



**Newcastle**  
University

Centre for  
Rural Economy

**CENTRE FOR RURAL ECONOMY  
RESEARCH OVERVIEW:**

# **CHANGING LAND USE, FOOD, FARMING, FISHING, ENVIRONMENT, AND RURAL ISSUES**

**April 2026  
House of Lords**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**The Centre for Rural Economy is grateful to Lord Curry of Kirkharle for sponsoring this event and to his team for coordinating it.**

**Gratitude is equally extended to all colleagues who have contributed their expertise by presenting their research.**

**Thank you to colleagues at Newcastle University who have helped organise this event.**

**Finally, we would like to thank all attendees for giving us their valuable time. We hope this is a fruitful event.**

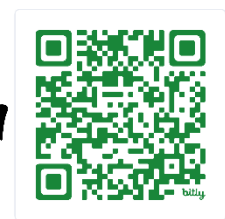
## ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR RURAL ECONOMY

The **Centre for Rural Economy (CRE)** is a research centre at Newcastle University, globally ranked first for rural research. It specialises in interdisciplinary social science and applied policy research, with a focus on supporting sustainable development in rural areas.

CRE brings together one of the largest and most diverse groups of rural social scientists in Europe. Our team includes more than 50 specialists from a range of disciplines, including economics, food marketing, psychology, political science, sociology, and geography.

Our mission is to improve rural lives through high-quality research and the sharing of knowledge. Our work addresses a wide range of issues, including changing land use, rural employment, rural policy, farmer and consumer behaviour, rural tourism, food systems, environmental management, and rural communities and organisations.

This event is organised by Alex Neill, Elaine Adams, and Sally Shortall  
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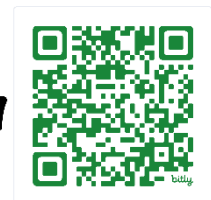
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## **A WARM WELCOME FROM SALLY SHORTALL**

The Centre for Rural Economy undertakes cutting-edge research on the environment, climate change, regenerative agriculture, food systems, and the rural economy. Our aim is to raise awareness of these critical issues and to encourage informed discussion on topics of professional, academic, and policy interest. This booklet provides a broad overview of our work and introduces the key research areas that shape our activities.

We are encouraged by the level of engagement our research has received from politicians and policymakers. As researchers, we are committed to rigorous, policy-relevant work that addresses questions affecting both present and future societies. These include changing land use, regenerative farming, food waste, environmental sustainability, rural economies, and social equality in access to land and housing.

We welcome opportunities to collaborate on research projects, support student placements with farm and food businesses, and invite you to join our lectures and seminars.

We look forward to updating this booklet regularly and to working with partners on innovative, timely, and impactful projects.



**PROFESSOR SALLY SHORTALL**  
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**DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND CHAIR OF  
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# TOPIC 1: CHANGING LAND USE

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## 1.1. Socio-Economic Impacts of Land Use Change

We conducted a series of rural case studies within England and Wales exploring the socio-economic impacts of land use change. Early findings reveal an appreciation of the value of landscape and ensuring this provides multiple functions (e.g.: farming, nature and the associated tourism and arts linked industries that use the land as inspiration). People and businesses engaged in land management provide multiple benefits in rural places alongside contributions to the local economy and environment.

Whilst changes are happening (such as Sustainable Farming Incentive uptake), local communities can often feel that their needs are overlooked in comparison to the environment (including restrictions on housing or farm diversification). The wider land use change trends need to be balanced with ensuring access to land within local communities serves their needs. This could also include more affordable housing and housing fit for an aging community, community energy provision, and ensuring that brownfield sites are used. Improving transport infrastructure would also help maximise opportunities.

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**Keywords:** Land use, Land use change, Socio-economic consequences, Rural, Community resilience

## 1.2. Farm Tenancies in North East England

This research explores how evolving land use policy, shifting subsidy frameworks, and longstanding landownership structures are influencing the future of farm tenancies in the North East of England. In the context of the UK's post-Brexit agricultural transition, this study investigates how tenant farmers experience increasing expectations around environmental management, business resilience, and long-term security.

Using a qualitative design centred on in-depth, semi-structured interviews with tenant farmers, landowners, agents, policymakers, and support organisations, we examine the financial, social, emotional, and wellbeing-related factors shaping decisions across the farming lifecycle. By analysing the interplay between agricultural policy, tenure arrangements, and the lived realities of those working within the tenanted sector, this study aims to illuminate barriers to equitable land access, understand how recent policy reforms are felt on the ground, and contribute evidence to supporting more sustainable rural livelihoods and resilient farming communities.

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**Keywords:** Farming, Tenants

## 1.3. Social Capacities for Peatland Transformations

Peatlands are one of the world's most important natural habitats, recognised for their capacity to deliver multiple objectives around carbon sequestration, nature improvement, and air and water quality. But today, around 80% of UK peatlands are damaged. Protecting and restoring peatlands has been identified in the Land Use Framework (2026) as key to achieving net zero goals.

The RESPECT project (Rapid Engagement with Stressed Peatland Environments and Communities in Transformation) is a multi-university BBSRC-funded interdisciplinary project exploring the physical capacity of agricultural land for peatland restoration, as well as the social capacity of landholders to undertake sustainable peat management and restoration. The research examines what enables or constrains restoration practice. The project aims to produce data, methods, landholder tools, and proposals for governance reforms to support and upscale the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of agricultural peatlands in Scotland and England.

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**Keywords:** Peatlands, Restoration, Sustainable land management, Farmers, Landholders

## 1.4. Land-use for Net Zero and Carbon Dioxide Removal

The climate crisis is accelerating research, development and commercialisation of Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) technologies and innovations. Many of these CDR strategies come with inherent costs, benefits, and trade-offs. In the agri-food sector, this includes potential conflicts with other government policy priorities, such as food security or biodiversity net gain. Alternatively, these innovations could provide benefits for growers, such as increased soil health or reduced dependency on energy-intensive inputs (e.g.: fertilisers and pesticides).

We investigate the efficacy of different land-based CDR strategies and evaluate the implications of these innovations for other policy priorities (e.g.: food production and nature recovery), enabling practitioners and policymakers to make evidence-based land management decisions. Our research focuses on novel land management systems (e.g.: agro-forestry, bioenergy with carbon capture storage), sustainable soil interventions (e.g.: enhanced rock weathering, biochar), or use of digital technologies (e.g.: sensing) to optimise agricultural management practices while minimising environmental impacts.

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**Keywords:** Carbon dioxide removal, Climate-smart agriculture, Ecosystem restoration

## TOPIC 2: FOOD

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### 2.1. Sustainability and Health

Facilitating food choice and consumption towards a more sustainable and healthy direction requires increased knowledge and an understanding of the factors that influence consumers' choices. Sus-Health is a research project that facilitates easier sustainability and health-based decision. For this, we explore the food system through a new single "lens" that combines nutritive and environmental value of a food in one single metric and assesses its impact on consumers, industry, and policy.

Current research has examined consumer preferences (through living lab experiments) which have fed back down the entire food chain, influencing the processes and raw materials used, towards more sustainable and health-inducing foods and diets. Key outputs focus on the co-creation of a systemic strategy and innovative solution for influencing food choices and consumption, so that they better align with both sustainability targets and nutritional guidelines.

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**Keywords:** Sustainable consumption, Health, Food choice, Consumers

## 2.2. Reducing Food Waste in Restaurants

A third of all food in the UK is wasted, marking a major lapse in the sustainability of our food supply chain. It is also estimated that the food service sector accounts for 12% of this total waste. This research therefore explored food waste in English restaurants, as one of the key segments of this sector.

Findings revealed that restaurants are currently experiencing competing pressures (including the rising costs of energy, materials, and labour; strict food safety regulation; and decreasing customer footfall and spend), all of which act as barriers to engaging with food waste reduction measures and initiatives. This was especially pertinent with regards to food waste created on consumers' plates. Restaurant managers did not wish to adopt waste reducing service improvements out of fear of upsetting the customer. Simultaneously, behavioural experiments with English consumers revealed a broad willingness to engage with food waste and plate waste reduction in restaurants. This collective research highlights a notable policy opportunity to complementarily build food waste reduction into preexisting policies and infrastructure.

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**Keywords:** Food waste, Food service, Restaurants, Consumers

## 2.3. Resident Participation in Food Waste Bin Collection

Working alongside Newcastle City Council, our research monitored a pilot household food waste collection scheme. We tracked weekly household participation in food waste recycling at the postcode level and identified patterns according to socio-demographic and housing conditions. Then, through a set of focus groups with community groups, we identified barriers and drivers to household participation and co-designed interventions to increase resident engagement.

Findings showed that households balance private costs of waste separation against perceived public benefits. Community engagement and tailored communication emerged as strategies with the highest potential of effectiveness. The challenge is how to encourage participation in food waste collection whilst reducing food waste production and maintaining private and community initiatives such as composting.

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**Keywords:** Food waste collection, Local authority, Communication strategy

## **2.4. Marketing and Consumer Understanding of UK Regional Foods**

As part of the European Union funded GI SMART project, we are undertaking research and innovation activities to improve consumer understanding and the marketing of regional foods in the UK. We focus on foods with Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status, such as Scotch whisky and Melton Mowbray Pork Pie.

Research includes World Cafés, which bring together producers and consumers to improve mutual understanding, and develop strategies to allow producers to discuss their offerings in ways in which are meaningful for consumers. Eye tracking and other online experiments help understand consumers' processing of product packaging labels and identify how best to promote regional foods and drink. We also established a multi-actor platform for UK actors to share experiences and implement findings.

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**Keywords:** Regional foods, Geographical indications, Consumer behaviour

## TOPIC 3: FARMING & FISHING

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### 3.1. Managing Sheep Lameness

Research on UK sheep lameness management highlights how both structural and behavioural factors, as well as humans' and animals' lived experiences shape farmers' uptake of recommended practices (e.g.: Five Point Plan). As such, lameness management is inherently contextual and often involves a balance of welfare value with the practical demands of running a flock.

Farmers' behaviours and actions are influenced by a range of factors within (e.g.: record keeping) and outside (e.g.: market prices) of their control. This demonstrates that effective lameness control requires sector-wide support and collaboration. Vet-farmer collaborations in particular emerged as central to successful management. Our findings indicate that the use of sheep health recording systems are effective tools to support a reduction in lameness. The findings highlight that successful implementation of lameness control strategies depends not just on technical protocols, but on recognising and supporting the situated expertise of farmers.

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**Keywords:** Livestock, Sheep, Animal health, Animal welfare, Lameness

### 3.2. Securing Inshore Fishing Livelihoods

Our research continues to evidence the societal benefits that flow from sustainable and well managed fisheries that operate in our coastal waters, providing a source of livelihood, local economy, vibrant cultural heritage and national food security. However, at the same time, research shows the current precariousness of our inshore fishing sector. These small boats, which make up 75% of our whole fleet, depend on local inshore fishing grounds and land their catch in the many towns and villages dotted around our coastline, benefiting in particular rural coastal regions.

In England, the inshore fleet is in decline, within a 14-year period (2008-2022), one fifth of under 10m vessels have been lost and the number of fulltime fishermen employed has almost halved. In many coastal areas, the inshore fleet is in real danger of collapse, accentuated by an ageing fishing population close to retirement and an uncertain future for new generations. Our research established a new Inshore and Small-Scale Fisheries (ISSF) consortium, which brings together inshore fishers with government and non-government stakeholders to collectively understand reasons for the decline and viable solutions to address it.

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**Keywords:** Sustainable fisheries, Inshore, Small-scale, Livelihoods

### 3.3. Regenerative Agriculture

For many, farming regeneratively represents a shift from long-established high-input crop production models to approaches that maximise soil health and optimise biodiversity and the ecosystem services that flow from it. In reducing reliance on external inputs and introducing resilience into agricultural systems, methods such as companion cropping, cover cropping, arable livestock integration, and reduced tillage may offer economic as well as environmental gains, particularly when supported through policy incentives or private markets for natural capital.

Nevertheless, realising gains from regenerative agriculture is neither straight-forward nor immediate, and may be affected by farm context, location and access to capital to support agri-technology investment that can facilitate change. Supporting farmers to most effectively make this transition, through research, demonstration, and communication, is therefore key for the future of regenerative agriculture, and to realising its full potential as an approach to farming that maximises productivity, profitability, and stability in a changing climate.

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**Keywords:** Regenerative agriculture, Soil, Resilience

### 3.4. Using Agritech to Support Resilient Farming in the UK

UK farming is under pressure from climate change, rising input costs, pests and diseases, labour shortages, and the need to reduce its environmental impact. Our research sits within agritech, where we work on digital and sensing tools that help farmers make better decisions and manage crops more precisely. This includes using sensors, imaging, AI, and field trials to detect crop stress earlier, reduce waste, and improve productivity.

We are particularly interested in how these technologies can support more resilient and sustainable farming systems in the UK, while also being practical enough for real-world use. This work brings together research, industry and policy, and also integrates teaching and knowledge exchange to help build the next generation of agritech skills. The overall aim is to support a more productive, climate-ready, and environmentally responsible farming sector.

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**Keywords:** Agritech, Digital agriculture, Precision farming, Crop resilience, Sensors, Artificial intelligence, Food security

### 3.5. Smarter Tools for Early Crop Stress Detection

UK farming needs practical ways to cope with climate change, rising input costs, pests and diseases, and growing pressure to reduce environmental impact. We focus on developing digital tools, sensors, and AI that can help UK agriculture become more resilient, productive, and sustainable. Working across potatoes and other field crops, we combine tractor-mounted sensing, drones, spectral imaging, and machine learning to detect crop stress earlier and support better decision-making on farms. This helps reduce unnecessary inputs, protect yields, and improve environmental outcomes.

We also explore how these technologies can support controlled and vertical farming, helping strengthen year-round food production closer to where people live. A major part of our work is ensuring research makes a real difference through collaboration with farmers, industry, policymakers, and the public. The aim is to develop practical and trusted tools that support food security and a more resilient future for UK farming.

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**Keywords:** Digital agriculture, Crop stress detection, Precision farming, Phenomics, Vertical farming, Food security, Machine learning

### 3.6. Farm Safety and Farmer Wellbeing

We are part of a Horizon Europe research programme examining farm safety across European farms through the SAFEHABITUS project. Our research also explores the wellbeing of farm families, with particular attention to the mental health of those living and working on farms. The project aims to develop practical solutions to improve occupational health and safety in agriculture.

Our work highlights important gaps in existing policies and regulations, which tend to focus primarily on hired agricultural labour—often migrant workers. While protecting this group is essential, the majority of farm work across Europe is carried out by self-employed farm families, whose safety needs are frequently overlooked. Many work long hours under demanding conditions that can compromise both physical safety and wellbeing. There is also limited research on the safety needs of pregnant women in farming, and medical professionals often receive little training on this issue. At the same time, farmers face growing pressures linked to policy uncertainty, land-use change, and market volatility.

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**Keywords:** Farm safety, Mental wellbeing, Practical solutions.

### 3.7. Driving Sustainable Farming with Video Advice

Working alongside DEFRA's Behaviour team in a project assessing the value of alternative format of farmers' advice, we researched how to effectively advise farmers to encourage the uptake of sustainable farming practices that deliver high environmental benefits when implemented at scale across farm boundaries. Given government goals to expand participation and the strain on scarce advisory resources, we explored alternative formats for delivering advice to increase the environmental benefits via joint adoption of scheme options that merit consideration.

In a survey experiment with English farmers and land managers, we recreated a sandbox agri-environmental scheme application and found that short-form video advice to farmers increased the overall uptake of options but not the relative frequency of choosing specific high benefit options.

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**Keywords:** Farmer's advice, Agri-environmental schemes

## TOPIC 4: ENVIRONMENT

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### 4.1. Environmental Change Organised within UK Family Farms

Farming in the UK is changing as new policies ask farmers to deliver environmental benefits such as improving biodiversity and reducing emissions. While most research looks at whether farmers take part in these schemes, less is known about what happens inside farms as these changes are put into practice. Most farms are run by families, where different members take on different roles.

This research examines how environmental change is organised within these family farms. It focuses on who makes decisions, who carries out the work, and who has the time, skills, and resources to manage new environmental requirements. By examining how these roles are distributed and coordinated, the research explains how environmental practices are implemented in everyday farming. This provides new insight into how environmental policy is translated into practice and how it can better support farms.

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**Keywords:** Environmental transition, Family farms, Farm organisation, Agri-environment schemes, Farm decision-making, UK agriculture

## 4.2. Improving Cropping Practices for Sustainability

European smallholder farmers and foresters face challenges including inefficient cropping practices, soil degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate pressures. Crop MATCHING is a four-year Horizon Europe project that tackles these issues by developing a thematic network to support the adoption of sustainable cropping practices. The project provides validated, evidence-based cropping practices through on-farm demonstrations and short training modules. Regional communities across 13 countries enable peer exchange, local events, and advisory support.

We coordinate the co-creation, training development, and stakeholder engagement, managing the behavioural change work across Europe. By combining practical tools, research, and multi-actor collaboration, the project empowers farmers to enhance soil health, biodiversity, climate resilience, and economic sustainability.

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**Keywords:** Environment, Sustainable cropping

## 4.3. Driving Sustainable Horticulture Across Europe

European horticulture faces major sustainability challenges: continued reliance on peat and limited alternatives, inefficient use of agricultural inputs, and declining soil health from unsustainable practices. Hort2thefuture, a four-year European project bringing together 28 partners from 12 countries, aims to develop low-cost, scalable, and environmentally friendly growing media, innovative production systems that reduce inputs, and strategies to improve soil structure and prevent compaction.

We coordinate the behavioural change work across Europe. This involves identifying barriers to sustainable practices, co-creating strategies with professional growers and amateur gardeners, improving growing media labelling, and designing policy measures and incentives to encourage adoption of peat alternatives. By combining research, practical trials, and policy guidance, the project seeks to accelerate the adoption of soil-friendly, resource-efficient horticulture across Europe.

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**Keywords:** Environment, Soil health, Sustainable practices

#### **4.4. Women in Regenerative Agriculture and Innovation**

GRASS CEILING was a three-year Horizon Europe research programme (2023–2025) involving a consortium of 29 partners across nine European countries. The project highlighted rural and farm women's engagement in socio-ecological innovation. It identified gaps in existing support systems, the collection and use of relevant data, and promoted the integration of women's experiences and needs into policy at both European and national levels.

A key component of the project involved working directly with women innovators in the nine participating countries. This collaborative model proved highly effective, and the research was recognised by the European Commission as a success story. Building on this work, we are currently replicating the model in the Scottish Borders in collaboration with women innovators. We are also involved in a related project on the Isle of Mull, working with women entrepreneurs to develop products using seaweed harvested from the community-owned seaweed farm.

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**Keywords:** Women, Regenerative farming, Ecological transitions, Innovation

## TOPIC 5: RURAL ISSUES

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### 5.1. Community Groups and Rural Migration in Scotland

Currently most people still live in cities, but more are choosing to move to the countryside. In the UK, some villages and small towns have seen a modest population increase in recent years. Existing research shows that newcomers can cause issues such as higher housing costs and gentrification, but they can also bring useful skills and resources. However, we still know little about how newcomers can best support rural community.

Based on fieldwork in rural Scotland from September 2024 to January 2025, this study found that newcomers help keep villages going and they are essential in various community groups. The Community Council gives residents a voice at higher levels of government and helps secure funding for development. Other groups, such as community hall committees, focus on wellbeing, mutual support, and local traditions. These groups are essential for village life and help make rural in-migration more positive for everyone.

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**Keywords:** Counter-urbanisation, Rural Scotland, Community groups, Rural sustainability

## 5.2. Rural Health Inequalities

Health inequalities experienced by people living in rural areas of the UK are often overlooked. Our programme of research examines health and wellbeing across rural parts of the UK, in relation to rural cancer inequalities, rural experiences of health and wellbeing, and health care provision and access.

People in rural areas are less likely to survive a number of cancers, are more likely to have late-stage disease at diagnosis, and often experience poorer treatment provision. Rural patients are also less likely to finish their cancer treatment and have less access to cutting edge treatments and clinical trials. Key barriers to accessing health care for cancer and other conditions, include financial challenges (seasonal workloads or costly health care access), cultural barriers (stoic attitudes), changing rural populations (increase in retirees, decrease in younger families), and continuity and accessibility of health care (staff recruitment and retention challenges in primary care practices, distance from specialist and hospital services). Overall, this contributes to health inequalities experienced by rural communities.

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**Keywords:** Rural inequalities; Rural health; Cancer; Health care provision

## 5.3. Advancing the Rural Water Agenda

Across the UK, thousands of people depend on private water and wastewater systems for the provision of basic water and sanitation services. In the case of rural and island Scotland, approximately 200,000 people rely on private drinking water supplies. Yet these systems repeatedly suffer with issues relating to both the quality and quantity of supply, with challenges expected to further increase under the context of escalating climate stresses and changing land use patterns.

These systems underpin everyday life for thousands of individuals, businesses and communities. Yet the current governance framework is failing many of them. Opportunities for change exist, but solutions will require not only technical interventions or institutional reform, but new approaches to collaborative management and sustained support for local provision of critical services. Without this, the long-term sustainability of a number of rural communities will remain at risk.

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**Keywords:** Water, Wastewater, Rural and island communities

## 5.4. Catalysing Rural Business Innovation

We are undertaking research to improve innovation support for rural economies. Rural businesses are resilient and resourceful and make up around 25% of businesses in England. Substantial national and international evidence suggests a disconnect between rural businesses and communities, and the research and innovation ecosystem.

We are working with Innovate UK to review existing evidence concerning how entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems differ in rural areas. We are discussing with businesses and innovation support stakeholders, how innovation is best enabled and harnessed in rural areas, how rural enterprise can be better integrated into the innovation ecosystem, and identifying implications for future innovation support. The project is funded by ESRC and Innovate UK via the Innovation & Research Caucus.

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**Keywords:** Innovation, Rural enterprise, Policy and innovation support

## 5.5. Social Sustainability of UK's Livestock Supply Chains

Social sustainability has become increasingly important for the UK's livestock systems as issues around labour shortages, farmer wellbeing challenges, public trust issues around food-safety concerns, and widening inequalities along supply chains. Although livestock contributes significantly to livelihoods, nutrition, and rural economies, the social aspects of sustainability remain poorly defined and inconsistently measured. This creates a gap between what policy frameworks expect and what other stakeholders, such as producers, can practically deliver. Without clear assessment of social outcomes, risks such as worker exploitation, farmer stress, weak community resilience, and misaligned incentives can persist, affecting both productivity and sector stability.

For the UK in particular, gaps between domestic schemes and broader global concerns risk limiting the sector's ability to respond effectively to emerging social expectations. Our research, therefore, focuses on a more inclusive, multi-stakeholder understanding of social sustainability, supported by evidence, to help inform policies that strengthen both social responsibility and long-term resilience in food systems.

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**Keywords:** Social sustainability, Livestock supply chains, Stakeholder perspectives, Food systems

## 5.6. Rural Futures Network

The Rural Futures Network brings together academics, policymakers, and practitioners from the four devolved regions of the UK to explore the future of rural policy. Its focus is on rethinking rural policy in response to changing demands on rural areas following Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. Originally funded by the UK Research Councils, the Network proved so valuable that the devolved governments chose to support its continuation.

The Network addresses shared policy challenges across the devolved administrations and provides a forum for exchanging ideas, experiences, and best practice. Meetings take place four times a year, with topics proposed by the participating governments. Discussions to date have explored the future of rural development programmes, the effectiveness of rural proofing, and whether legislating would make it stronger. Future work will also examine the quality and availability of robust rural data across the UK.

Key outputs include research briefings to inform meetings and summaries highlighting the main insights and recommendations from each meeting.

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**Keywords:** Network, Rural policy, Devolved regions, Future rural development

## 5.7. Rural Poverty in Britain

Poverty is perceived as an urban problem, yet many in rural Britain also experience hardship. Our research explores how and why people in rural areas experience and negotiate poverty and social exclusion, and how this might be addressed by policy. Our findings highlight the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on rural households (including fuel poverty), the shortcomings of our social welfare system in supporting rural citizens, and a lack of affordable rural housing.

The neglect of poverty and social exclusion in rural Britain stems from a lack of understanding of these circumstances by central government, and from the exercise of power to favour other interests. Rural poverty could be readily addressed, given political will, and our book "Rural Poverty Today: Experiences of Social Exclusion in Rural Britain" (Policy Press 2023) offers practical solutions to these policy challenges.

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**Keywords:** Rural poverty, Social exclusion, Cost of living, Fuel poverty

## 5.8. Place-based Rural Development and Spatial Justice

Ministers have said that no-one should be disadvantaged by where they live. Can a place-based rural development approach contribute to spatial justice? Place-based approaches, such as LEADER and 'Pride in Place' often involve working with residents and local institutions towards the future prosperity of rural communities and to enhance rural economies' contribution to national growth and wellbeing.

Our research has examined the effectiveness of place-based rural development in promoting social innovation and spatial justice in England and Scotland. One study examined LEADER and spatial justice in north-east England. Another contributed to the Rural Policy Review for the Scottish Government, while another examined the potential to reimagine rural policy through mission-led governance. Key themes include flexibility to adapt to the diversity rural places; the degree of active participation, capacity-building and local capability; the social construction of place; and the importance of governance and power.

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**Keywords:** Place-based rural development, Community-led local development, Spatial justice, Mission-led, Rural policy



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