

What do ecosystem services offer the UK rural economy?

Research pioneered by CRE staff has been carried out nationally on the range of services that the natural environment provides for human wellbeing and these services may also play an increasingly important role in the rural economy and rural livelihoods.

What are ecosystem services?

- Ecosystem services include all the essential natural services provided by the land, including:
 - Food
 - Timber and other crops
 - Clean water
 - Biodiversity
 - Carbon storage
 - Landscapes for enjoyment and leisure

Why is there an increasing focus on these services?

- Our limited supply of land has to provide increasing quantities of food and other goods for a growing population.
- Environmental change is creating additional pressures.
- Research has shown that we need to take all these services into account when planning how we use land.
- Providing these services offers opportunities for rural businesses.

What would help rural businesses to support and benefit from an ecosystem services approach?

- We need better ways of mapping and valuing our natural assets.
- We need more interdisciplinary research that links natural and social sciences.
- We must ensure that policy design takes account of the benefits that natural assets deliver.
- Farmers and land managers should be appropriately rewarded for the work they do in maintaining and enhancing the supply of ecosystems services from the UK countryside.
- We must recognise and support the work done by NGOs and quangos that contributes to the supply of ecosystems services.
- The people who advise land managers need to be better linked into research via schemes such as [Landbridge](#).

Further information:

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- [Fowey River Improvement Auction briefing note](#) April 2013
- [Garrod, G.D. and Willis, K.G. \(1999\) Economic Valuation of the Environment: Methods and Case Studies.](#) Edward Elgar, Cheltenham
- Natural England (2009) [No Charge? Valuing the Natural Environment.](#) (NE220)
- Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2011). [The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature.](#) CM8082. The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Willis, K.G and Garrod, G.D. (2012) [Valuing Environment and Natural Resources](#) Volumes 1 and II, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham

Useful websites:

- www.landbridge.org.uk
- www.valuing-nature.net
- www.nerc-bess.net
- www.nerc-bess.net/ne-ess/

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