

The role of ruminants in future food systems

**Lisa Norton (presenting on behalf
of multiple researchers and
stakeholders)**



Figures from CS2007 show that the majority of UK grassland (% of UK areas) is agriculturally improved

- Neutral (9.7%)
- Improved grassland (20.5%)
- Calcareous grassland (0.2%)

Only 2% of grassland is considered species rich (semi-natural)

- Hay meadows
- Lowland meadows
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland and upland calcareous



Debate over compatibility of net zero and livestock production

The Telegraph

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Forget free-range: is grass-fed and pasture-raised better for animals, industry, and us?



Wakanui Feedlot Drone screenshot from SAFE video. Photo / Supplied

Dr Anne Galloway, Associate Professor, Design for Social Innovation, Victoria University of Wellington comments:

How important are consumer attitudes towards farming styles?

"New Zealand livestock farming's social license to operate is strongly influenced by consumer attitudes towards different farming styles. Current concerns about beef feedlot operations highlight the role that cultural values play in any public controversy.

"The large majority of New Zealand beef is produced in extensive, pasture-based systems that reinforce the cultural value of 'clean and green' food production. Any alternative can be seen by consumers as a betrayal of their values.

Policy and Practice note

Global food security programme (UKRI)

<https://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/>

Cross project activity

<https://www.foodsystemresilienceuk.org/?s=livestock+systems>

- Stakeholders & researchers

Used the ideas of Abson and Meadows to consider levers for sustainability transformations
(Ambio DOI 10.1007/s13280-016-0800-y)



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- to what extent might knowledge production (rethink) and use be important in reorienting the management of pasture landscapes?
 - to what extent might reconnecting with nature influence pasture landscapes, and
 - to what extent might institutional change (restructure) influence pasture landscapes.



RETHINK

- Engage farmers & facilitate peer to peer learning
- Realign research towards socio-ecological context of pasture systems
- Build relationships between producers and consumers and producers and processors

RECONNECT

- Reconnect farmers with their soil, grassland and livestock
- Reconnect citizens with farming
- Reconnect consumers – procurement, advice, regulation
- Reconnect policy makers – natural capital, circular economy thinking – connect environment and farming
- Reconnect agri-food supply chain businesses with the landscape that their raw materials come from





STRUCTURE and re-organise institutional frameworks

BREXIT re-organisation of trade deals, food standards, cultural subsidies

up policies on food, land use, health, environment

support private initiatives to monitor farm performance but

introduce private payments for public good provision

ensure prices reflect environmental costs of production all the way through the production system

ensure infrastructure support to ensure small rural businesses can remain competitive

support greater integration of arable and livestock systems



Research and policy need to take account of:

- Multiple interacting levers & multiple lenses through which systems are viewed.**
- Transformational change is likely to require holistic thinking to integrate levers and transdisciplinary research to help underpin and drive change**

Useful websites

Global Food Security Programme

<https://www.foodsecurity.ac.uk/>

SEEGSLIP (Sustainable economic and ecological grazing systems – Learning from innovative practitioners)

<https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/seegslip>

Resilient Dairy Landscapes

<https://www.resilientdairylandscapes.com/the-project>

ResULTS

<https://upland-resilience.org/>