

Grassland Clusters



Why Grasslands?



- 95% loss of lowland meadows in England
- Worcestershire has 20% of Neutral grasslands in England
 - Similar picture in Herefs and Glos
- Feckenham Forest is one of the main hotspots in Worcestershire – as well as for Ancient woodland and Parkland.
- Small sites but they are the jewels in the crown – some with incredible diversity
 - Scattered but broadly connected

Priority Habitat is being lost continually



- **An assessment of data between 2002 – 2006 showed that about 36% of SWS grassland and mixed grassland sites were damaged or destroyed**
- **This attrition is ongoing**
- **EIA's are a window into how these habitats are being lost**
- **Small sites don't score in CS but need protecting**
 - **We are trying to solve this through grouping small sites for justification and MID-TIER.**

Opportunity Mapping



- Funding for mapping
- Focus our efforts
- but don't exclude areas



JRAL
AND

- [illegible]

Working in Partnership



- **Facilitation area set up initially for pollinators by the WT but this included Grasslands.**
- **We have worked with WT to match facilitation area to the Focus area boundary of the Feckenham Forest/worcestershire**
- **CFE farmers group have been focusing on grassland creation and restoration – one event last year /more to come**
- **Herefordshire Meadows facilitation group**

What next?



- **Data – evidence base for loss and current extent – we need a baseline!**
 - Partnership work with WT and Council on Phase 1 mapping and site checking – Evidence funding through NE for opportunity mapping/Donor meadow mapping in W/H/G
 - Nick has already done Warwickshire
- **Outside funding for grasslands**
 - Project with the wildlife trust and other partners on grasslands to fund capital works

What next?



Cluster Projects in each county

- **Farmer led/farmer funded - Ownership**
- **Potential NE/DEFRA funding for ecological monitoring/adviser time**
- **Potential for funding for innovations/risk taking etc – crop insurance for trying something that has potential – harvested seed instead of Herbal ley?**
- **Biodiversity offsetting**
- **Real action – demonstrated with real data – baseline**

What next?



- **Countryside Stewardship is so important**
 - Flagship delivery scheme
 - No 1 SSSI remedy option – but SSSIs don't score
 - Cluster Approach - Income generation
 - Support for agreement holders post start date.
- **Shaping our priorities WITH our partners/FARMERS!**

New Practices



Holistic Planned Grazing



New management techniques



New management techniques





Rural Land Register (RLR) Map
SRI - 108775287
RLR/DRA006
Map 2/5

Legends
Your RLR Parcel(s)
SPS Permanent Ineligible Features
Adjacent Parcel Boundary
Unconfirmed Boundary
in its Information

Parcel ID	Parcel ID	Total Area (ha)	SPS Permanent Ineligible Area (ha)	English Hedges
010001	010001	1.32	0.00	0
010002	010002	1.32	0.00	0
010003	010003	1.32	0.00	0
010004	010004	1.32	0.00	0
010005	010005	1.32	0.00	0
010006	010006	1.32	0.00	0
010007	010007	1.32	0.00	0
010008	010008	1.32	0.00	0
010009	010009	1.32	0.00	0
010010	010010	1.32	0.00	0
010011	010011	1.32	0.00	0
010012	010012	1.32	0.00	0
010013	010013	1.32	0.00	0
010014	010014	1.32	0.00	0
010015	010015	1.32	0.00	0
010016	010016	1.32	0.00	0
010017	010017	1.32	0.00	0
010018	010018	1.32	0.00	0
010019	010019	1.32	0.00	0
010020	010020	1.32	0.00	0
010021	010021	1.32	0.00	0
010022	010022	1.32	0.00	0
010023	010023	1.32	0.00	0
010024	010024	1.32	0.00	0
010025	010025	1.32	0.00	0
010026	010026	1.32	0.00	0
010027	010027	1.32	0.00	0
010028	010028	1.32	0.00	0
010029	010029	1.32	0.00	0
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010096	010096	1.32	0.00	0
010097	010097	1.32	0.00	0
010098	010098	1.32	0.00	0
010099	010099	1.32	0.00	0
010100	010100	1.32	0.00	0

Scale 1:5000
10m 0m 10m 100m 100m 200m
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RLR/DRA006 Date: 23/10/2009

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Business performance



- Gross Margin on beef suckler system - £650/cow
- All cattle finished off grass alone by 28 months average – all under 30 months
- Average daily live-weight gain of 0.8 kg per day on store cattle – Even though they were out wintered with no hay.
- Leasowes farm – Restoration/Eades meadow. 180 acres in one application.

Holistic Grazing in Scotland



Holistic Grazing in Scotland



Using holistic grazing principles to increase/maintain diversity



Advantages of Holistic grazing:

- Extended winter grazing with better nutrition for animals
- Easier stock checking when wintering on multiple sites
- Proper rest periods allowing for necessary plant recovery – especially important for forbs.
- Small mammals love it!
- Weeds go away!
- Forage not removed across large areas in one day (compared to a hay cut) – increased age diversity.
- Increased productivity of grasslands.

Using holistic grazing principles to increase/maintain diversity



Advantages of Holistic grazing:

- Wintering COSTS!
- Low Fixed costs.
- No additional feed costs
- Low barriers to entry for young farmers
 - Cheap Infrastructure
 - Contract grazing other peoples stock
- Great fun when you are moving forward.

What next?



There is a place for a Wildflower meadow on every farm

Post Brexit?

- **Traditional mixed farm – herb/hospital patch**
- **Arable field margins – seed harvesting**
- **Green hay/harvested seed for re-seeding/soil health**
- **Species rich hay feeding – demand for species rich hay**
- **Spring turn-out**
- **Holistic Planned grazing**
- **Growth promoters**

Questions