sup>21</sup> Harper, G and Price, R., (2011). A framework for understanding the social impacts of policy and their effects on wellbeing. Defra Evidence and Analysis Series Paper 3. Available online at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13467-social-impacts-wellbeing-110403.pdf>
- <sup>22</sup> Craig, G., (2007). 'Community capacity building: something old, something new...?', *Critical Social Policy* 27, pp.335-359.
- <sup>23</sup> Yates, H., (2002), *Supporting Rural Voluntary Action*. London: NCVO.
- <sup>24</sup> Hopkins, R., (2008). *The Transition Handbook. From oil dependency to local resilience*. London: Green Books.