



Training and advice for agri-environmental management

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Background

- Actions of farmers critical to successful AES outcomes.
- Early analysis assumed sufficient levels of uptake & removal of barriers as proxy indicator of success.
- Participation cannot be viewed as simple dichotomous decision to participate or not participate.
- Not participation per se, but level of engagement with scheme aims and objectives that matters.
- Researchers argued for shift towards conservation-oriented attitudes & need for appropriate educational programmes.

Farmer characteristics: education



	Trained	Untrained	All farmers
Technical qualification	56%	60%	58%
Degree	26%	20%	23%
Vocational training	30%	44%	38%

Farmer concerns: Ease of EF2 management



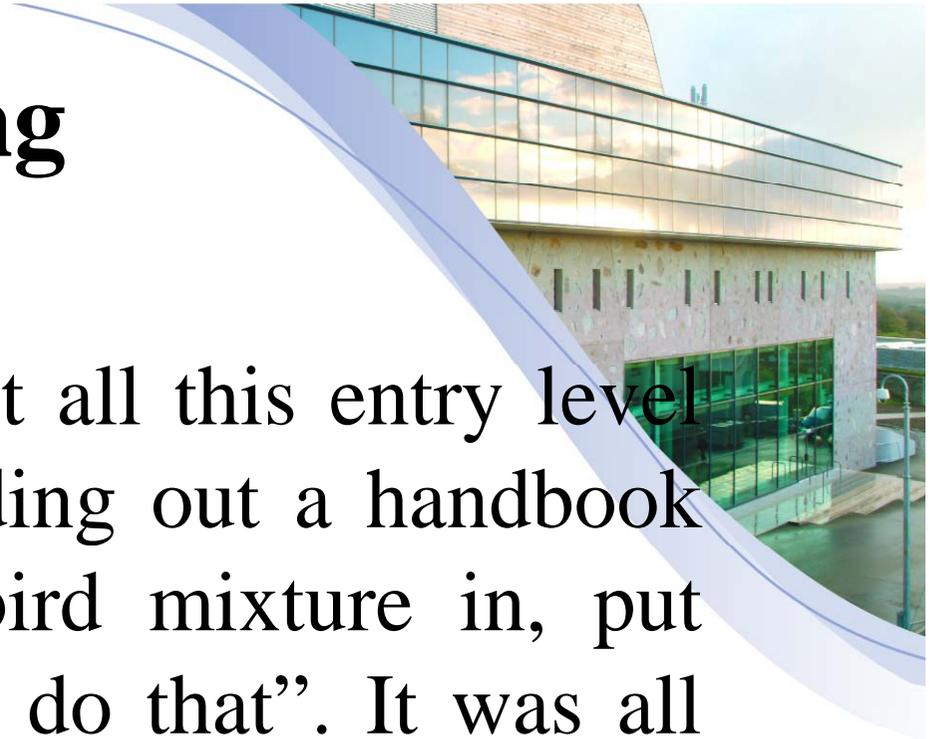
	Easy	Straight-forward	Difficult
Sow combination of 3 small seed crops	33%	38%	29%
Strips 6m wide. =< 0.5 ha, etc	50%	38%	13%
Re-establish as necessary	26%	44%	26%
Limit herbicide applications	17%	21%	63%

Farmer concerns: Ease of EF4 management

	Easy	Straight-forward	Difficult
Sow mix of at least 3 pollen & nectar plants	50%	25%	25%
Re-establish as necessary	29%	46%	25%
Limit herbicide applications	25%	13%	63%
Cutting requirements	25%	29%	46%

Farmer understanding & concerns

- ‘Well when they brought all this entry level in... .. it’s alright handing out a handbook and saying “put wild bird mixture in, put field corners in, do this, do that”. It was all brought in and we all signed up quickly because we knew the money was going to be there, *but we never really had a clue until we started* going the sort of things you are doing” (T)



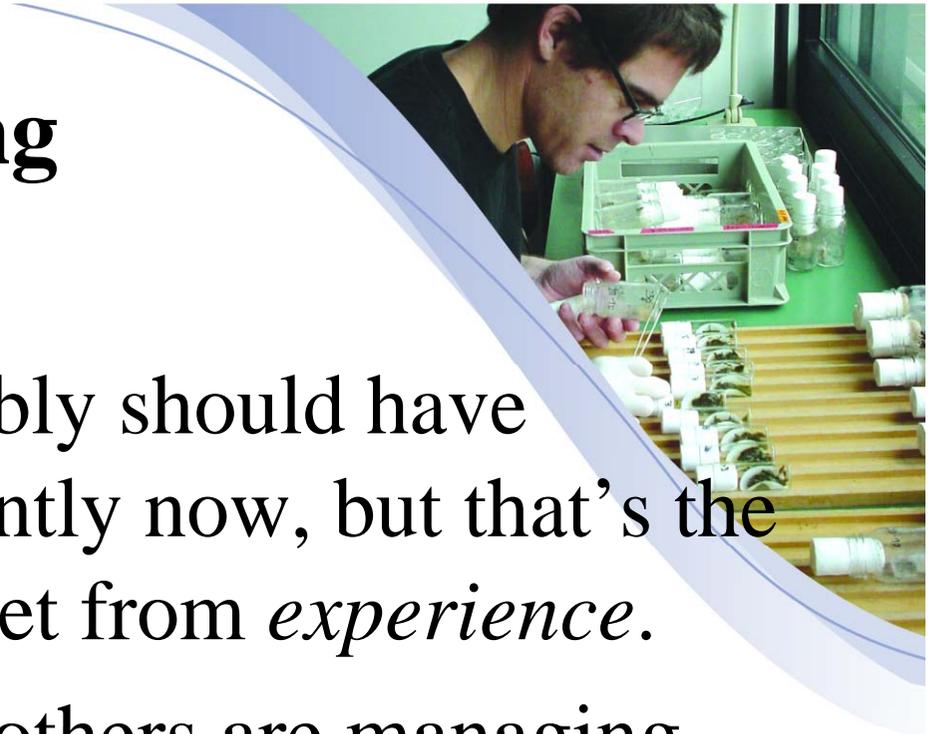
Farmer understanding & concerns



- ‘The re-establishment ... I suspect that is going to be moderately difficult ... *not knowing quite when to do it*. It goes back to the thing that I had nobody to tell me. And I guess unless we farmers that we are doing it get together with some professionals ... *you know we are not really equipped to know quite how to do that*’ (T).
- ‘Hum ... we took some silage off it but we didn’t know whether to top it or not ...or leave it as it is. I think we will leave it as it is. ... I mean ... we have got the topper on ... I don’t know whether to top it all, or top half of it or top it a bit more or ... *I don’t know what to do really.*’ (U)

Farmer understanding & concerns

- I can see where I probably should have planned slightly differently now, but that's the sort of thing you only get from *experience*.
- '... well ... to see how others are managing their plots ... hum ... and really just ... to give me a bit of *confidence* ... to make sure I am doing it right



A training day

the theoretical

Policy context, basic ecology, relevant R&D

Key message: need to adopt same professional approach to ELS land as to rest of farm



the practical

Farm walk where participants examine on the ground applications of AE options, discuss and distinguish between more or less successful treatments



“I wish I could have done that course before”: Farmer response to group training events

- Overall how enjoyable was the day?
 - 61% (17 farmers) -Very enjoyable
- Overall, how useful did you find the information presented today?
 - 71% (20 farmers) – Very useful
- Is the training likely to influence the way you think about environmental land management in general?
 - 93% (26 farmers) - Yes
- Is the training likely to influence the way you manage your ELS land?
 - 90% (25 farmers) - Yes
- Would you recommend this training event to a farming friend?
 - 100% Yes



Face-to-face training



During a farm walk ...

The farmer discussed on the ground his/her concerns.



'I will show you, I put the same mix in and it is the first year ... we cultivated the whole field and I just left a piece and I drilled it straight into that and it didn't come at all ... it didn't work. I mean, ... it is a wet place anyway ... but ... all the others I ploughed in the winter ... they came out fine ... and whether it was just the year? Or it was a little of wet corner over there I don't know.'



... back inside

The farmer received detailed advice on appropriate environmental management

Preliminary conclusions

- Farmer concern about establishment & on-going management of options
- Very receptive to idea of training
- Group training: popular with farmers & created positive attitude towards ELS management
- Gave farmers greater sense of ability to influence environmental outcomes
- Introduced notion of professionalised agri-environmental management