



AGM: Grazing for Good

In 2020 Natural England (NE) published the report "Grazing Regimes for Nature Recovery: Experience from 25 Years of Agri-Environment Agreements in the Lake District's High Fells." This report recommends an average annual stocking rate of 0.05 Livestock Units/Ha (1.6 sheep per ha) for nature recovery. Since its publication the report has been highly influential in further reducing the number of sheep grazing Lake District

commons and enclosed fell. It is now standard practice for NE advisers to require graziers and their Commoners' Associations to reduce sheep numbers to meet this one size fits all stocking rate before they will recommend an HLS rollover. As the development of new Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier schemes has been severely delayed, Commoners' Associations have had no choice but to stick with HLS rollovers if they wanted to keep the government funding coming in.

However, this report was not reviewed by independent experts before publication and we wanted to know if the monitoring methods and evidence used would stand up to independent scientific scrutiny. So last year in partnership with the Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association and West Lakeland CIC we gathered funds to engage Professor Robin Pakeman, Plant Ecologist at the James Hutton Institute to provide an initial review of the report and whether the mandated stocking rates for HLS rollovers across wide areas of the Lake District were appropriate.

Professor Pakeman completed his very useful report last autumn. In brief he did find the methods used by NE have limitations and there are areas where information is lacking. See p 3 for a summary of the Report.

We have invited Professor Pakeman to our AGM to explain how he assessed the NE Report and suggest how we can build a collaborative process involving fell farmers, independent natural

and social scientists, Natural England, and other local stakeholders to shape future land management schemes that promote conservation and sustainable farming in an equitable way.

While this review looked at the Lake District High Fells, Professor Pakeman's findings are relevant to all upland commons in Cumbria and beyond as Natural England uses the same condition assessment methods, despite differences in vegetation and climate.

We have also asked the Farmer-Led Habitat Assessment projects at Derwent and Kinniside commons to explain how they are learning to assess fell habitats for themselves.

Please come along on **March 7th** and find out more.

From the Chairman

After what feels like 16 months of constant rain, at least the backend store and breeding sales have been steady. Fat lamb and beef prices are up nicely and hopefully, they'll hold up for the next few months.

As some of you may know, our administrator, Viv Lewis, has been undergoing cancer treatment over the past few months. Though she's still very involved in Federation matters, she has had to step back from much of the workload. Her treatment included a six-week stay at Manchester's Christie Hospital, and while it's now nearing completion, it has understandably taken a toll on her. So far, her results are positive and I'm sure you'll all join me in wishing her a full and swift recovery.

In the meantime, Jennifer Dodsworth took over Viv's duties. For those who haven't yet met her, Jennifer and her partner Shaun have recently taken on a farm tenancy near Alston. She's also been working on the new Lakeland Shepherds' Guide, is very involved with the "Grazing in Upland Landscapes" research, undertakes ELMS policy work and has helped write this newsletter.

Viv has started resuming her work as the Secretary and Jennifer will continue to help us.

John Rowland



A summary of Professor Robin Pakeman's Initial Review

“Grazing in Upland Landscapes”

Background

As mentioned on page 1, this Review was initiated by the Herdwick Sheep Breeders Association, Federation of Cumbria Commoners, and West Lakeland CIC. We were becoming increasingly concerned that our already fragile heafing system was being further undermined by the findings of the Natural England report “Grazing Regimes for Nature Recovery: Experience from 25 Years of Agri-Environment Agreements in the Lake District's High Fells” published in 2020.

This report, which was not independently reviewed, recommended an annual average stocking density of 0.05 Livestock Units per hectare to achieve nature recovery on the High Fells. The timing of the report coincided when many 10-year Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) schemes on commons were beginning to expire and the only funding on offer was to rollover the HLS. However, Commoners' Associations were told by NE advisers that they needed to agree to reduce sheep numbers (often over 3 years) to meet this one size fits all stocking rate before the adviser would recommend an HLS rollover. This left Commoners' Associations with no choice but reduce the numbers of sheep grazing the common if they wanted to keep the government funding coming in. Four years on we now have fewer sheep grazing the fells

and the heafing system has moved closer to collapse.

During this time, we were collecting data, talking to local and national NE staff about our concerns, informing agencies like the LDNPA, the World Heritage Site, the National Trust and writing to our MPs and Ministers about the negative impacts of these low stocking rates. We felt we were raising the issues, but not being listened to. In other words, the agencies were sympathetic, but no one wanted to get off the fence and stand beside us.

We couldn't sit by and watch this happen and we needed to change tack. We engaged Professor Robin Pakeman an eminent upland ecologist at the James Hutton Institute to provide an initial scoping review of the report.

We wanted to know if the science NE is using to mandate low stocking rates for HLS rollovers across wide areas of the Lake District is sufficiently robust or whether more information and research is needed before our traditional farming systems are sacrificed for nature recovery and rewilding. Is there a more equitable way of working together that keeps farmers on the land using traditional farming practices that deliver for nature and the climate?

The Review

Below is a brief synopsis of the review which is in three parts:

I. The research questions:

What methods does Natural England use to monitor and evaluate grazing regimes?

Natural England primarily uses Site Condition Monitoring (SCM) from Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to assess grazing. This involves comparing the current state of habitats against ideal conditions based on specific indicators. While this method is standardised across the UK, it may overlook local variations and the broader impacts of climate and management practices.

How reliable and transparent are these methods and the data collected?

Although Site Condition Monitoring is widely used, it has limitations, such as:

- Variability in habitat conditions that depend on surveyor judgement.
- A focus on vegetation management without adequately considering other environmental factors.
- Simplification of complex ecosystems into broad categories, which can obscure detailed insights.
- Lack of long-term monitoring capabilities and precision in assessing change.

What are the key concerns of local farmers regarding current agi-environment schemes?

Local farmers have raised critical concerns regarding:

- The economic viability of their businesses if stock numbers need to be reduced under new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS).
- Ecological impacts of changes in management practices, including issues related to bracken, ticks, and wildfire.

What potential areas require further research to improve biodiversity and sustainable farming practices?

The review identifies several areas where further research is needed:

- The effects of grazing changes on various species beyond just vegetation.
- Interactions between management practices, climate change, and nitrogen deposition.
- Understanding the economic implications of changes in agricultural support mechanisms and markets.

What are the benefits and challenges of conducting a larger, long-term collaborative study?

While there are benefits to conducting larger studies, including comprehensive data synthesis and informed decision-making, challenges exist. These include integrating diverse data sources and maintaining long-term funding and stakeholder agreement.

Recommendations

The review made three key recommendations to enhance the development of agri-environment schemes in the Lake District. Natural England's approach to developing schemes with farmers should move away from the current reliance, on the 'Grazing Regimes' document for mandating stocking rates, as seen in HLS rollovers, towards a more equitable strategy for land management such as the 'Ecosystem Approach', which has been adopted internationally. Using this approach, Professor Pakeman recommends:

Independent facilitation - All stakeholders to come together with an independent facilitator to scope out how to review the available evidence

Independent scientific panel - appointed to review evidence on environment, economics, and social aspects to understand the drivers of change and to identify potential directions for upland management that would deliver multiple benefits.

Decision making framework - The stakeholders to agree a framework for future management decision making within the Lake District taking into account all drivers of change and specific socio-economic circumstances in the area.

Detailed Commentary on NE's "Grazing Regimes for Nature recovery" Report

Professor Pakeman provided a series of general observations on NE's report and comments on individual sections in the report. Below is a summary of the major points:

- There is a clear contrast between the subject of the report "Nature Recovery" and the content which focuses on vegetation. This contrast in focus means that there is an assumption that Vegetation = Nature. However, vegetation is only one part of nature. Consequently, the report is only a partial view of how changing the management of the Lake District fells would impact biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- The report is based around an analysis of condition assessment from SSSIs before March 2018, creating a number of issues. By focusing the analysis and future management changes on the condition assessment, decisions are being based on proxy data and managing for the proxy, not the desired result of managing for nature in the round
- The report focuses on grazing as the biggest driver of condition and ignores other drivers and the potential interaction between drivers. The Lake District has seen high levels of acidic and nitrogen deposition with impacts on sensitive habitats. There are also continuing impacts of climate change which will also have an impact on natural habitats. Not taking

Grazing in upland landscapes continued

these into account can fail to address the underlying causes of change

- The report is very site focused, and it could be improved by taking a landscape level approach to identify key areas where management change could provide key benefits and areas where benefits might be low or may even be disbenefits.
- A wide range of species are associated with open, grazed habitats and it is possible that these will suffer from decisions about reduced grazing and increased woodland cover.
- Which species should be favoured is a discussion dependent on values as well as regional and national trends in species abundances. These discussions should be explicit about the trade-offs before making decisions
- There is a need for further study of the impacts of changing flock numbers and flock sizes on hefting behaviour. This is an important topic and one that should be followed through by Natural England.

If you would like to have a copy of the full report, please email viv@cumbriacommoners.org.uk

Moving forwards

Just before Christmas we held a webinar for organisations who own and/or manage land across Cumbria including Natural England, Lake District National Park, National Trust, conservation NGOs, and academic bodies. Twenty-five people attended to hear Professor Robin Pakeman present his Review. This was followed by a useful Q & A session with Robin Pakeman, John Rowland and Will Rawling on the panel. In the final session we invited the audience, via an online poll, to say whether they would like to be involved. The majority said yes.

Our aim is that this Review is the start of a collaborative process between fell farmers and organisations who are looking for a balance between the needs of nature, climate, farming and local communities in shaping the future of the Lakeland landscape. We will need more research and independent facilitation to work out what “balance” means.

Thank you to the local businesses whose contributions have supported the Review

- **Penrith & District Farmers Mart**
- **Hope’s Auction Mart**
- **Mitchells Action Mart**
- **Harrison & Hetherington**
- **Robinson & Co Accountants**
- **Benson Accountants**
- **Keswick Show**
- **Cockermouth Show**
- **Ennerdale Show**
- **Millom & Broughton Show**
- **Borrowdale Show**
- **Buttermere Show**
- **Skelton Show**

Did you know there is a plan to introduce White-Tailed Eagles to Cumbria?

For the last couple of years the Cumbrian White-Tailed Eagle (often known as sea eagle) Project has been exploring the possibility of bringing white-tailed eagles back to Cumbria – see <https://lifescapeproject.org/projects/white-tailed-eagles/> The organisations involved include the University of Cumbria, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, The Lifescape Project, RSPB, the Wildland Institute, the Lake District National Park Authority and local estate owners and managers. Both the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria Local Nature Recovery Strategy include white-tailed eagles in their lists of priority species for nature recovery.

In 2023 the University of Cumbria undertook a species pre-feasibility study – see <https://lifescapeproject.org/uploads/final-wte-pre-feasibility-report-uoc-2022.pdf> . This work suggests there is suitable habitat in Cumbria, mostly in the areas around the lakes and the estuaries in the southern half of Cumbria. It seems there is plenty for white-tailed eagles to eat as they are generalist predators and scavengers feeding on fish, birds and mammals.



However, the study has little to say about the experiences emerging from Scotland where the livelihoods of sheep farmers and crofters in certain areas are being devastated by white-tailed Eagle predation of lambs and sometimes adult sheep.

The project is now undertaking a social feasibility study to explore what local people think about having white-tailed eagles back in Cumbria. Last Autumn they ran some online and in-person events. As they were not widely advertised, only a few people turned up to find out more.

It became clear that the majority of farmers hadn't heard about this re-introduction project and the NFU in consultation with local farming organisations requested specific consultation meetings for farmers so they could hear about the proposal, the results of the feasibility study and get the opportunity to have their say. .

The Lifescapes team arranged four meetings for the end of January, but limited the numbers of attendees to 8 per meeting. This didn't meet our aim for widespread, open and transparent consultation but we decided to attend one of these meetings to express our views . We clearly stated our doubts and concerns about the whole reintroduction process. Amongst other questions we asked if the southern part of Cumbria can truly meet white-tailed eagles' needs?,

How would this affect the Herdwick breed given the concentration of Herdwick sheep in this part of the Lakes? Could the significant visitor numbers and unmanaged tourism have negative impacts on species reintroduction? Could a lack of prey mean that they might predate on lambs and possibly ewes? Would there be mitigation measures and economic compensation for sheep farmers?

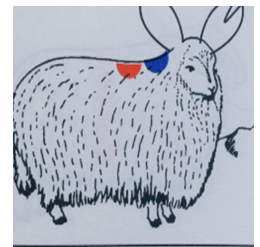
We were told there is still a long way to go before, and if, the introduction of white-tailed eagles to Cumbria is approved and it is not a done deal. But we all need to keep an eye what happens next, attend meetings and have our say. Decisions on white-tailed eagle reintroduction must not be done behind closed doors and must balance conservation goals with the needs of local communities and be guided by science, environmental, social and economic sustainability.

We will try to keep you informed of what happens next and please have your say.

Updating the Lakeland Shepherds' Guide

The Book

Thanks to your support, we are now very close to completing the valley collection phase. We're awaiting the return of information from only one remaining valley, which we expect shortly. This phase has taken a bit longer than anticipated due to several challenges, including postage issues, changes in tenancy, and the busy schedules of our invaluable valley collectors. We're extremely grateful for the dedication of all collectors who have worked tirelessly to bring this critical part of the guide together.



We have been working with Stramongate press in Kendal to get the layout of the Guide right and keep its traditional format. Luckily one of the employees at Stramongate press worked on the 2005 Guide. That's the beauty of using local firms with employees who stay for a long time and their knowledge does not have to be reinvented. The same can be said about fell farmers!

Data analysis

With the valley collection phase nearly complete, Jenifer is now able to focus on the data analysis, examining changes across the 1985, 2005, and 2025 editions of the Shepherds' Guide. Jennifer has been conducting interviews and extensive desk-based research on changes to the fells over the past 40 years, and she's eager to schedule more interviews in the coming months. She wants to capture your unique perspectives on the evolving landscape.

The website

The Lakeland Shepherds Guide is more than an historic record—it's a valuable opportunity to share the importance of fell farming with the many visitors who come here each year. We're working on the structure and the look of the website and will have prototype designs to share soon. Your input will be crucial so the website's look and feel reflects fell farming and your experiences and needs.

The smit plaques

Several farmers have already signed up for a custom 'smit plaque' for their farm gates. These plaques will feature a bespoke sand-blasted version of your farm's smit mark, crafted by Honister Slate Mine, and a link to a personalized page on the Shepherds' Guide website. This page is a fantastic way to share your farm's story—whether promoting meat boxes, holiday cottages, or your family's history in Lakeland. If you'd like your own plaque, please get in touch with Jennifer.

The Shepherds' walks explaining the basics of fell farming

We're working with an illustrator on a series of walks and maps for the website with explanations along the route on how they were used by shepherds in the past and how they are used today. We'd love your input on any local walks you believe best show the heritage and role of farming in our region.

Celebratory event to launch the 2025 Guide

Finally, we're planning a celebratory event in early summer 2025 to officially launch the Guide and honour the role of fell farming in Lakeland. This will be a wonderful opportunity for all of you who have an entry in the Guide to gather and celebrate the heritage and future of fell farming together. Thank you for your continued support and involvement in this important project. We look forward to sharing more updates with you soon!

Sign up and win a £200 voucher

Take part in an interview, sign up for a smit mark, or suggest a local walk and be entered into a competition to win a £200 Carrs Billington Voucher.

Ways to enter:

Sign up for your own smit mark plaque

Get in touch to have a bespoke plaque made by Honister Slate Mine for your farm gate featuring your flock smit mark and your own web page on the new Guide website

This fully funded project aims to promote your farm and form a collection of 'smit marks' for visitors to collect when on holiday in the area, promoting hill farming and your own business to existing tourist trade.

Sign up for an interview

We are still running interviews with hill farmers through the coming weeks to provide evidence about your experience of changes to hill farming and what you want to see from future farmer support.

Share your views and ideas with us for this project

We will be asking for your input on the content and formatting of various elements at the events above:

- the Shepherds' Guide Website
- the Smit Mark plaques
- Shepherds' walks

contact Jennifer: jennifer@fellsfieldnotes.co.uk / 07794 640871 to get involved!



North Sheep

Wednesday 4th June 2025: Greystoke Castle Farm, Greystoke, Penrith, Cumbria.

Showcasing the Lakeland Shepherds' Guide.

We will have a small stand next to the HSBA stand to explain the origins of the Lakeland Shepherds' Guide and copies of the book for visitors to look at. Please come along and say hello.

West Lakeland CIC: A Farmer-Led Approach to Change in the Lakes



Will Rawling

The recent budget announcements must have shocked everyone—I know they did for me, as an owner-occupier. Although this had been floated as a possibility, I genuinely didn't expect it to actually happen. Now, it's yet another challenge we have to take on and hopefully overcome. One key question is what this means for the commons. National Trust-owned commons likely won't be affected, but those in private hands may be. For some owners, commons represent a major capital asset, but rights holders will continue to have access regardless of who owns the land. I wonder if we'll see more commons passed to the National Trust?

We all know how complex it already is to manage commons with trust and cooperation—this just adds another complication. It's a reminder of the critical role organizations like the Federation of Cumbria Commoners (FCC) play and the importance of everyone working together.

Another unexpected announcement came earlier from Natural England, about their aim to reduce stocking density across the Lake District fells to 0.05 livestock units per hectare — essentially, one sheep per five acres. This ambitious target spurred us to come together for a collaborative effort. Once COVID began to settle, a few of us in the western Lakes met to explore different ways of meeting environmental goals. We called a meeting in a very drafty farm building near Gosforth in West Cumbria. Most who attended were commoners from Kinniside, Stockdale Moor, or Nether Wasdale, which is where we decided to focus our efforts. These three commons, along with the associated inby land around the fell wall, cover a large area. We included a few additional farms to complete the landscape and, by mutual agreement, added adjoining freehold fells. All three commons are owned by the National Trust, as are many of the farms. After several supportive meetings with the National Trust (NT) and the Lake District National Park Authority (LDNPA), we had a plan covering 22,000 hectares across commons, freehold fells, and inby land. This initiative now involves forty-two farm businesses in Ennerdale, Wasdale, and the surrounding areas, mainly beef and sheep farms with some crops grown for farm use.

Our shared goal is clear: to keep people working the land while also delivering for the environment. Everyone agrees that protecting the heafing system, already fragile and fragmented,

is crucial. How we actually achieve this, however, is the big question. Seeing that everyone was on board, we knew it was time to make it happen—easier said than done for a group of farmers. With a bit of financial support from the LDNPA, we brought in professional help from Viv Lewis. She guided us in establishing the 'West Lakeland, Farmer-Led Nature Recovery Community Interest Company'—quite a mouthful, so we call it "West Lakeland CIC." With the help of Ruth Dalton, another force of nature, we secured some initial funding from the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) program to set us on our path. We assembled a local board of directors and formed a facilitation team. It sounds straightforward, but it's a lot of hard work. This team is fantastic, and together, we're committed to creating a sustainable future for the farmers and communities of the western Lakes. However, the slow pace of rural policy development remains a major barrier.

We're all in the same boat here—DEFRA needs to get its act together and give us something concrete to work towards. We have a strong team of people dedicated to realistic, achievable goals. We're building scientific evidence that supports our traditional systems; the findings in soil biology alone are mind-blowing. New data suggests that what we do isn't just 'not bad'—grazing animals play a vital role, not only in producing high-quality food but also in maintaining biodiversity.

Groups like Ullswater CIC, which is working in a different way, show that bottom-up initiatives led by farmers can achieve great things. We still have a long way to go, and it's hard work, often frustrating. But this approach—locally designed solutions led by local people—is the way forward. If you want a healthy environment and a sustainable food system, who better to deliver it than a skilled farmer? So please, government, get your finger out and no more bloody surprises.

Commons progress on SFI MOR1: Assess moorland and produce a written record

Jo Edwards from PFK and Charles Raine from YoungsRPS, both FCC committee members have given us an update on CMORI

Cumbria: Jo Edwards

Making an application

At the time of writing the application process for MORI is still being run by the RPA off line for commons. There are a number of steps to go through:

- In order to apply someone registered with the appropriate authority with the RPA for your common needs to contact the RPA to request an application for your common

- Your commoners' group has agreed to go forwards with MOR1 and got the necessary documentation in place that sets out how the group will manage and run the agreement.
- Once the expression of interest is with the RPA, they will get in touch requesting various details about the common and the commoners' group.

I have found the RPA team who is dealing with the application process extremely helpful and they will guide you through the process of what they need in order to issue an agreement for the common.

Common Land Moorland Surveying App

All the commons which I have been involved with have elected to use the Foundation for Common Land Moorland Surveying App which they developed for the surveying / information gathering work. You can register for the App using this link: <https://foundationforcommonland.org.uk/sfi-moorland-surveying-app>

The Foundation's SFI coordination team are extremely helpful and will guide you through the information they need in order to set up the mapping. They will give all members of the commoners' group who are doing the surveying access to the App so they can undertake the surveying work.

Some commoners' groups have elected to do all the surveying themselves, some have engaged a contractor to do all of the surveying and some have worked with a mix of commoners and contractors.

They have found the App to be a great tool and are progressing well, with many having completed their first-year survey over last summer/ autumn. The groups have arranged a meeting over this winter to review the results and complete the report that is required for year 1 of the agreement.

Finally

I would encourage any commoners' group who have not yet considered this SFI option to look at it. It is proving to be a very interesting task, and those commons I am involved with are finding both the surveying and results useful.

The App set up by the Foundation for Common Land is a great tool for getting the survey work done, and I am really pleased to be able to say that my experience with the RPA team dealing with this part of SFI has been great with them being very helpful!

Northumberland: Charles Raine

Charles oversees SFI MOR1 implementation across 8,500 hectares of common land in Northumberland, notes that all participating commons in his area have opted to use contractors for their Year 2 surveys.

In his view contractors bring expertise and impartiality to the survey process. They enable uniformity in the surveying and the timely completion of the task. This structured approach to gathering data across vast, shared landscapes is crucial to getting a consistent survey. As the program progresses, these surveys should offer valuable insights into how to manage shared landscapes sustainably while ensuring compliance with MOR 1 and effective engagement from all stakeholders involved.

Our Upland Commons' Heritage Lottery Project

We have been continuing to deliver a wide range of activities across Cumbria commons as part of the 'Our Upland Commons' – a National Lottery project. The Federation of Cumbria Commoners is one of the 25 partners. Recent activity includes:

- Supporting Bampton Common to enter the SFI Moorland Survey and holding training sessions for all at Askham and at Mungrisdale.
- More training for the remote-controlled Bracken cutter and work on the Bracken management plan at Derwent Common
- Developing farmer led habitat assessment tools on Kinniside and Derwent Commons to enable farmers to collect more ecological vegetation data while undertaking their SFI Moorland survey.
- Butterfly surveys on Derwent Common
- Agreeing and commissioning natural flood management works on Brant Common to protect Sedbergh town.
- 48 bursary places for commoners and advisors on a range of University of Cumbria Uplands ELM courses including Farm Business Opportunities, Farming for Net Zero and Mapping Environmental Assets.
- Continuing to develop a film on Commoning by Sarah Beddington.
- A series of webinars on the cost of commoning, trees on commons and a range of other topics
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The Our Upland Commons Project is now finished. It was a 4.5 year, £3m, 25-partner project helping to secure the future of upland commons in Dartmoor, the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and Shropshire Hills. It was led by the Foundation for Common Land.

We are shortly going to start working with Matterdale, Threlkeld and Mungrisdale commons with West Cumbria Rivers Trust looking at how these commons can support protect Keswick

NSA report *UK Sheep farming and the sustainability agenda*

Andrea Calvesbert , NSA

The recently launched NSA report *UK Sheep farming and the sustainability agenda* produced with the Harper Adams School of Sustainable Food and Farming, highlights examples of positive farming practices that are enhancing the sector's sustainability credentials. From the use of genetics to increase efficiency of flocks to grazing practices that improve soil health and promote broader biodiversity, the report showcases the multifunctional benefits that sheep farms help to deliver without making exceptional changes to the way in which they already operate.

The report recognises, too, the vital role of hill farmers and common land graziers in maintaining a landscape which has been shaped by centuries of sheep grazing, along with their role in being the 'glue' which supports and maintains communities in remote areas, sheep farming contributes to the social and financial economies, generating interaction between people and place and being a cornerstone of business activity as well as heritage and stewardship of the land.

Whilst upland farmers in many areas are facing challenges posed by HLS and ELMS encouraging the removal of sheep, often with large financial incentives, the NSA report urges a more bespoke approach to encouraging biodiversity rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

It suggests food production and security should not come at the cost of other industries offsetting their emissions - carbon trading should not be allowed to come between landowners, tenants, owners of commons and rights holders.

The report also highlights the importance of the stratified sheep system of which the hills are an integral part, producing hardy breeding replacements for lowland farms along with store and finished lambs and wool. This is a real positive attribute of sheep farming and its contribution to rural economies and infrastructure and one which often appears easy for policymakers to overlook. It's easy to decide, on paper, that hill farmers are not producing as much food as lowland farms – when in actual fact they are playing a vital role in rearing and supplying sheep to those farms to rear and send to market.

You can download a copy from the NSA website <https://nationalsheep.org.uk/our-work/policy/uk-sheep-farming-and-the-sustainability-agenda>

Federation of Cumbria Commoners Committee

Office holders

Chairman	John Rowland	Lakes North
Treasurer	Dave Smith	Eastern Fells
Administrator	Viv Lewis	

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Julia Aglionby	Co-opted
Jo Edwards	Co-opted
Andrew Humphries	Co-opted
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