

Section 1: Policy & Governance

CCRI conducts agenda-setting research to aid policy makers who work at the interface of agricultural, social and environmental issues in the UK, Europe and beyond.

In 2018, we extended our hard-fought reputation for excellence in policy and governance advice on rural and urban development. We covered topics ranging from soil science and sustainable agriculture, to the culture of food, and the limits of the food system.

Brexit: a time for strategy

2018 proved CCRI is well positioned to contribute to post-Brexit thinking and policy formulation

The one thing we know for certain about the UK's decision to leave the EU is that it will shape food, farming, environmental and rural policy for the next 20 years. "After a year of central government paralysis, with everyone worrying about the implications of the referendum result, 2018 was the year new thinking around Brexit started to emerge," says CCRI Director Janet Dwyer. CCRI was consulted on current political developments – drawing on years of specialist knowledge – and worked on new projects focused on the 'beyond Brexit' agenda.

House of Lords – the Rural Economy

The report, entitled 'Time for a strategy for the rural economy', covers a broad range of topics – the rural economy, housing, service delivery and policies impacting upon rural areas. Janet Dwyer was interviewed as part of the consultation process. She spoke about the uncertainty that has been created in the farming community by Brexit and voiced concerns regarding the effects of austerity measures, which have had a disproportionate effect on rural areas. Many small family businesses struggle to expand due to insufficient support. This is an important issue that must be addressed if government policy is to support a more sustainable agricultural economy.

Welsh Affairs Select Committees

CCRI gave evidence to two different committees in Wales on what Brexit might mean for Welsh rural areas and Welsh agri-economy, Welsh rural development and environment. Janet Dwyer was commissioned by the Public Policy Institute for Wales for a study on the implications of Brexit for rural Wales.

The English Context

CCRI radio interviews and other media commentary applied our knowledge of European policy and an understanding of the likely consequences of different Brexit scenarios. A CCRI press release highlighted the loss



of rural development in the policy agenda. “Research has given us understanding of both what’s been difficult about money coming from Europe but also what’s been good”, comments Janet.

Brexit Geographies

Damian Maye published a paper on Brexit and Agriculture in a special issue of ‘Brexit Geographies’. The paper reflects one of CCRI’s broad ongoing goals – to connect research on sustainable agriculture to live debates in the policy arena. The subject matter links to ideas incorporated in the EU-level SUFISA project (see below).

Brexit Conference

CCRI held five workshops in early 2018. Across all five there was a clear call for innovation both in policy, lines of communication and in the synergy between food and energy as well as land, water and biodiversity.

There is an urgent need for a new generation of entrepreneurs and knowledge exchange around different ways of working and achieving a resilient landscape.

Diversity is also key with a need to move away from a one size fits all approach to policy and regulation, building on the excellent examples that exist in Gloucestershire and elsewhere in the country. The situation is complex but we need to value food and highlight the social value and well-being aspects of food and how it is produced.

Sustainable agriculture, food and fisheries policy

Last year saw us further improve our ability to support future policy for more resilient agricultural systems

Agricultural production sits at the heart of major societal concerns, spanning food security, nutrition and health; livelihoods and development; the environment; and animal welfare. By their nature, sustainable policies should support primary producers, but these producers exist in a context of multidimensional policy requirements, market uncertainties and globalisation. Much of our work was focused on improving, gathering and analysing knowledge and data around these complexities in order to aid policy decisions.



Inshore fisheries and dairy farms

2018 was the final year for SUFISA, an EU-level project, spanning 11 countries and 22 regions. CCRI's primary role was to examine farmers' and fishers' perspectives on market and regulatory pressures on inshore fisheries in Cornwall and dairy farms in Somerset.

We also investigated the strategies used at farm-level, as well as collectively, to manage these pressures effectively. "We spent the early parts of 2018 finishing case study work and then translating the UK findings report – which was over 200 pages – into two short policy briefs outlining the relevant headlines about our findings," explains Damian Maye, who coordinated CCRI's activities on the project.

The team undertook a major cross-national comparison of agri-food commodity arrangements for a variety of case studies across Europe, drafting a large, highly detailed report for the Commission. "From a dissemination perspective, SUFISA is one of our most significant projects," says Maye.

Farm and forest management

In 2018, we completed another major EU Horizon 2020 study called PEGASUS (Public Ecosystem Goods And Services from land management – Unlocking the Synergies). The work focused on new ways of thinking about farmland and forest management. The broad aim was to stimulate a long-lasting improvement in the provision of public goods and ecosystem services from agricultural and forest land in the EU.

The CCRI played a significant role in developing the evaluation framework and the approach to analysis of the project's 34 case studies, including four in the UK.

"It's interesting, Europe is now moving in the direction that the UK has been advocating for some time," notes CCRI Director Janet Dwyer. The project has helped move the conversation beyond the rhetoric of neoclassical economics and its preoccupations with market failure and government intervention. "The reality of rural business is that policy comes in little silos," says Dwyer. "You may get some money for heritage, some for environment or some for economic

growth and development of jobs”. Businesses must try to juggle these different elements in a coherent way.

PEGASUS demonstrated that, if you want to deliver environmental quality through funding rural land managers, you need to think beyond targeting the environment alone. Decision makers can achieve more cost-effective outcomes for the environment by including local social, cultural and economic factors in their policy design.

Quantitative Policy Analysis

Mauro Vigani’s work for the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) demonstrated just how effective CCRI has been in its capacity building efforts in 2018.

The CCRI has a long-standing reputation for producing rigorous qualitative policy-relevant research. Vigani’s supportive work for the JRC has applied quantitative skills,

ranging from estimating demand elasticities for countries like Ethiopia and Kenya, to investigating the production, markets and regulation of microalgae-based food and feed products in Europe.

The JRC is regularly charged with developing policy scenarios at the request of the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development in the European Commission.

Similarly, the UN’s FAO also relies on third-party research institutes for quantitative analysis. In this instance, Vigani analysed six farm support programmes run by the Ministry of Agriculture in Georgia. The project represents a new high watermark for CCRI’s quantitative evaluation impact.



Culture & Heritage

CCRI’s work here focuses on opportunities to integrate rural heritage into post Brexit rural development and agri-environment policy

Sound policy relies on reliable evidence. CCRI actively supports policy decisions by gathering and analysing data around key culture and heritage issues, including generational renewal, the built environment and land use. Making the case for rural heritage is reliant upon demonstrating not only the challenges it faces – but also identifying the scale of these problems and the socio-economic value that conserving it might bring.

Generational Renewal in Agriculture

Empowering a new generation of young farmers is really vital to the success of the rural economy at large. This has been a very active area for CCRI in 2018.

An EU-funded project for the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development to looked at the issue across all Member States.

“To some extent, all agricultural policies impact upon generational renewal,” says John Powell. “Any measures that impact the wider rural economy can affect the number of young entrepreneurs and workers entering the market.” The study involved a wide range of different activities: analysis of EU statistical data, and interviews with EU-level policy makers, as well as national workshops.

Seven in-depth case studies look at the impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on farm succession and generational renewal in very different countries and regions. CCRI worked with partner organisations in Italy, Austria, Belgium, Poland, Estonia and Hungary.

Through this work, we’re improving policy advice on factors that drive farm succession. “This work will significantly improve policy makers’ understanding of the local contexts that affect farm succession,” Powell notes. “Our findings will feed into the next round of EU agricultural policy.”

Natural capital and the historic environment

Currently there is limited understanding of the role of historic environmental assets in ecosystem services and natural capital approaches, and the monetary and non-monetary benefits they can provide to society. To fill this knowledge gap, Historic England has commissioned research to assess the benefits that the historic environment can provide to people’s health, wellbeing and prosperity. As part of this research, CCRI is undertaking three projects to develop a return-on-



investment model to explore ways in which historic environment values can be incorporated into the four categories of ecosystem services.

As a result of this work CCRI has been able to set out in the language of ecosystem services what public and environmental goods and services the heritage assets provide. The CCRI has developed a research methodology for recording the public and environmental benefits arising from the historic environment, and specifically flowing from dry stone walls in the Peak District National Park, linear features in the Lower Severn Vale and historic buildings and their associated boundaries in Gloucestershire, Shropshire and the Peak District.

Farmsteads and Landscapes Statements

Historic farmsteads make a fundamental contribution to landscape character, local distinctiveness and a sense of place. They are also assets which, through agricultural or new uses, can make an important contribution to the rural economy and communities. Historic England has led national research on this subject and has produced guidance on the conversion and maintenance of farm buildings. However, further work is still needed to develop the evidence base, in the form of Farmsteads and Landscapes Statements.

Historic England commissioned Jeremy Lake and CCRI to create and publish a baseline statement for 159 of England's National Character Areas. The Farmsteads and Landscapes Statements will inform decision-making by all those involved in the conservation, reuse and development of historic farmsteads and farm buildings. The Farmsteads and Landscapes Statements will provide, for the first time, an interpretation of the farmsteads and farmed landscapes of England to inform research agendas.

Peer-to-peer farmer learning

In 2018-19, CCRI advanced its reputation for delivering policy-relevant research on farmer learning and innovation. Our work on EU project AgriDemo-F2F identified best practice in providing on-farm demonstration activities, and proposed effective ways for policy makers to support these at local, regional and Europe national levels.

CCRI researchers have also been involved in the 'Farmer-led Initiatives Network (FLIN). This is just emerging as a formalised network. It brings together NGOs, researchers and agencies with a common interest in supporting farmer-led initiatives in sustainable agriculture. The motivation for the network is to share experiences and to identify the best way to evaluate farmer-led initiatives. We're looking for ways to find evidence that counts for policy makers and shows that such models work. This will be particularly important given the emphasis on rewarding collaborative provision of public goods post-Brexit.

An interview with Julie Ingram

"We've continued to develop ideas that have emerged in academic circles relating to learning and innovation. Our particular interest is understanding how knowledge processes operate in Agricultural Innovation Systems, the complex and dynamic system of producers, innovation support and advisory systems, commercial sector, supply chains, researchers and educationalists, and policy makers.

"This is a particularly useful area of policy-relevant research now the UK is thinking about its future as a competitive food producer outside of the EU's CAP. I think we're quite well placed to draw on our knowledge and experience from previous projects on this to inform policy makers.

"Working with partners (academics and practitioners) internationally has allowed us to explore a number of case studies and develop some innovative ideas. We really have been quite cutting edge in the work we've done.

"Many EU projects are now following the multi-actor approach which means project partners are drawn from farmers groups and advisory services, industry, NGOs as well as academics. The focus is very much on working together to solve problems and co-produce innovations that are relevant, practical and will deliver impact. These partners can act as gatekeepers for researchers to stakeholders in the agriculture community. So this is a great opportunity to really understand the realities of achieving innovation on-farm.

"Working with stakeholders also allows us to bring together our collective knowledge and co-create knowledge on topics that stakeholders identify as important. Whilst this can be rewarding for all involved, but it also has its challenges.

"The complexities of implementing co-production of knowledge is something worth noting. We have to take care to manage expectations and to understand that, while for researchers the research project is a top priority, for stakeholders it is just one of the many demands on their time.

"As researchers, we have to be reflective and think about our responsibility to the stakeholders, farmers and advisors we involve in these projects. That's quite a progressive position that we're starting to explore in more depth."



Living Labs

Complex problems, such as effectively managing an ageing population or delivering sustainable mobility, are often specific to a particular region and encompass both rural and urban areas. Such challenges can only be solved by taking a collaborative approach, involving policymakers, researchers, businesses, service providers, citizens and other stakeholders. But it can be difficult to know what types of governance arrangements are effective in different scenarios.

This is why we have been contributing to the EU's Horizon 2020 ROBUST project since 2017. ROBUST (Rural-Urban Outlooks: Unlocking Synergies) brings together 24 partners from 11 countries to advance our understanding of the interactions and dependencies between rural, peri-urban and urban areas; and to identify and promote policies, governance models and practices that foster mutually beneficial relations. A key element of ROBUST is exploring different governance arrangements in real-life settings. Therefore, 11 case studies called 'Living Labs' have been chosen to cover diverse territorial contexts, one of which is Gloucestershire.

Each Living Lab is a place-based form of experimental collaboration that emphasises co-creation in a real-world setting. The Gloucestershire collaboration partners CCRI with Gloucestershire County Council. "It's a bit different to



"In a Living Lab scenario we deliver co-produced innovation, working very closely together and identifying what we each want out of the process."

Damian Maye

the sort of conventional way that you do research," says CCRI's Damian Maye. "Normally, if we were working for the Council, we would just go away and collect lots of data and come back with a report. In a Living Lab scenario we deliver co-produced innovation, working very closely together and identifying what we each want out of the process."

"In 2018, one of our main jobs on the project was to develop a framework for how you do these Living Labs – how you run them – and then to develop a toolkit of

methods that all the practice partners can then use,” says Maye. “We also developed a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the learning as the Lab goes through its stages so that by the end of the project we can provide evidence to the Commission and our peers of what this type of ‘trans-disciplinary research’ can actually achieve.”

Beyond developing a robust methodology, work centred on specific challenges in urban-rural governance. “To give you a real example, there’s a food strategy for Gloucestershire and within that we think we need to progress quite rapidly towards a plant-based diet,” says Dan Keech. The CCRI team is working with the Council to adapt their contracting for local food provision of school meals. To make this change, within ROBUST we are developing experiments that challenge existing conventions, linking the work we do on sustainable food strategies to inform the Council’s thinking. “That’s going to affect the profile of agriculture in the county and certainly the business models people might need to think about as change happens; so you can see how there’s a rural-urban relationship.”

Environmental land management in England

The Exmoor Ambition is an initiative to design, trial and test future approaches to environmental land management in England.

At present, if farmers want financial support from the public sector, they can face extraordinary levels of bureaucracy. Consequently, some farmers have started to organise in various ways and build capacity to win back some control.

Exmoor Hill Farmers and the National Park had previously commissioned CCRI to survey Exmoor farmers, helping them to develop capacity to make a difference at a local level. Janet Dwyer then joined the steering group, developing the initiative and contributing ideas on governance based on her knowledge from other parts of Europe.

Dwyer also evaluated a small project called ‘Graze the Moor’. This focuses on understanding how to regenerate heather moorland. “We’ve realised that the traditional

prescriptions of agri-environment schemes weren’t working; particularly in the southwest,” Dwyer says.

Landowner Christina Williams took her moorland area out of the conventional scheme management and persuaded Natural England to experiment with a different approach. This involved establishing a grazing cattle herd that would stay on the Moor in winter. “With centrally designed, top down schemes, a simple narrative about what works can become policy everywhere, when it was only appropriate to one context,” Dwyer says. “This project was about challenging that and building on valuable local knowledge.”

Future grazing management

In Norway, rural land is facing change from second home construction and residents who do not want to see agricultural activities taking place on their doorstep. In addition, some of those with hunting rights want to remove sheep grazing entirely to offer hunters a more ‘natural’ experience. There are also wider structural problems arising from the effect of state subsidies on sheep farmers, and declining lamb consumption among Norwegians.

Such change has led to concern about the voice and lack of power and influence that traditional graziers have in the mountain and forest regions of Norway, prompting the Norwegian government to initiate a three-year project called FUTGRAZE.

Beginning in 2018, FUTGRAZE investigates how the local common land associations are adapting to environmental, political and economic changes and why it seems that some are more able to adapt and avoid conflict than others.

“We’ve been chosen as a partner to look at some of the UK’s management of those spaces and look at traditional voices,” says CCRI’s Chris Short. “They’re looking to us in a sense because we’re more populated and we’ve got fewer of those areas, so they tend to be under more pressure.” CCRI’s knowledge of both legislation and local mechanisms of self-governance and resilience in the UK will help to shape future best practice arrangements in Norway.