



The National Trust for Scotland

FARMLAND MANAGEMENT POLICY

Introduction

1. This statement sets out the general policy of The National Trust for Scotland with regard to the management of its farmland. It was approved by the Trust's Council on 23 April 1999. It is intended to guide Regional staff when considering proposals for specific properties, and to provide information to current and prospective tenants and partners concerning the Trust's objectives.

Background

2. The National Trust for Scotland was established in 1931, and has the statutory purposes of promoting the 'permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and buildings in Scotland of historic or national interest or natural beauty' and 'access to and enjoyment of such buildings (and) places ... by the public'. The Trust is Scotland's largest voluntary conservation organisation, with some 230,000 members and some 450 permanent staff. It owns or manages 126 properties, including over 78,000 hectares of countryside. Over two million visitors are recorded to Trust properties each year, and hundreds of thousands more visit the Trust's countryside properties uncounted. The Trust cares on behalf of the nation for a great diversity of properties, including mountains, coastlines, islands, woodlands, battlefields and historic sites, gardens, castles, mansions and cottages.

Application

3. This policy statement applies to the management of all farmland owned by the Trust, whether managed in hand or by tenants or partners. It applies principally to lowland farms, for example at Hill of Tarvit or Threave, but also to hill farms where inbye land and rough grazings are managed together as a unit, for example at Ben Lomond or Glencoe. It does not apply to land which the Trust has sold outright or by feu disposition, or to land covered by restrictive agreements with the Trust. There is a partial overlap, particularly in the case of hill farms, between this policy statement and the recommendations of the Trust's Grazing Working Party Report (1992). Separate policies apply to the Trust's crofting land (Crofting Working Group Report 1997). Copies of both these reports are available on request.

Policy Context

4. The agricultural policy of the European Union (EU) is implemented principally through its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). As part of the *Agenda 2000* reforms agreed by the EU Council of Agriculture Ministers in March 1999, a new Rural Development Regulation will establish the framework for EU support for sustainable rural development. The emphasis of the CAP is likely to shift from price support mechanisms to direct area payments with a more explicit environmental objective, under which payments will be conditional on the use of sustainable farming practices. Greater integration is likely between social, economic, environmental and food production objectives. The EU favours a more prominent role for agri-environment measures, especially

support for organic and other low-input farming methods and the maintenance of semi-natural habitats, which currently account for only 3% of the CAP budget.

5. These changes will continue to be reflected at Scottish level through the further development of agri-environmental schemes. For example, the approach used in the existing Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) schemes was extended in 1997 to the whole of Scotland through the new Countryside Premium Scheme (CPS), followed by the current (1999) proposals to merge the ESA and CPS into a single agri-environment scheme.

The Trust's Farmland

6. Under the above definition, the Trust owns approximately 9,800 hectares of farmland, details of which are listed at Appendix 1. Some of this is farmed because one or more key features depends upon the continuance of agriculture, such as the maritime grassland at St Abb's Head. Some is farmed because it forms an integral part of a wider property which is nationally important for some other reason, such as Inverewe Home Farm or the designed landscape at Hill of Tarvit.

Definitions

7. Some of the terms in this policy statement are used with specific technical meanings, details of which are given in the Glossary at Appendix 2.

Aims

8. The Trust seeks to ensure that the management of its farmland demonstrates exemplary environmental stewardship, following best current conservation, land management and agricultural practice, in accordance with current national policy and the Trust's Corporate Plan.
9. The Trust owns or manages farmland in order to contribute towards achieving its statutory purposes, paraphrased in its Corporate Plan as conservation, enjoyment and education, and influence and persuasion. The Trust's aims for the management of its farmland are therefore:
 - a. To contribute to conservation by conserving and enhancing the natural heritage (including scenic beauty and biodiversity) and cultural heritage (including historic buildings, archaeology and traditional farming practices) and the landscapes which result from the interaction of these features.
 - b. To contribute to enjoyment and education by providing access to the countryside, recreation, education and interpretation opportunities and other facilities for visitors.
 - c. To contribute to influence and persuasion by demonstrating good practice in integrating conservation, access and farming and in resolving conflicts where these may occur.

Objectives

10. The Trust's more detailed objectives for the management of its farmland are:

- a. To establish farming practices which conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of each holding.
- b. To support organic and other farming methods which minimise the need for artificial inputs in achieving viable outputs, including the reduction of pesticide or artificial fertiliser inputs and reducing energy use where feasible.
- c. To provide opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of farmland which are compatible with conservation and agricultural objectives.
- d. To encourage the introduction and development of schemes at European, UK and Scottish level which support sustainable farming.
- e. To establish one or more demonstration farms, to allow other farmers and visitors to experience practical examples of sustainable farming at first hand.
- f. To maintain rural employment and the viability of farm units, including the improved marketing of farm produce and the encouragement of diversification, where compatible with conservation aims, and to safeguard farm incomes.
- g. To make full use of all available grant schemes which support the objectives of this policy, and to encourage and assist tenants and partners to do likewise.
- h. To seek opportunities to integrate farmland management with woodland management.
- i. To promote sound animal husbandry.

Implementation

11. The Trust will gradually implement this policy on each of its holdings by means of the following process:
 - a. Initial discussions between tenants or partners and relevant Trust staff.
 - b. Carrying out a 'conservation audit', ie a survey of the principal features of the farm.
 - c. Assessment of potential for conservation.
 - d. Negotiations between tenants or partners and Trust staff, including consultation with other relevant organisations and individuals.
 - e. Preparation of a Whole Farm Plan.
 - f. Introduction of conservation practices on a prioritised basis, involving grant schemes and rent adjustments as appropriate.
 - g. Ensuring adherence to all relevant codes of good practice.
 - h. Arrangement of relevant training for staff and for farming tenants and partners.
12. Priority will be given to farms where leases or partnership agreements are under review, followed by

land managed in hand, seasonal grazings, then all other farms managed by tenants or partners, in that order. Where this policy statement overlaps with the recommendations of the 1992 Grazing Working Party Report, the Whole Farm Plan mechanism will provide the mechanism for their integrated implementation.

Conservation Audit

13. The Trust will carry out a conservation audit (sometimes referred to as a ‘farm conservation report’) of each holding before developing detailed future management proposals. This will include the following topics:
 - a. Property Management Plan Aims, objectives and proposals of the overall management plan for the wider property of which the farm forms part, which will have been prepared in consultation with the local community.
 - b. Land Use Current agricultural management practice, including use of pesticides and artificial fertilisers; biodiversity; species and habitats; landscape, including historic context; archaeology; dykes and other boundary features; hydrology, including water quantity and quality; buildings; public access, including paths and tracks.
 - c. Buildings Current and proposed conditions and uses of existing historic and other farm buildings; responsibilities for maintenance; proposed new buildings or extensions.
 - d. Legal Donor’s wishes; current leases or partnership agreements; designations.
 - e. Environmental Impacts upon wider environment, including energy usage and waste disposal.
 - f. Economic Options for extensive or intensive choices of farm management; rental income, including scope for reduction or cash payments for implementation of agreed conservation prescriptions; grants availability; options for change to existing farming practice.
 - g. Social Employment; demonstration farming or other educational opportunities.
14. The audit will be co-ordinated by the relevant Regional Factor. Use will be made of the local knowledge of tenants or partners, and of the expertise of other Regional and Head Office staff including ecologist, archaeologist, ranger/naturalists and buildings surveyors. External organisations such as the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) or Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) may also be involved where appropriate.

Whole Farm Plan

15. The results of the conservation audit will be used to identify the significant features of the farm and any current or potential problems or constraints. An assessment will then be made of opportunities for changes in management practice to conserve and enhance these features, taking into account any agricultural and financial implications. The audit and assessment will then be incorporated into a whole farm plan, which will also include any detailed proposals which emerge and a map or maps showing the significant features and the areas where any changes are proposed. The Trust will seek to benefit from the experience of existing initiatives such as Targeted Inputs for a Better Rural Environment (TIBRE) (SNH) where appropriate. Each Whole Farm Plan will set measurable targets related to its objectives. If any changes are proposed which may have implications for the

wider Trust property of which the farm forms a part, they will be assessed against the overall objectives for that property as set out in the relevant property management plan. Any such proposals will be included in the farm conservation plan only if they are compatible with these wider objectives.

Farm Buildings

16. Many historic and other farm buildings are situated on the Trust's farmland. In conservation terms, the significance of historic farm buildings can usually best be retained by keeping them in the use for which they were built. However, this is frequently no longer feasible, and in such cases the preferred alternative uses will be those which are most compatible with a farm building's historic fabric and cultural significance. The Trust will advise on sensitive proposals for new farm buildings or extensions to existing ones, where this is essential to the viability of the farm. Further advice is available from local planning authorities and in Planning Advice Note 39: Farm and Forestry Buildings (The Scottish Office Development Department).

Grants

17. The Trust will encourage and assist its tenants and partners to make full use of all current relevant sustainable farming grant schemes, such as those listed at Appendix 3.

Genetically Modified Organisms and Cloning

18. Given the Trust's interest in the conservation of the historic diversity of plant species and in accordance with the precautionary principle, the Trust will not approve of the growing of genetically modified crops or the breeding or keeping of cloned animals on its land until such time as it is fully satisfied that this poses no risk to the environment or public safety.

Renewal of Leases

19. All new tenancy or partnership agreements will reflect the approach outlined in this policy statement. The selection of new tenants or partners will be partly based on applicants' past record in sustainable farming and on their proposals for the farm concerned.

Existing Leases

20. Where existing leases or partnership agreements do not contain clauses reflecting the approach outlined in this policy statement, the Trust recognises that it can only seek to implement changes through discussion and negotiation.

Staffing and Financial Implications

21. The full implementation of this policy may have staffing and financial implications for the Trust. The work will be co-ordinated by Regional Factors, bringing in other existing staff as appropriate. External specialists from FWAG, RSPB, SAC or SNH may occasionally be requested to assist with survey work. It may be possible to implement some resulting prescriptions within existing resources through changes in management practices, but funding may be required for others. Suitable grants will be utilised in the first instance, with any remaining balance being identified in annual property budgets so that funding can be sought in the usual way.

Timescale

22. It is intended to complete all of the above stages for all of the Trust's farmland within the period covered by the second Corporate Plan, ie by 2004.

Monitoring and Review

23. Regional Factors will be responsible for routine monitoring of this policy as it is implemented, in conjunction with farm tenants and partners, and for bringing forward any problems for discussion and resolution. This policy will be regularly reviewed in the light of changing circumstances, and it is anticipated that any future review will promote greater integration between the Trust's farmland management, grazings and crofting policies, given the potential overlaps between them.

Partnership

24. The Trust will implement this policy in a spirit of co-operation and partnership with tenants, partners, local communities, other non-governmental organisations, government departments and agencies.

Further Information

25. Additional technical information and advice is available from the Trust's Senior Land Agent.

APPENDIX 1

FARMLAND

Key

L Lowland Farm
H Hill Farm

AT Agricultural Tenancy
IH In Hand

LP Limited Partnership
SG Seasonal Grazing

PROPERTY/FARM	CATEGORY	HECTARES	TENURE
ARGYLL, LOCHABER & THE WESTERN ISLES			
Canna	H	1169	IH
Glencoe			
Achnacon	H	560	IH
Achtriochtan	H	1986	IH
Strone	H	349	LP
Iona			
Culbhuirg Farm	H	108	AT
Maol & St Columba Farm	H	97	AT
CENTRAL, TAYSIDE & FIFE			
Bannockburn			
Newpark Fields	L	10	AT
Borestone Field	L	2	SG
Ben Lawers			
Balnasuim	H	184	LP
Kiltyrie	H	73	LP
House of Dun			
Mains of Dun	L	285	AT
Hill of Tarvit			
Whitehill Farm	L	83	LP
Golf Field	L	19	AT
Grass Parks	L	19	AT
Hill Park	L	11	AT
Kellie	L	2	SG
Linn of Tummel	L	6	AT
GRAMPIAN			
Castle Fraser	L	64	SG
Craigievar	L	28	AT
Crathes	L	36	AT
Drum			
Home Farm	L	63	AT
Fyvie	L	23	AT
Leith Hall			
Home Farm	L	54	AT
Pitmedden			
South Mains Farm	L	14	AT
Policies	L	5	SG
MAR LODGE ESTATE			
Allanaquoich	H) (SG
Craggan	H) total 80 (SG

Little Inverey	H)	(SG
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PROPERTY/FARM	CATEGORY	HECTARES	TENURE
HIGHLAND			
Balmacara			
Home Farm	H	149	IH
Cemetery Field	H	3	IH
Kirkton Field	H	3	AT
Brodie	L	3	IH
Culloden	L	22	IH
Fair Isle			
Skaden	H	2	AT
Inverewe			
Home Farm	H	401	AT/LP?
Kintail			
Achnagart	H	620	AT
Morvich Farm	H	21	LP
Luib-an-Eorn	H	132	IH
Torridon			
Mains Farm	H	47	IH
LOTHIANS, BORDERS, DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY			
House of the Binns			
Parks	L	62	AT
West Park	L	17	SG
Inveresk	L	4	SG
Newhailes	L	32	SG
Rockcliffe	L	7	AT
St Abb's Head	H	65	SG
Blackpotts	H	50	SG
Head	H	12	SG
Lumsdaine	H	68	SG
Threave			
Hightae Farm	L	122	AT
Keltonhill Farm	L	90	AT
Kelton Mains Farm	L	66	AT
Lodge of Kelton Farm	L	93	AT
Blackpark Holding 1	L	36	AT
Blackpark Holding 2	L	41	AT
Blackpark Holding 3	L	18	AT
Venniehill	H	1	SG
WEST			
Ben Lomond			
Blairvockie Farm	H	2173	LP
Black Hill	H	2	AT
Brodick			
Castle Parks	L	36	SG
Culzean	L	52	AT
Geilston	L	8	SG
Greenbank	L	3	IH

Wester Kittochside	L	42	SG
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APPENDIX 2

GLOSSARY

Farmland

Lowland enclosed agricultural holdings; hill farms with inbye land and rough grazings managed together as a unit.

In Hand

Land managed directly by the landowner rather than by a tenant or partner.

Lease (Agricultural Tenancy)

A legally binding written agreement between a landowner and occupier (tenant or lessee). Agricultural leases normally involve compliance with the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Acts, and grant security of occupation for the tenant and successors unless the tenant fails to comply with the terms of the lease. The lease contains terms binding on the landowner and tenant, and is normally accompanied by a separate agreement setting out repairs obligations on both parties in relation to buildings and other fixed equipment.

Limited Partnership

A legally binding written agreement to occupy land, between a landowner and a limited partnership comprising the landowner (limited partner) who contributes small sum of cash and an occupier (general partner) who contributes working capital, machinery and livestock. The partnership pays rent to the landowner for the land and buildings. The agreement runs for a fixed period of years, often 5, 10 or 15.

Sustainable Farming

Farming which integrates environmental, social, economic and agricultural objectives to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Tenant

The party, normally an individual but sometimes more than one (joint tenants), who occupies the farm or agricultural land, pays rent to the landowner and draws an income from growing crops or raising livestock on the land or both.

Whole Farm Plan

A plan for a specific farm, normally for 5 years, which promotes the integration of conservation and access with agriculture, including a description of the farm's principal features, an assessment of opportunities, and specific proposals for future management.

APPENDIX 3

CURRENT SUSTAINABLE FARMING GRANT SCHEMES

Agri-Environment Programme

- Countryside Premium Scheme (CPS)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs)
- Organic Aid Scheme (OAS)

Contact: The Scottish Office Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries Department (SOAEFD)

Farm Woodland Scheme (FWS)

Contact: Forestry Commission

Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF)

Contact: National Agricultural Centre

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Management Agreements

Contact: Scottish Natural Heritage

Scottish Natural Heritage Conservation Grants

Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), including Livestock Exclusion Annual Payment (LEAP)

Contact: Forestry Commission

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