**The state of farming and land management**

**Measuring changes in farming and land management**

Farming and land management have created many of the Lake District’s special qualities: distinctive high quality produce; the character of the cultural landscape and its biodiversity; farm woodlands and the open nature of the fells.

A little over half of the National Park (55%) was registered as agricultural land in 2002 (Source: Defra Agricultural Census) but the structure of farming which manages this land is changing. There are more large and small farms but fewer medium-sized farms. Farms are amalgamating and farmhouses are being sold off, often to second homeowners. Income from farming is falling. The challenging landscape of the National Park makes farmland labour-intensive to manage.

The vision for conserving and enhancing the National Park cannot be done without farmers and land-managers. The impacts resulting from the reform of farm payments are potentially threatening.

The challenge is to identify any changes in farming quickly and effectively to ensure appropriate action can be taken to support sustainable farming activity in the Lake District.

The key indicators to be used to measure change in farming and land management are:

**SOP7**

**Changes in conservation-based farming and land management practices**

1. Area and % of the National Park managed in line with conservation objectives including land in the following schemes: Environmentally Sensitive Area, Countryside Stewardship, Higher Level Scheme, Entry Level Scheme or Organic Entry Level Scheme agreements

We will measure the percentage of the National Park which is being managed in line with National Park conservation objectives. This should indicate the area of land where farmers and land managers are conserving and/or enhancing the special qualities of the National Park. It will also indicate the relative economic value of these schemes to the local economy. This will help us to understand the link with other factors such as changes in land ownership, size of farms and availability of workers for land management activities.

**2005**
181,300ha or 79.1% of National Park managed in line with National Park conservation objectives.

Source: Lake District National Park Authority, GIS Analysis 2005

In 2005, 178,532ha of the Lake District National Park are within ESA. The key landscapes that will be measured within the total area under ESA are:

- Fell (including heather fell) 91,741ha
- Woodland 2,458ha
- Meadowland 765ha

Source: Defra Rural Development Service, 2005

Over the next few years we will monitor the area of land within the Higher Level Scheme, Entry Level Scheme and Organic Entry Level Scheme.

**SOP8**

**Changes in farming economy**

1. Net farm income
2. % farm income from non-farming enterprise and the additional value of produce

**SOP9**

**Changes in the structure of farming**

1. Number of people living in the National Park employed in farming
2. Average size of farms and number of farmsteads occupied by farmers
**SOP8**  
*Changes in farming economy*

The economic performance of farms within the National Park will give us a broad understanding of the health of the farming industry. We will also measure the proportion of income in farming which comes from non-traditional farming enterprise such as bed and breakfast, tea rooms and the proportion which comes from the additional value of produce such as cheese-making. This will show how the farming industry is diversifying in the National Park. In 2002, land use consultants estimated that total farmgate income generated by agricultural holdings in the National Park area was £59m, of which 57% (£33.6m) came from the sale of agricultural products (livestock and milk), 16% (£9.3m) came from commodity-based production subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and 27% (£16.1m) came from area-based CAP payments.

**SOP9**  
*Changes in the structure of farming*

Over the years, farming has changed with fewer, larger farms and fewer employment opportunities. The number of holdings has increased by 21% since 1990. Just over half of the agricultural land in the Lake District is owner-occupied and the remainder rented (Source: Defra Agricultural Census, 2002). We will measure how the role farms play in local communities changes over time. We will monitor the average size of farms and the number of farms occupied by farmers, the bulk of whose household income comes from farming or related farm diversification activities. We will also monitor the use of buildings on farms. This will help us understand how many of the buildings are being used for traditional farming purposes, for farm diversification activities (including holiday accommodation) or to provide housing for local people or as second homes. We will also monitor the number of National Park residents employed within farming and land management.

**2001**  
1,566 local residents employed in farming

Current information gives an indication of the number of local residents employed in farming but it does not give an indication of the number of residents employed locally, which we will measure in the future. This may also give an indication of the rural skills that exist and that are used within the local community.

Source: Land Use Consultants, 2004 based on Census 2001