

## A European Project Bringing Together Areas On The Atlantic Seaboard Of Europe

Annandale and Eskdale Rural Partnership and the Langholm Initiative have been participating in an Interreg 3B<sup>1</sup> project bringing together 7 areas of Europe. The French Association of Agriculture of the Atlantic Arc - AC3A - has guided the partners.



Langholm Initiative



ESPAÑA ESPACIO ATLÁNTICO  
FRANCE ESPACE ATLANTIQUE  
IRELAND ATLANTIC AREA  
PORTUGAL ESPAÇO ATLÁNTICO  
U.K. ATLANTIC AREA



*Dumfries  
& Galloway*  
COUNCIL

## The Methodology for the 'AGATE' project

- Our French partners developed the method called 'Preventive – Prospective' that was used in the project.
- The method brings local people together to debate, exchange ideas and generate meaningful projects that will lead to the sustainable development of their region.
- The objective of the meetings of local people is to stimulate individual initiatives and increased co-operation between the different agencies involved. It promotes collaboration between farmers and other people living in rural areas.
- The meetings aim to identify emerging issues and warning signs and highlight these to policy makers, local government and other agencies.

## 'AGATE' in Annandale and Eskdale

Annandale and Eskdale forms the eastern most part of Dumfries and Galloway and has a population of 37,000 people with settlements ranging from 2 – 7,000 people. It is on the border with England and has boundaries with two other Scottish regions. Historically the area formed a buffer zone between Scotland and England to the south.

In 2001 Annandale and Eskdale was devastated by the foot and mouth epidemic with almost all farms being affected and many losing all their livestock. The crisis demonstrated the dependence of the local economy on agriculture. In the past the textile industry was important to the area and this is now in decline. Other traditional industries are food production, forestry and other manufacturing. The high quality environment attracts visitors to the area for walking, fishing, golf and shooting. The towns of Annan, Langholm, Gretna, Lockerbie, Moffat, and Lochmaben are all in Annandale and Eskdale and are of historic interest.

## Our Local Group

At the beginning of October 2004 thirty people from Annandale and Eskdale were invited to participate in the AGATE project discussions. Although not everyone who was invited initially chose to participate, those who did met four times to debate the future of living with the land in Annandale and Eskdale.

Through the sessions the participants considered ideas about land use, land ownership and management, marketing, the role of young people, land ownership, maintaining rural services, policies and legislation, new business opportunities the sustainability of rural communities and bureaucracy. Having reflected on the current situation the group tried to identify what the situation might be like in 15 – 20 years time. They considered the factors that might influence the possible future scenarios. The report below outlines this process in more detail.

## The Participants

Name & Designation	Name & Designation
David Latimer, Local Retailer	Iain Waldie, Organic Gardener
Mark Oddy, Estate Manager, Buccleuch Estates	Bruce Clarke, Community Initiative Consultant
Stephen Busby, Farmer	Erica Anderson, Scottish Agricultural College
Debbie Edlmann, Women's Development Worker	Pip Tabor, Southern Upland Partnership
Hugh Edlmann, Farmer	David Niven, Southern Upland Partnership
Ann Dalglish, owner of rural based catering business	Elliott Cavers, Farmer with sons Alistair and Sandy
George Ferguson, Community Councillor, Greengrocer, Ambulance Driver	Sandy Colvine, Economic Regeneration Officer, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Alan Thomson, farmer, Arts Association and Community Initiative Development Worker	Ray Eagleson, Chair, Langholm Initiative

Name and Designation	Name and Designation
Lara Porter, Organic Farmer, Community Development Worker	Joan Mitchell, Elected Member, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Chair, Planning and Environment Committee
Maureen Brockley, Organic Gardener, Hotel owner	Sarah Wall, Public Health Nurse
A N other, Scottish Agricultural College	Ben Mardall, Tourism Officer, Buccleuch Estates
Andrew Weatherall, Newton Rigg Agricultural College	Judith Johnson, Langholm Initiative – joint facilitator of the AGATE project
Mairi Telford Jammeh Community Planning Co-ordinator - joint facilitator of the AGATE project	



## Summary Of The Meetings

- Meeting 1 The group identified 100 issues affecting 'living with the land' today e.g. land ownership and new business opportunities.
- Meeting 2 Issues were grouped into 10 themes and the group projected 15 – 20 years ahead and were asked to consider what 'living with the land' would be like in the future.
- Meeting 3 Participants were asked to consider the future scenarios in more detail and identify factors that might result in those coming about.
- Meeting 4 Participants reviewed the scenarios and identified trends which are already happening. These trends would suggest that a scenario is highly likely to come about. These were then analysed in more detail to identify the warning signals.
- Meeting 5 At this meeting participants identified potential projects and interventions that could address the warning signals and promote positive outcomes in the future.



## **Current Issues For People In The Group About 'Living With The Land In Annandale And Eskdale'**

### ***A. Global Issues/globalisation***

Can we learn from the failures – successes of communities elsewhere in the world? How?

We have to accept we are in a market economy and 'subsidy' is a dirty word now. Taxpayers' money will have to deliver public benefits.

Mega global corporations like Monsanto driving the GM debate.

In a world of limited oil and gas reserves – how do we maintain energy supplies – especially for rural communities?

Climate change – Kyoto agreement – doomed without US support and with emerging Chinese economy.

Labour prices – uncompetitive against EU.

Eastern Europe is now Europe's larder. Scottish Farmers will go out of business in 15 years.

### ***B. Marketing***

The Scottish Farming structure is based on large farming units – small niche units are the future.

Website for hill lambs – direct selling.

Ways of adding value to product.

Not enough farmers producing for direct sales – lack of infrastructure.

Dumfries and Galloway only region without farmers' market.

Selling local produce – easy to sell the best meat, who is going to eat the 'mince'?

Making the connection between farming and food.

How do we add value to the resources we have in rural communities and the land around them?

Organic local produce is not convenient.

'Made in Cumbria' type brand.

Local processing distribution.

Why can't I buy food that is grown in/on the land around my community?

Organic Scottish farmers are not encouraged to continue enough after their 5 year initial organic period.

Commodity prices – can we compete?

How can we develop the local food market – school offering local and/or organic food?

Infrastructure e.g. slaughterhouses.

Co-operative websites.

Valuing and adding value to local produce.

Food miles. Distance between primary producer and consumer. Supermarket power.

Would like French attitude to food to be encouraged.

Large Estates are a bar to niche marketing.

Lack of local produce or lack of market outlets.

Currently tourism is seen as a possible saviour of the countryside – you can't eat a tour bus!

How do we get farmers to work in the European fashion i.e. more co-operation?

Can we link food to better health?

### ***C. Land Tenure/land Ownership***

Access to land – difficult.

Large estates a bar to niche marketing.

Land tenure is a problem – too large estates.

Land ownership is seen by many as a bad thing.

## ***D. Rural Viability And Services/Maintaining Rural Communities***

Will people continue choosing to live in rural areas?

Making a living and living in a rural area.

There is such an emphasis on rural economy and regeneration but the local rural schools are being shut.

How do we have working countryside and a rich natural heritage?

Attracting new people to live in rural areas.

Local schools shutting down.

Little understanding for the rural way of life.

How can rural communities benefit from the economic successes in the urban centres?

How can we bring good quality jobs to rural communities?

Will services continue to be provided to the right level for rural communities?

Telecommunications – broadband.

Affordable housing.

How do we look after increasingly 'more mature' rural populations?

Rural facilities – learning centres – internet access – broadband.

Lack of understanding between farmers and rural population as a whole.

Bringing up a family.

Rural Poverty is often very hard to see but it is there – easy to ignore.

Rural communities can sell 'quality of life' – we often take it for granted. Try living in a city!! with young children.

Transport provision.

Farmers are the custodians of the landscape.

Farming underpins so many other businesses – we therefore have to sustain farmers.

Without land-based industries there is no 'Living in the Land'.



### ***E. Reproducing The Farming Labour Force – The Role Of People***

The next generation of farmers seem to be diminishing.

Isolation of young people in farming.

Social isolation for young people in farming.

Trouble encouraging young shepherds to our areas.

No work for young people. Apprenticeship schemes need to be restarted.

Shortage of quality leadership.

Confidence building for rural women. Problems with isolation.

Lack of skilled labour on farms.

Sustainable Farming – only one thing sustains farming, that is profit. At the present time this is not possible, only two employed people in the Parish of Ewes. In New Zealand one farm – 6,000 ewes, 2,000 cattle.

### ***F. Policies And Legislation***

Change in subsidy system – are we prepared?

Agricultural base in U.K. not important – low priority in policy.

U.K. interprets EU directive as minimum standard.

Open Access – freedom to roam.

Land Reform issues.

The implications of CAP reform – cattle moving off the hills.

As Europe expands funds are starting to dry up – how will we cope?

EU enlargement – a challenge.

EU standards – not a level playing field.

Change the culture of farming – food legislation – food inspectorate.

Subsidies in central Europe here.

Misguided land reform.

Too many experts and accountants.

### ***G. Urban Vs Rural – Town And Country***

Total misunderstanding of how the countryside is managed by the urban masses.

Difficulty of getting farmers included with other rural groups.

Muddy education!

Raising awareness for tourism – visitors.

Image of wealthy farmers.

Farmers need to be more receptive to people and their ideas from urban areas.

Head stuck in sand attitude.

Media translation of rural areas clouds issues.

Education – Information – Openness – are the key to many of the countryside's problems.

Integration of farming with tourism and other industries.

### ***H. Diversification/new Business Opportunities***

How can we get investors to take more risks with support for new ideas?

Farmers large units plus smaller units and full time outside job.

Changes in land use.

Need new business on farms i.e. pony-trekking. Pig farming on hills.

Lack of SEDG support.

Insurance for pony trekking.

Integration of farming in tourism and other industries.

### ***I. Unpredictability/uncertainty***

Will we decide what's going to happen?

Issue with living with the unknown – politics and policies, the weather.

Unpredictable!

Farming uncertainties – changes.

## Trends Towards The Future

- People recognising the importance of marketing and branding produce
- Threat from supermarkets and hypermarkets felt
- Branding and marketing started by large estates – aiming at marketing quality
- Traditionalism – people uncertain and frightened of the future and change
- Inertia – people feel strangled by legislation and bureaucracy
- People clinging to what they know
- Support for women's development available and women seeking new opportunities and contributing to community development
- People 'going organic'
- Immigrant workers in food processing industry and 'hard to fill' jobs
- Young people and their parents unsure if family farm is the best future for them

## The Possible Scenarios Of The Future – 15-20 Years Ahead

The scenarios are possible situations, which could happen in the future and which are influenced by economic, social, historical and environmental factors. As conclusions from the discussion emerged a number of possible scenarios were generated. Three of these are presented below.

- The 'Do Nothing' Scenario – legislation and big business have strangled small-scale farming
- A new population with new activities
- Emphasis on using the environment to support diversification

## Scenario 1

### ***The 'Do Nothing' Scenario -Legislation and big business have strangled small-scale farming***

<p><b>Actors</b></p> <p>Large supermarkets Mega farmers Big buyers e.g. large dairies Service industries Bureaucrats/consultants/experts/accountants Planners/environmental health staff/ gatekeepers Large estates/landowners People dependent on state benefits</p>	<p><b>Territory</b></p> <p>Rural farming areas are depopulated/lack of growth Mega farms Livestock farmed indoors People buy farmhouses for lifestyle No rural schools – children bussed to towns Large estates persist</p>
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>A few people are employed by the supermarkets and most are employed in the service sector. Self-employment or employment contracts are the norm. People commute for work. Low wages, people with several jobs Disincentives deter business start-ups. Bureaucrats interpret laws inflexibly</p>	<p><b>Representation/images</b></p> <p>Traditional farming gone Lack of incentives for small businesses Cheap food/low quality No local identity – rural areas homogeneous No subsidies/free market Gatekeepers/Inflexibility Contradictory advice</p>

## Scenario 1

### ***The 'Do Nothing' Scenario***

Warning signals – indicators that this scenario is likely to become reality

- Lack of farm diversification, clinging to what is known
- Bureaucracy inhibits new small businesses and other rural development
- Lack of appreciation of local product which may cost more but is of higher quality
- Lack of appreciation of distinctiveness and uniqueness of our region
- Lack of ability to manage uncertainty and tackle bureaucracy

- Bureaucrats interpret legislation to the letter and are inflexible and distant from farmers, small businesses and the rural population
- Lack of awareness of size of the new European Union
- Unwillingness/Inability to look ahead and predict outcomes of changes
- Rural communities break down
- People commuting out of the area to work
- Feeling of helplessness, inability to change or challenge the systems
- Farmers don't come together as they did in the past

## Scenario 2

### *New population/new activities*

<p><b>Actors</b></p> <p>Immigrant/migrant workers            Young people come back or stay            Women play lead role in business development            New non agricultural business people            New people move into the area 'lifestylers'            Land workers make their living in a variety of ways – farmers manage the landscape            Low incomes/dependence on benefits            Crafts people, skilled professionals            Estates/managers of the landscape</p>	<p><b>Territory</b></p> <p>Improved infrastructure – IT, Broadband, roads, learning, transport            More housing in rural villages and countryside            Less livestock            Managed landscapes            Sites of Special Scientific Interest attract grant money</p>
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>Diverse range of businesses; More mixed economy – less dependence on agriculture            Bureaucrats more flexible            Estates more supportive of entrepreneurial spirit; Marketing a key skill            Ability to manage uncertainty            Farmers produce for direct sales</p>	<p><b>Representation</b></p> <p>Improved respect between urban and rural            Rural areas valued/associated with quality product; Diversity of experience            Barriers between estates and wider community reduced            Encouragement from authorities for farmer's markets; Globalisation of labour</p>

## Scenario 2

### *New population/new activities*

#### ***Warning Signals– indicators that this scenario is likely to become reality***

- Lack of infrastructure for direct sales of agricultural produce
- Population not prepared in terms of skills for a more diverse economy
- Lack of a local brand that helps sustain livestock production
- Lack of local food processing/adding value to product locally
- Shortages of skilled trades people
- Lack of starter farms
- Limited number of people who recognise new opportunities and act to create new activities
- Limited debate of the issues/farmers not identifying the issues
- Lack of interaction and debate between community, farmers and policy makers



## Scenario 3

### *Green Tourism/Emphasis on using Environment to Support Diversification*

<p><b>Actors</b></p> <p>People with local knowledge of rural way of life and environment          People producing traditional foods          Organic farmers/gardeners          Eco schools          Green tourism operators          Renewable energy producers</p>	<p><b>Territory</b></p> <p>Allotments          Polytunnels          Trails/walks/river walks          Lodges/high quality accommodation          Wild life/landscape          Starter farms/land available</p>
<p><b>Activities</b></p> <p>People growing their own food including schools/kitchen gardens          Environmental holiday packages/More joined up tourism          Local authentic experience          Diverse farming/animal husbandry          Small niche farming units          Marketing via co-operatives</p>	<p><b>Images/Representation</b></p> <p>Support from agencies for small scale green activities          Respect for organic – understanding of health benefits of ‘natural’ food          Local food valued and served in local restaurants and schools          Pride in rural environment          More opportunity for urban people to experience rural living</p>



## Scenario 3

### **Green Tourism/Emphasis on using Environment** to Support Diversification

Warning signals -- indicators that this scenario is likely to become reality

- Lack of skills to challenge bureaucracy/barriers to development of organic/green tourism
- Lack of ability to see opportunities that 'green' offers
- Lack of education and awareness of recycling/composting/small scale growing
- Loss of traditional skills/authentic ways of doing things
- Lack of appreciation of traditional ways of managing the countryside – no move to professionalise this or value it
- Lack of wet weather activities for tourists
- Lack of appreciation of heritage/biodiversity
- Inability to realise benefits of way marked accessibility/paths
- Lack of outside influences/perspectives
- Lack of land – small farms/allotments available for interested and motivated people to demonstrate the 'green' way forward



# Potential Actions Indicated By The Warning Signals

Warning signal		Action indicated/suggested	Suggested lead agency
<b>FARM BUSINESS OPTIONS</b>			
Lack of farm diversification, clinging to what is known – leaving crucial decisions too late	Support farmers to explore options and find out about managing non agricultural businesses	SEERAD/Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway	
People take government hand outs and get out of farming	Support farmers to explore options adequately before making decisions	SEERAD, NFU	
Lack of starter farms/part time farming opportunities	Estates to explore starter farm options	Landowners	
<b>BUREAUCRACY AND BUSINESS</b>			
Bureaucracy inhibits new small businesses and other rural development	Research bureaucratic barriers to small businesses and take action to address these	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway; Dumfries and Galloway Council	
Lack of ability to manage uncertainty and tackle bureaucracy	Research bureaucratic barriers to small businesses and take action to address these Work with businesses to develop risk assessment skills and ways of managing uncertainty	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway; Dumfries and Galloway Council; NFU; Farm businesses	
Bureaucrats interpret legislation to the letter and are inflexible and distant from farmers, small businesses and the rural population	Reduce 'distance' between bureaucrats, farmers and small businesses through joint workshops to explore barriers to business development	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway; Dumfries and Galloway Council; NFU; Farm businesses	

<b>Warning signa</b>	<b>Action indicated/suggested</b>	<b>Suggested lead agency</b>
Lack of skills to challenge bureaucracy/ barriers to development of organic/green tourism e.g. high cost of consultants	Research bureaucratic barriers to developing green tourism and take action to address these	The Soil Association; Farm Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG); farm businesses; business development officers
Feeling of helplessness, inability to change or challenge the systems	Confidence building, management skills training on offer locally	Scottish Agricultural College, Barony College; local educational providers
Unwillingness/inability to look ahead and predict outcomes of changes	Work with businesses to develop risk assessment skills and ways of managing uncertainty and planning skills	Scottish Agricultural College, Barony College; local educational providers; business development officers
<b>VALUING WHAT WE HAVE</b>		
Lack of appreciation of distinctiveness and uniqueness of our region	Work with young people and our communities to build greater appreciation of our region	VisitScotland/Schools
Lack of appreciation of local product which may cost more but is of higher quality	Promote consumer awareness of local produce through food festivals, cooking demonstrations and health awareness days	Food shops; women's groups
Rural communities break down	Increase community development activities and encourage actions by local community groups	Community groups; D&G Council, A&E Federation of Village Halls
<b>FARMING NETWORKS</b>		
Limited debate of the issues/farmers not identifying the issues	Offer regular opportunities for farmer to express the issues that they face to policy makers – engage farmers in community planning	NFU; Young Farmers Associations; Dumfries and Galloway Council; Landowners/Estates

<b>Warning signa</b>	<b>Action indicated/suggested</b>	<b>Suggested lead agency</b>
Farmers don't come together as they did in the past due to new technology, use of contractors etc	Develop/support local farmers associations to promote increased networking Provide 'study tour' opportunities for farmers to visit other regions	NFU; Young Farmers Associations; Dumfries and Galloway Council/Landowners/Estates
<b>MARKETING/ADDING VALUE TO PRODUCT</b>		
Lack of infrastructure for direct sales of agricultural produce	Explore marketing approaches used elsewhere e.g. Cumbria and use lessons to develop local direct sales opportunities, establish farmers markets	Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway; Food producers
Lack of local food processing/adding value to product locally	Explore food processing approaches used elsewhere e.g. Cumbria and use lessons to develop local opportunities to add value to product	Leader Plus; Community Initiatives, Small Businesses
Need to create brand that helps sustain livestock production if we wish to retain animals in our landscape	Explore marketing approaches used elsewhere e.g. Cumbria and use lessons to developing branding possibilities	Leader Plus; Community Initiatives; Scottish Enterprise D&G
Need to establish links between farmers and craftspeople	Hold workshops to explore possibilities of collaborative working	DGAA
<b>SKILLS AND WORK</b>		

<b>Warning sign</b>	<b>Action indicated/suggested</b>	<b>Suggested lead agency</b>
Population ill equipped educationally – not prepared in terms of skills for a more diverse economy	Raise skill levels and ability to identify core transferable skills and ability to manage change	D&G College; Scottish Agricultural College; Dumfries and Galloway Council
People commuting out of the area to work	Work with people to look at self employment opportunities and home working options	Business development advisers
Unskilled low paid jobs which cannot be filled locally taken by immigrant/migrant workers	Explore benefits of migrant workers/support services that can bring community benefit	D&G Council, Scottish Enterprise Dumfries & Galloway
Shortages of skilled trades people	Foster increased apprenticeship schemes/earn while learning schemes	Dumfries and Galloway Council; Scottish Enterprise Dumfries and Galloway; LANTRA
Lack of appreciation of traditional ways of managing the countryside – no move to professionalise this or value it/Loss of traditional skills/authentic ways of doing things	Identify traditional skills under threat and showcase/develop them to ensure that they are recognised and appreciated	Scottish Agricultural College; Leader Plus; LANTRA
Lack of awareness of size of the new European Union	Education on EU in schools, local communities	Schools, Media
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL APPRECIATION</b>		
Lack of appreciation of heritage/biodiversity	Increase environmental education on biodiversity and heritage	Schools; community groups

<b>Warning signa</b>	<b>Action indicated/suggested</b>	<b>Suggested lead agency</b>
Lack of ability to see opportunities that 'green' offers	Work with local businesses to explore benefits of green tourism	VisitScotland, Community Initiatives, Estates
Lack of education and awareness of recycling/composting/small scale growing	Continue to support community recycling groups and education for young people	Schools; Community Groups
Inability to realise benefits of way marked accessibility/paths	Assess the community value of way marked paths/increased accessibility of countryside; use that evidence to build the case for increased appreciation	Walking groups/Access Officers of Dumfries and Galloway Council
Lack of land – small farms/allotments available for interested and motivated people to demonstrate the 'green' way forward	Estates and other landowners to explore using 'free' land for allotments/small starter farms/diversification opportunities for farmers – service plots, co-op compost	Estates/landowners/farmers
Lack of wet weather activities for tourists	Work with local businesses to look at wet weather opportunities for visitors	D&G Council - Planning
<b>IDEAS AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES</b>		
Lack of outside influences/perspectives	Develop study tours/visits for farmers to other areas of UK and of the rest of Europe	Leader plus; Scottish Agricultural College

***Any comments you may have on this report or on any aspect of the project can be sent to the following people:***

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(Footnotes)

<sup>1</sup> Interreg 3B is a strand of European funding that supports collaborative projects between different regions.



