

Conference Closing Address. Richard Snow - Environmental Advisor, Defence Estates.

Firstly my thanks to all those who have made the conference possible; Devon Wildlife Trust and the clients and staff involved with case studies, the GAP team, the speakers and everyone else who has supported the event to bring it to such a useful and successful conclusion.

There is no doubt that we are living in an evolving world of fragmented landscapes and fragmented stakeholders. The need for grazing systems to manage the landscape has never been higher but equally the risks have never been higher. The numbers of beef cattle are down by 20% and sheep numbers are also down by 25%. Farming specialisation is contributing to the loss of skills, knowledge and infrastructure and we are producing food at the cost of soils, water and biodiversity.

This conference has introduced and considered:

- Integrated Ecosystem Services
- Working together at the strategic level
- Working more closely together at the local level
- Using dialogue that is appropriate to the audience (start from where they are, not from where you want them to be)
- The importance of Continuity, Trust and Listening.
- Go out and be brave, bold and passionate in the work that you do and keep it simple
- We heard from Dylan Bright the move from “Polluter Pays” to the new principle of “the Provider is Paid”
- This was further backed up by Martin Ross and his “Up Stream Thinking”

We have heard from Wales, Yorkshire, Germany, and Lincolnshire and of course Devon all with common problems to address.

We need to be careful how we badge conservation grazing. A conservation grazier probably considers himself to be a mainstream farmer, so moving conservation grazing into main stream agriculture may require an adjustment for us but not for the farming community. We must highlight the benefits of extensive grazing systems using well developed case studies with the full costs.

When discussing grazing we often discuss biodiversity in terms of Pearl-bordered fritillaries but we must consider our native breeds within the formula.

We need to consider how we work at all levels, from national policy to regional, county, parish and at the common and farm level. Local means local to that site, so we must adapt to this and re-learn or re-story our approach. As Karl Heinz-Kolb illustrated with the local celebration of returning from the pasture.

You are the practitioners who have the skills and ability to make the changes and to lobby and advise.

So what will GAP do to help you deliver?

- GAP provides a focal point and sign post to raise the profile of the need for grazing management and to champion the cause.
- Work in partnership with other organisations.
- Work through and support practitioners on the ground.
- Technical Advice Panels will provide research and practical technical information that is peer reviewed. Information will include: grazing projects at ecosystem and landscape scale; breed profiles and research; costs of grazing systems in gross margins; case studies of economically sustainable grazing systems that take full account of food security and low carbon systems providing - local food for local people.
- Training courses, seminars and workshops.
- Website and Nibblers. Grazier databases such as Stock Keep that are developed by farmers for farmers and graziers. Links to grazing schemes in other countries for example Germany, Kenya, all have options for the future.

What happens next?

- Proceedings will be made available to download from the GAP website.
- Messages from the conference will be taken forward to policy makers
- This information will be used to inform the future activities of GAP.

So thank you all and GAP will do its utmost to support you in your work, but what does this conference tell us? It has told us to be bold; to listen carefully; and to be passionate in the promotion of the grazing management systems within our landscape.