

# Engaging farmers in biodiversity solutions

**Working with farmers is integral to the successful conservation of Scotland's biodiversity.**

**Engaging farmers in biodiversity solutions** is an SNH-led project that is working to understand how farmers value wildlife and what they see as important in terms of conservation. It will help to identify what support is required for farmers to engage more actively in shaping their own solutions for biodiversity outcomes on the farm.

The project will help inform future agricultural policy beyond 2020 and, among other aspects, will explore a more collaborative approach to developing future agri-environment support mechanisms.

## Project Summary

The project will focus on three farming areas in Scotland; hill farming in the West, arable farming in the East and dairy farming in South Scotland.

The project method will be based on interviews with a selection of farmers in each area. These interviews will gather views on what the barriers are to farmers taking up biodiversity management, the support they need to achieve biodiversity conservation, and how they can be more actively engaged in shaping their own solutions for biodiversity on the farm.

The project includes a specific focus on young farmers in order to address the future of farming and nature conservation.

SNH Graduate Placement Kirsten Brewster has been appointed to undertake the project. It is guided by a Steering Group made up of farmers including Sarah Allison, Soil Association; Edward Baxter, arable farmer and JHI researcher; Jennifer Craig, hill farmer and Chair, NFUS Clydesdale Branch; and Angus MacFadyen, hill farmer and Chair, NFUS Environment & Land Use Committee.

**If you would like to get involved or find out more, please contact us.**

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## Background

With over 70% of Scotland's land area utilised as agricultural land, the way farmland is managed has a significant impact on nature and wildlife.

Many farmers enter into voluntary agri-environment agreements which have delivered a range of environmental improvements. But there is a wealth of research to suggest that the prescriptive design of AECS (Agri Environment Climate Scheme) has been a barrier to uptake and implementation of the scheme.

Involving farmers in identifying solutions for biodiversity will help land managers do more for wildlife and conservation that fits within the running of the farm business.

Using farmers' experience, knowledge and skills will help us work together to halt the declines of farmland wildlife.



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