

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 3B¹ 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>Actors</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>Territory</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>Activities</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>Representation/images</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>Actors</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>Territory</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>Activities</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>Representation</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>Actors</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>Territory</p> <p>Allotments Polytunnels Trails/walks/river walks Lodges/high quality accommodation Wild life/landscape Starter farms/land available</p> |
| <p>Activities</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>Images/Representation</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 |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| FARM BUSINESS OPTIONS | | | |
| 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 | |
| BUREAUCRACY AND BUSINESS | | | |
| 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 | |

| Warning signa | Action indicated/suggested | Suggested lead agency |
|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| VALUING WHAT WE HAVE | | |
| 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 |
| FARMING NETWORKS | | |
| 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 |

| Warning signa | Action indicated/suggested | Suggested lead agency |
|--|---|---|
| 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 |
| MARKETING/ADDING VALUE TO PRODUCT | | |
| 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 |
| SKILLS AND WORK | | |

| Warning sign | Action indicated/suggested | Suggested lead agency |
|--|---|--|
| 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 |
| ENVIRONMENTAL APPRECIATION | | |
| Lack of appreciation of heritage/biodiversity | Increase environmental education on biodiversity and heritage | Schools; community groups |

| Warning signa | Action indicated/suggested | Suggested lead agency |
|--|---|---|
| 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 |
| IDEAS AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES | | |
| 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)

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



