

WEBINARS

BIODIVERSITY OF GRASSLANDS

The new UK Agriculture Act is the basis for radical change in the way grassland livestock farming is supported. In future farmers will only receive public money in return for delivery of 'public goods'.

That means, primarily, biodiversity and other environmental benefits. But do we have the science base to underpin such a policy, and can farmers apply it to deliver results at sufficient scale whilst maintaining food production and a viable business?

BSAS, BGS and Stapledon Trust have organised two Webinars on Biodiversity in Grassland focused on the UK to inform and activate discussion.

Please see over for details



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Webinar 1 - Tuesday 26 January 2021, 17.00-18.30

The science: what is the state of grassland biodiversity and how might it be increased?

Dr Lisa Norton, Land Use Group, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Lancaster.

Grassland biodiversity in the UK: status, trends and prospects.

Lisa led the large Countryside Survey project and is currently studying semi-improved grasslands and leys in livestock and arable systems. She is uniquely placed to give an overview of grassland diversity, the factors driving it and the potential for increasing it.

Prof Robin Pakeman, James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen.

Plants, invertebrates and birds in upland grassland: effects of grazing management

Robin will draw on his own and other research, including the 18-year experiment at Glenfinglas, to identify the impact of management on gains and losses in biodiversity and carbon.

Dr Will Peach, Head of Conservation Science for England & Wales, Royal Society for Protection of Birds.

Management of lowland grassland for invertebrates and birds.

Research carried out by Will and his colleagues shows how biodiversity can be greatly increased on improved grassland and livestock farms.

Webinar 2 - Tuesday 2 February 2021, 17.00-18.30

Implementation: how policy and practice could reverse biodiversity decline.

Clare Pinches, Principal Science Analyst, Natural England.

Development of policies to conserve and increase biodiversity in grassland.

Clare has been active in monitoring, evaluation, design and delivery of agri-environment schemes for over 17 years. She will discuss the success of past and current schemes and policies relevant to grassland and suggest how these could be improved in future.

Ian Boyd, Cotswold Beef & ianboydphotography.co.uk , Whittington Lodge Fm, Cheltenham.

A profitable farm rich in wildlife.

Conventional arable until 15 years ago Ian's farm has evolved into a mixed organic system with species-rich permanent grassland and herbal leys in rotation. His Hereford cattle are grown and finished with no concentrate feed and all the meat is sold via a box scheme with Pasture for Life branding. Ian has won many wildlife awards including from RSPB & FWAG.

Chris Clark, Nethergill Associates.

Maximum sustainable output: making nature a stakeholder in a profitable business.

Chris is a farmer, business consultant and England chair of the Nature Friendly Farming Network. In 2019 he published Less is More, based on 43 upland farm businesses. It showed that, in seeking high output, most were incurring excessive and unnecessary costs and making little or no profit. Chris will suggest how businesses might survive and thrive by delivering biodiversity and other public goods as well as quality food.