Increased output in UK agriculture 1935-85: 
*using farm accounts*

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Volume of UK agricultural output

Growth rate peaked 1945-65
Sources of output growth

- Change the output mix
- Change inputs
  - Because output prices change
  - Because input prices change
- Increase output per unit of input
  - By increasing output
  - By decreasing inputs
What do we already know?

- A lot about what happened at the *national* level

Less about the differences between
- Expanders
- Survivors
- Failures
And not much about *why* it happened

- Interwar/post-war price response differences
- Price and cost signals
- OR authority, discourse and media effects?
We need a farm-level dataset

- The UK Farm Management Survey was established in 1937
And is still going
The FMS contains information on:

- Outputs
- Inputs
- Labour
- Capital
The analytical process

- Produce the database of farmers
  - Select farms for analysis
  - Analyse the accounts
  - Follow up the findings
Producing the database

- Accounts were analysed every year
- So there are about 10,000 field books
- 15 year maximum stay – in theory
- Sample every decade
  - 1940
  - 1951
  - 1961
  - 1971
  - 1980
Selecting farms for analysis

- Length of time in survey
- Geographical coverage
- Farm size
- Farm type
Ideally, selection criteria would also include:

- A farmer still available for interview
- A mixture of expanders, survivors and failures
Analysing the accounts for changes

- Outputs
- Yields
- Inputs / costs

- Performance measures
  - Purchased inputs / £100 labour cost
  - Output per £100 fertilizer cost
  - Output per £100 buildings and machinery investment
Following up

- Interviewing farmers
  - Ethical issues
  - Specific questions
  - Revealing complexity

- Archives

- Interviewing non-farmers

- Testing the authority-discourse-media model
Conclusions

- How typical is south west England?
- Extending the use of FMS
- Future relevance