STITCHING THE PATCHWORK:

AN EXAMINATION OF THE AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY NETWORK IN ENGLAND

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Abstract

The Agri-environmental Regulation, part of the 1992 CAP reform package, led to the (re)introduction of a number of agri-environmental schemes in the UK. These seek to counter some of the negative impacts that 'productivist' policies have made on the countryside in the post-war period. Although the Regulation is viewed as marginal to core agricultural policies by traditional interests, it represents an important policy shift towards the recognition of the complexity of the contemporary rural economy and the value placed on environmental goods by an urbanised society.

A general move away from the development and implementation of public policies based on 'control and command' philosophies towards more open, consultative approaches has altered the mechanisms through which policy is designed and implemented. This study of the agri-environmental schemes in England examines the changing roles of individuals and organisations within the policy process, revealing a process that evolves through a policy network where actors interact and exchange resources rather than through a logical sequence of events. It also shows that the process of evaluation does not necessarily rest with an 'elite' group of actors but to a greater or lesser degree all actors feed into this process. The problems associated with evaluating non-quantifiable benefits from environmental goods have required actors to use their own judgements and beliefs to appraise policy outcomes. The potential effects of these issues on policy formation are discussed and assessed.

Through interviews with farmers, their advisers, key officials in conservation and agricultural NGOs, and representatives of government statutory advisers and departments in England, a snapshot of the network organised around these schemes is described. It reveals how the policy process involves an extensive system of linkages and relationships between actors through which policy is constantly being refined.
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<td>AAP</td>
<td>Arable Area Payment</td>
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<td>ADAS</td>
<td>Agricultural Development and Advisory Service</td>
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<td>AER</td>
<td>Agri-environmental Regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>AES</td>
<td>Agri-environmental Scheme</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALURE</td>
<td>Alternative Land Use and Rural Economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>AONB</td>
<td>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASC</td>
<td>British Association of Shooting and Conservation</td>
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<td>BFSS</td>
<td>British Field Sports Society</td>
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<td>BGMS</td>
<td>Broads Grazing Marsh Scheme</td>
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<td>BSE</td>
<td>Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy</td>
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<td>BTO</td>
<td>British Trust for Ornithology</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Commission of the European Community</td>
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<td>CAP</td>
<td>Common Agricultural Policy</td>
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<td>COPA</td>
<td>Comité des Organisations Professionales Agricoles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPRE</td>
<td>Council for the Protection of Rural England</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLA</td>
<td>Country Landowners' Association</td>
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<td>CoCo</td>
<td>Countryside Commission</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Countryside Review Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DETR</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGVI</td>
<td>Directorate General for Agriculture</td>
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<td>DGXI</td>
<td>Directorate General for the Environment</td>
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<td>DTi</td>
<td>Department of Trade and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAGGF</td>
<td>European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
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<td>ECU</td>
<td>European Currency Unit</td>
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<td>EN</td>
<td>English Nature</td>
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<td>EEB</td>
<td>European Environment Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ERM</td>
<td>Exchange Rate Mechanism</td>
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<td>ESA</td>
<td>Environmentally Sensitive Area</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<td>FYSS</td>
<td>Five Year Set-aside Scheme</td>
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<td>FoE</td>
<td>Friends of the Earth</td>
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<td>FRCA</td>
<td>Farming and Rural Conservation Agency</td>
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<td>FS-a</td>
<td>Former Set-aside</td>
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<td>FSA</td>
<td>Food Standards Agency</td>
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<td>FWAG</td>
<td>Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group</td>
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<td>GCT</td>
<td>Game Conservancy Trust</td>
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<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>HCLA</td>
<td>Hill and Livestock Compensatory Allowance</td>
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<td>IACS</td>
<td>Integrated Administration Control System</td>
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<td>ICM</td>
<td>Integrated Crop Management</td>
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<td>IFAW</td>
<td>International Federation of Animal Welfare</td>
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<td>JNCC</td>
<td>Joint Nature Conservancy Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>Link</td>
<td>Wildlife and Countryside Link</td>
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<tr>
<td>LFA</td>
<td>Less Favoured Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAFF</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFU</td>
<td>National Farmers' Union</td>
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<td>NRA</td>
<td>National Rivers Authority</td>
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<td>NT</td>
<td>National Trust</td>
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<td>NCC</td>
<td>Nature Conservancy Council</td>
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<td>NNR</td>
<td>National Nature Reserve</td>
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<td>NWT</td>
<td>Norfolk Wildlife Trust</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NSA</td>
<td>Nitrogen Sensitive Area</td>
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<td>PO</td>
<td>Project Officer</td>
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<td>RSNC</td>
<td>Royal Society for Nature Conservation</td>
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<td>RSPB</td>
<td>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAFE</td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture, Food and Environment Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>Single European Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSSI</td>
<td>Site of Special Scientific Interest</td>
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<td>SLB</td>
<td>Street-Level Bureaucrat</td>
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<td>SPS</td>
<td>Suffolk Preservation Society</td>
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<td>SWT</td>
<td>Suffolk Wildlife Trust</td>
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<td>TFA</td>
<td>Tenant Farmers' Association</td>
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<td>VFM</td>
<td>Value for Money</td>
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<td>WT</td>
<td>Wildlife Trusts</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organisation</td>
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<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wide Fund for Nature-UK</td>
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Introduction

As part of the continuing reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the introduction of the Agri-environmental Regulation (AER) in 1992 marked an important step towards the progressive integration of agricultural and environmental policy in the European arena. Prior to this, European agricultural policy making had been almost wholly dominated by the need to increase agricultural productivity and to provide an adequate income to farmers and other members of the rural workforce. Little formal concern had been expressed in policy terms for environmental protection in the farmed countryside.

The need for reform arose from growing opposition to 'productivist policies' which had led to the over supply of agricultural commodities while doing little to close the gap between farm earnings and incomes in other economic sectors. It was obvious by the mid 1980s that the CAP would have to undergo major changes if its rising budgetary cost was to be brought under control. In addition to the internal problems of the CAP, the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations played an important if indirect role in the reform process, not least by energising European Union (EU) politicians into addressing what is a highly contested area of policy between commodity sectors, national interests and the differing perceptions of producers and consumers. Apart from the monetary and trading problems of the CAP, there were growing concerns over the way contemporary farming practices had altered the appearance of the countryside and polluted the rural environment. Concerns extended beyond impacts to landscape and wildlife to include the economy and social structure of the European countryside.

These issues were accorded a high priority by some national governments and their associated non-governmental organisations (NGOs) but much less in others, and the relative importance they attributed to environmental and social and economic issues also differed (for a review, see Jones and Clark, forthcoming). One outcome of the tortured policy debate was a series of policies to address environmental concerns, identified primarily but not exclusively in the Agri-environmental Regulation (AER)
2078/92 (CEC, 1992). In the UK, the AER is seen as a key reform by both environmental and agricultural interests as one means of responding to domestic demands to raise the quality farmed environment whilst ensuring that farmers derive financial benefits from the process.

The current reform of the CAP is thus the result of non-agricultural pressures as well as traditional farming ones. Over the past two decades, the environmental lobby has increased its influence in the agricultural policy network, traditionally the domain of the major farming, landowning and food producing organisations. Its legitimacy and influence have been sustained by wider concerns in society about the environment and the lobby has contributed significantly to the development of the AER in Brussels (Jones and Clark, 1998; Clark et al., 1997a; Dixon, 1998), even if, so far, the AER remains at the margins of agricultural policy and consumes a small proportion of the CAP budget (3.6% of the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) (guarantee) expenditure in 1996 (CEC, 1997a)). Nonetheless, its introduction marks an important policy shift. It recognises the complex nature of the contemporary rural economy within society revealing a growing focus upon consumption, including amenity and the supply of conservation goods.

For policy makers in the UK, the AER neither introduced a new concept of agricultural land use nor land management. Almost all farmland in the UK exhibits aspects of multiple use and many of the schemes included under the AER were already in existence in some form before the Regulation was adopted. Indeed, some were brought forward on the basis of UK experience and encouragement (Jones and Clark, forthcoming). More generally, the importance of the Regulation lies in the way it requires two traditionally distinct policy networks, namely those representing agricultural and the environmental interests, to work together so as to provide a coherent set of policies. How the actors involved in the production and implementation of these policies have adapted to this process of integration is important if we are to gauge how effective and long-lasting these policies might prove to be. Fundamentally, can they ensure that environmental imperatives are incorporated into future farming policies rather than them acting as marginal add-ons.
to food policy in general? And can they ensure that conservation programmes, which at present mainly focus upon designated areas, become ubiquitous in the farmed countryside?

The Policy Process

Before examining how agricultural and environmental organisations and individuals have influenced the introduction and amendment of agri-environmental policy, it is first necessary to assess the changing nature of public policy making processes more generally and, to enquire whether public policy is effective in meeting its objectives and providing value for money. Numerous approaches have been employed to address these questions. Most have sought to understand how policy is made, how it is put into action, and in the light of experience and changing social values, how it is refined. This has led some to advocate a 'top-down' approach to policy analysis (see Ham and Hill, 1993), but this approach has weaknesses. For example, effective policy making is made more difficult where the decision chain is attenuated and complex (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984; Palumbo and Wright, 1981), as in the case of policies formulated in the EU which are then refracted by national interest and local circumstances. As a result unintended 'gaps' may appear between policy intent, delivery and outcome, primarily because of differences between the opinions, experiences and actions of those actors charged with different aspects of the policy process (Cloke, 1987; Gilg and Kelly, 1997; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992a). When this is the case, a policy implementation 'gap' is deemed to exist, but a 'top-down' approach is poorly situated either to identify or explain its occurrence. To address the 'implementation gap', and to understand how implementation shapes policy outcomes, a 'bottom-up' approach to policy analysis has been promoted as a counter-view (Lewis and Flynn, 1979).

The 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches often place each part of the policy process within strict boundaries, implying that the process occurs in a logical and
inevitable sequence. In doing so, these perspectives often fail to take account of the continuing interactions between actors throughout the process, artificially separating implementation from policy making and presenting a largely static outlook on what are dynamic processes. By suggesting that the policy process follows a largely set pattern, it fails to emphasise how policies evolve within policy networks in which the actors interact and exchange resources. It underestimates the importance of learning in which all the participants are engaged (Cloke and Little, 1990), and tends to assume that actors have ordained or pre-set interests and do not themselves seek to adjust the process to meet their specific needs and understanding. The model underestimates the negotiated nature of policy implementation, especially where policies represent a departure from standard practices and past experience (Barrett and Fudge, 1981). In such situations it is common for neither the policy developer nor the implementer to be able to prescribe precisely the nature of the outcome (or good or service to be delivered), nor always to evaluate the exact worth of the outcome. This is especially true in the case of environmental policies where market prices, or any other single set of indices, fail to measure the value of outcomes in ways acceptable to all the interested parties. Political judgements of worth may come to dominate discourses of evaluation.

In these circumstances, the policy process cannot be viewed as a simple or single pathway. Analysis has to take account of the views and actions of each actor and what these impart to policy intent, delivery and outcome. In doing so, the policy process becomes reactive and recursive and rarely has set starting or finishing points (Barrett and Fudge, 1981). In addition, it is necessary to look beyond the formal actors involved in the process, such as civil servants and politicians in Brussels, Whitehall and the locality, and the implementing agents (in the case of agri-environmental measures, advisers and farmers), and to include those individuals and organisations who may seek to influence the policy's direction at any stage in its development, implementation or evaluation (e.g. environmental and agricultural NGOs). Consequently, the policy process may involve many actors whose interactions define whether it fails to meet their objectives and thus where the 'gaps' lie. The 'gaps' are a result of the opinions expressed by the actors involved, and
depend largely on 'where you are standing and which way you are looking'. From this perspective, the importance of the 'gap' will depend on the ability of particular actors to inform others of its 'existence' and to encourage them to help in seeking 'solutions'. In reality, the complexity of the problems surrounding the 'gaps' often means that they cannot be solved through simple mechanisms, although actors may be forced to reduce the complexity of the issues under debate to specific areas of policy so as to provide a point around which discussion and negotiation can take place.

The shift in the pattern of governing away from policies based on 'command and control' ideologies towards a more open and consultative approach has altered the policy process in the UK (see, for example, Goodwin and Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997). This has led to the widespread use of the term 'governance' defined by an assumption of interdependence between organisations (including the state and other interests) and where relationships are built on trust and the exchange of resources. These characteristics are reflected in the development of complex networks which are self-organising rather than being controlled by the state (Rhodes, 1997). Because of this, the boundaries between government and other interests have become less distinct and the state now finds itself attempting to 'steer' the direction of policy through the relevant network of actors (ibid.). This approach has contributed to, as well as being a response to, a rise in the number of agencies and interest groups involved in all areas of policy making and their ability to move between spatial scales (e.g. from the local to the national) (Goodwin and Painter, 1996; Murdoch and Marsden, 1995).

It follows that a better understanding of how the policy process works can only be developed if the analysis attempts an holistic view of the interactions between the actors involved. They include various organisations (i.e. agricultural and environmental lobby groups), government agencies and departments, and the individuals the policy seeks to serve (e.g. farmers and conservationists). In turn, these actors become part of a wider policy network formed through individuals' connections. The network is built through enrolment¹, drawing upon the range of

¹The process of enrolment involves negotiation between the actors, during which their identities are exposed and their place within the network is defined (Callon, 1986).
communication that takes place between the actors both formally and informally. The mechanisms through which enrolment takes place are important to understanding the position and stances particular actors adopt. The process is not, however, dependent on simple force as Callon explains:

"To describe enrolment is thus to describe the group of multilateral negotiations, trials of strength and tricks that accompany the intéréssements and enable them to succeed" (1986, p.211).

It is necessary, therefore, to examine how actors are enrolled or seek to enrol others, in particular the negotiations that are involved in the process. Mechanisms frequently include the exchange of resources or the development of mutual benefits (Benson, 1975; Leach, 1980). For example, organisations may seek to pool resources so as to strengthen their arguments for changing the direction of policy (Sabenius, 1992).

The process of evaluation is often reduced to a separate and distinct part of the public policy - a final stage rather than an integral part of the continuing development of policy. In practice, actors are continually engaged in evaluation, assessing possible policy options, on-going activities and the final outcomes (Hellstern, 1986; Majone, 1989), drawing upon a range of evaluative tools and sources of information to make their appraisals. These include formal techniques such as contingent valuation or cost-benefit analysis (see for example, DoE, 1991, 1994a; Garrod and Willis, 1994), and the results of official monitoring on uptake, compliance and environmental change. But these tools do not provide sufficient information to address the complexity of the process, and in the case of ex ante evaluation this will be necessarily incomplete, and thus evaluation will also depend on individual intuition, experience and received opinion (Holdgate, 1995; Majone, 1989; Winter, 1996). Moreover, the process of evaluation is often incorrectly defined through its association with senior civil servants (Pollitt, 1993). As such, it is viewed as an 'elite' or 'insider' process, whereby evaluation is conducted by, or on behalf of, those responsible for the spending of

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2Intéréssement is the process by which the key actors seek to define the problems that link those to be enrolled into the network. Additionally it includes the attempts of key actors to formulate a strong structure around which the network will be based so that competing definitions of the problem are excluded and the alliances between the enrolled actors are strengthened (Callon, 1986).
public monies. Given the need to meet their own interests, the elites become both poacher and gamekeeper.

This view fails to take into account the evaluation performed by the full range of actors involved in the policy network. All actors will feed their views into the process, either through the voicing of their own experiences and opinions or from collective attitudes developed within their organisation. These attitudes are, in turn, formulated through experience of previous policies, reaction to current policies and hopes for future policies, and they contribute to actors' judgements or organisations' biases. As each actor feeds their views on the performance of the policy into the network, they will be incorporated, rejected or translated by others. They may be suppressed, modified or enthusiastically endorsed and will be used in subsequent bargaining and negotiation over adjustments to policy and its implementation. It is, therefore, important to develop an understanding of the notions and beliefs that go into the actors' recognitions of evaluation, and how these feed into their policy objectives. The evaluation of public policy has many facets. A current pre-occupation for the UK government is the value for money that particular policies provide. In terms of environmental policy, assessing value for money is made more difficult by the problems of how to translate non-quantifiable outputs and intrinsic value into monetary terms. The financial assessment of policy may be reduced to personal judgements of the policy's ability to secure environmental gains at a cost which is deemed to be economically and politically acceptable.

Implementation of the Agri-Environmental Regulation in England

The thesis addresses the issues introduced above through an analysis of the networks of actors that have become established through the implementation of the AER. The focus is on the development and implementation of the Agri-environmental Regulation in England, although it is important to stress that the network extends well beyond England to include actors working within the European Commission and
Parliament, lobbyists who seek to influence EU decisions as well as those taken in other member states. They also extend to wider international networks, such as that formed around the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The focus upon the UK is practical (what can be achieved in a doctoral thesis), avoids duplicating other current research (see Clark et al., 1997a) and is sustainable as a self-contained project because of the principle of subsidiarity, whereby each member state has adapted the Regulation to satisfy its own domestic demands.

Within England, the agri-environmental network is formed around three broad localities, namely the local, the regional and the national. Within each of the localities actors take up positions. For example, the local network includes farmers and their advisers; the regional network incorporates government departments and the county offices of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the implementation of policy; the national network includes policy makers in Whitehall and the national spokesmen of NGO lobby groups. Many of the actors are not confined to specific localities and may move across the network forming alliances with actors from other localities and sectoral interests (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995).

The empirical study of the agri-environmental network conducted here seeks to establish how the linkages between the actors are formed so as to assist our understanding of how the Regulation has been implemented and with what effect on traditional policy networks. It has already been noted that the AER has encouraged the agricultural and environmental sectors to work together even more closely than hitherto in order to produce policies which can only be delivered through a common approach. By studying the positioning of the various actors, it is hoped to throw new light not only on how these important policies have emerged and been implemented,

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3The principle of subsidiarity allows member states to design schemes which complement local, regional and national measures. It follows that the impact of policies developed under this principle is dependent on the commitment of individual national governments to implement schemes without causing adverse land-use changes and to ensure the programmes do not come into conflict with other policy objectives (see Collier, 1997; Golub, 1996).

4Within the UK the development and implementation of the AER has taken place differently in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland allowing the adoption of schemes pertinent to the circumstance of each.
but also to consider what effect these policies may have on the future of agri-environmental schemes (AESs) in the UK.

In addition to a greater comprehension of complex policy networks, the research seeks to provide some insights into the new forms of local governance that are emerging, especially as the roles played by local and regional actors in the policy process have been enhanced by the devolution of responsibilities from national to regional agencies. Consequently, although the AESs are formed around national frameworks, the detailed implementation of the schemes is developed by those working at the regional and local levels. This arrangement places greater responsibilities on these actors to develop the nationally designed schemes to meet local conditions. A key question that arises is do the actors working at these levels have sufficient discretionary freedom to do this effectively? Furthermore, the actors' links with other networks "involves more power being exercised by a very varied range of institutions which operate at a range of spatial scales" (Goodwin and Painter, 1996, p. 636). To reveal how this works in practice, it is necessary to understand how the actors communicate between the different scales and how this affects the resources upon which they can draw.

Given the complexity of the agri-environmental networks, the thesis can only provide a framework. It cannot depict every linkage but only try to identify those that appear to be the most important. Additionally, because the analysis views the policy process as dynamic and recursive, this account can only offer an interpretation of the process at one point in time. It does, however, act as a tool for interpreting outcomes and possible future trajectories of agri-environmental policy, and is the first description of the policy process behind the development and implementation of the AESs in England, revealing how the policy process has altered actors' positions within the network. Furthermore, the increased discretionary freedom made available to those responsible for delivering the final environmental goods illustrates how agricultural policy is moving away from a singular approach to one where those best placed to make assessments of local needs are given the freedom to do so, and then to act upon them.
The thesis seeks to address the issues raised above by focusing on three key objectives. These are: i) to examine the form of the new relationship between the traditionally distinct agricultural and environmental interests and, its impact upon the development and formulation of agri-environmental schemes in England; ii) through intensive fieldwork, to investigate the changing pattern of policy process with reference to the agri-environmental network; iii) to provide detailed insights into the way the policy process functions through an investigation of the implementation and evaluation of agri-environmental schemes in England.

The first two chapters discuss the historical development of agricultural and environmental policies in the EU and England from the 1970s to the present. Particular attention is paid to the 'distance' between these two sectors at the beginning of the period and the pressures that have required them to develop a dialogue over the last decade. This dialogue has in turn had a significant impact on the structure of the agricultural and environmental policy communities.

Chapter Three examines various approaches to the policy process. It is argued that traditional perspectives have been narrow in their focus and that it is not only important to understand the structure of the network but also how actors interact within it. The chapter concludes that in many academic accounts the evaluation of policy is frequently neglected or limited to particular actors or parts of the policy process, and that this narrowness hinders our understanding of the policy process.

Chapter Four builds on the description of the agricultural and environmental policies presented in Chapters One and Two and the review of the policy process in Chapter Three to develop a notional account of the agri-environmental network in England. An attempt is made to describe in an 'ideal' way how the agri-environmental network is structured and how the actors' linkages are developed. This idealisation is used as a framework for the empirical study, the methods of which are described in the second section of the chapter.

Chapters Five to Eight describe, interpret and analyse the evidence collected from the empirical survey of the agri-environmental network. The evidence indicates how the policy process has changed with the shift towards a more open and consultative form.
of governance and as the agri-environmental network itself has grown. Chapter Five investigates the farmers' sub-network, revealing what links farmers have with other members of the agri-environmental network and how they attempt to influence the policy process. Chapter Six examines the links between the national and regional actors and how they have been enrolled into the network as a basis for understanding why the traditionally distinct agricultural and environmental communities now work together. Chapter Seven analyses how the AESs are implemented, whether there is a 'gap' between farmers' and conservation advisers' environmental objectives, and the significance to this of the level of discretionary freedom available to the schemes' project officers. Chapter Eight reviews how actors 'formally' and 'informally' assess the worth of possible and actual outcomes of the AESs and argues that evaluation has to be seen as an integral and continuous part of the policy process, and not something that is detached and only engaged in at a particular point in the process.
Chapter One

The Development of Agricultural and Environmental Policy in the UK and Europe

Introduction

From the Second World War until the mid-1980s UK agricultural policy was dominated by the requirements of increasing farm output and the maintenance of farming incomes through commodity price support. This led to dramatic changes in the organisation of the agricultural and food industries and to the nature of farming systems that are well documented (see for example Shoard, 1980, Goodman and Redclift, 1991; Harvey, 1997). These changes led to what are now universally accepted as adverse effects on the landscape and wildlife of the countryside.

In the last twenty years the demands placed on the countryside have become more complex as a range of consumption interests has required greater access to rural space and increased respect for environmental and heritage resources. This shift in social attitudes has required the formulation of more intricate policies to meet the challenge of conflicting environmental and agricultural priorities, partly through the integration of two traditionally separate policy arenas: that designed to support food production and that aimed at protecting the rural environment. For the four decades before the 1980s the two policy sectors and their associated institutions ran their own agendas, and largely ignored the needs of the other, despite efforts by the environmental lobby to highlight some of the problems caused by the industrialisation of farming (European Parliament, 1986). However, rising public disquiet associated with these environmental problems eventually required agricultural policy makers to look for ways of addressing these concerns and to do so within the confines of the
traditional purview of agricultural policy. Environmental degradation could no longer be seen as 'external' to the management of agricultural markets and farming practice. This chapter will chart the development of the agricultural and environmental policy sectors in Europe over the last three decades up to the reform period of 1990s. During this period the 'productivist' approach to agricultural policy led to the rapid increase of food production throughout the EU, but these policies failed to raise farmers' incomes in line with other economic sectors. Consequently, whilst the ever greater production of commodities led to increasing budgetary costs for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the economic viability of rural areas continued to decline. In the UK, a strongly corporatist stance over the development of agricultural policy had dominated, privileging state and commercial interests in the interpretation of EU policy, a situation that came to be challenged in the 1980s by an environmental lobby prepared to contest the views of established insider interests (Cox and Lowe, 1983; Cox et al., 1986a).

The chapter discusses the emergence of this new agrarian political economy in the UK while noting that the drivers for policy in Europe are considerably varied. In Europe emphasis has been placed more squarely on reducing agricultural budgetary costs and maintaining rural economies with little regard for environmental concerns. Whereas in the UK (and indeed other northern European states) public pressure has led to the inclusion of environmental concerns within these policies. These differences in approach to the restructuring of agricultural and agri-environmental policy are examined.

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1The food crisis following the Second World War led to the development of policies to increase agricultural production so as to offset shortages in supply and reduce the need for expensive imports. This led to what has been commonly termed 'productivist' agricultural policy. This sought to encourage "a commitment to an intensive, industrially driven and expansionist agriculture with state support based primarily on output and increased productivity" (Lowe et al., 1993, p.221).

2Cox and Lowe, 1983, have defined corporatism as "a particular system of interest intermediation. By emphasising the integration of selected corporate interest groups into policy-making and implementation in partnership with the state" (p.174).
After the Second World War there was a strong desire to develop a European federation which through its agreements would make another war impossible. The starting point was the setting up of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1951. This involved France, Germany, the Benelux countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) and Italy (this would become the EU-6). The UK was invited to join but declined. Subsequently other Treaties were signed and in 1956 the Treaties for the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) were set-up and enacted under the Treaty of Rome, including the objectives for a common agricultural policy (CAP) (Tracy, 1989). Under Article 39 of the Treaty the basic principles on which the CAP would be founded were spelled out:

1. to increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress and by ensuring the rational development of agricultural production and the optimum utilisation of the factors of production, in particular labour;
2. to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community (in particular) by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture;
3. to stabilise agricultural commodity markets;
4. to assure the availability of food supplies; and
5. to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

The Treaty did not determine which particular policy instruments should be used, but the objectives implied that a fair standard of living would be achieved by increasing agricultural output and the individual earnings of those engaged in farming. The original six member states did not come to final agreement over the working of the CAP until 1962 (Harvey, 1990; Tracy, 1989). The five principles of the CAP have been described as peripheral to the 'core policy doctrines', which are based upon a need to maintain rural farming communities, an idea cherished by all member states, who viewed the maintenance of these communities as central to their nations’ cultural identities (Clark et al., 1997a). The 'closed' policy communities\(^3\) of the agricultural sector (already in existence before the CAP was developed) sought to maintain these

\(^3\)A 'closed' policy community is thought to exist where relatively few interest groups have almost exclusive access to relevant government departments and statutory bodies throughout the policy process (Cox et al., 1986b).
'core policy doctrines' and to reject attempts to restructure the functioning of rural communities (ibid.).

In the 1960s farmers readily responded to production incentives under the CAP and by the end of this decade the Community was producing surpluses of wheat, milk and sugar. The surpluses reduced the amount of money raised for the European budget through import levies, leading to greater public spending, while farm incomes fell relative to those of other economic sectors because of declining real prices and rising costs (Harvey, 1990). These pressures led to the production of the Mansholt Plan (1968). The Plan proposed a restructuring of farm size and job creation in rural areas so as to alleviate the social consequences of an increased transfer of labour out of agriculture and suggested that the least productive agricultural areas should be afforested or turned into national parks, green belts or utilised for tourism (CEC, 1968). The radical reform of the agricultural sector the Plan proposed was at direct odds to the 'core principles' of the CAP and was readily rejected by the member states (Clark et al., 1997a). This set a tone by which future challenges to the CAP would be judged, specifically with member states defending their rights to support farming per se rather than look to other mechanisms of preserving the rural economy.

The first reference to environmental considerations impinging on the CAP were contained in the First Environmental Action Programme* introduced in 1973. The Programme called for, "the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their [members states] peoples" and "the harmonious development of their economies" (p.1). It noted that:

"An environmental programme for the Community cannot, therefore, be limited to protecting the physical environment by combating pollution, but must also make an active contribution to improving the quality of life. The activities of the Community in different sectors in which they operate (agricultural policy, social policy, regional policy, energy policy etc.) must take concern for the protection and improvement of the environment.

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* The Environmental Action Programmes can be used to provide a policy framework but unlike other items of European Community (EC) legislation, they cannot be strictly regarded as constituting Community policy. The Programmes fulfil two purposes: first they can suggest specific proposals for future EC legislation, and second, provide an occasion to discuss some broad ideas on policy. The Council of Ministers usually only approves of its 'general approach' (Haigh, 1992).
Furthermore, such concern must be taken into consideration in the elaboration and implementation of these policies" (CEC, 1973 pp.10-11).

To this end, the Programme recommended, *inter alia*, an assessment of the ecological consequences of modern farming practices and, in particular, an evaluation of the effects of crop protection products and fertilisers, intensive livestock and crop husbandry, and the outcomes of land 'improvements' such as drainage and the removal of hedges, on the environment. Although the Programme encouraged research into the impacts of contemporary farming techniques, no explicit judgement was reached on either the harmful effects of these techniques or the role the farming community played in this process. Indeed, the Programme also notes that "as part of their activities, farmers already play a valuable role in tending the soil and the land. It is in the interests of the general public that they should be encouraged in this role" (ibid. p.38). Furthermore, Clark *et al.*, have found through interviews with Commission officials that many of those involved in the administration of agricultural policy at that time "...simply didn't [sic] believe that agriculture had environmental side-effects" (Clark *et al.*, 1997a, p.1876 (interview with DGVI source)).

It is important to record the respective roles Directorate General for Agriculture (DGVI) and Directorate General for the Environment (DGXI) played in the development of agricultural and environmental policy. DGVI and the agriculture departments of member states were part of a closed community (Cox *et al.*, 1986a; Smith, 1990) which allowed the production of agricultural policy in the absence of other interest groups. In addition, it is widely recognised that DGVI is a powerful DG which has the ability to push its policy objectives through the policy process to become Regulations even when these may be contested by other parts of the Commission (Jones and Clark, 1998; Mazey and Richardson, 1992). By comparison, DGXI's position in relation to agricultural policy reform is constrained. It works on the margins of changes, and DGVI has demonstrated a strong desire to keep a tight control over the development of agricultural policy. These problems are exacerbated by the fragmentation of the policy issues within the DGs. This can become a major hurdle to the development of co-ordinated policies, especially where the issue does not lie within any one DGs borders (Peters, 1994). Although DGXI was constrained
in its attempts to alter agricultural policy, through the rise of public interest in environmental issues in the 1970s DGXI sought to address farming's environmental problems through proposals to tackle ecological degradation. Thus, whilst DGXI was unable to exert much influence over the direction of the CAP, their statements in the First and following Action Programmes marked the beginning of an attempt to create a coalition of 'stakeholders' who would subsequently challenge agricultural policy (Robson, 1997). But progress was slow. For example, in the early 1970s the abandonment of marginal agricultural land or 'desertification', particularly in France, the Alpine Countries and areas of southern Europe, not only had a considerable effect on rural economies and their social fabric, but also on the ecology of these areas (Baldock and Lowe, 1996; Bignal and McCracken, 1996). Although these environmental implications are now seen as important, in the 1970s they were not of great concern and did not stimulate policy reform. Indeed, in such areas the 'environment' was seen as a hindrance to agricultural productivity (Clark et al., 1997a).

The practical outcome to the problems of desertification was the adoption of the Hill and Mountain Farming Directive 75/268\(^5\) (CEC, 1975). The Directive sought to sustain agriculture in regions where production conditions were constrained and became known as the Less Favourable Areas (LFA) Directive. The payments were designed to sustain the rural population and in doing so preserve the celebrated landscapes which had been shaped by farming practice in these areas. However, the Directive assumed that simply maintaining a rural farming community would sustain the ecology and landscape, and failed to address the social and environmental problems which underlay the decline in farming (Clark et al., 1997a). Nonetheless, whilst it is clear that this Directive was not primarily concerned with the need to protect the environment, this was the first policy to include countryside protection as a legitimate reason for farmer support, even though the Directive's implementation would later be associated with the intensification of agricultural practices across parts of the UK.\(^5\)

\(^5\) In the UK this Directive allowed the continuation of hill livestock subsidies which had been introduced during the Second World War and incorporated in the 1946 Hill Farming Act (see Marsden et al., 1993; Tracy, 1989).
of the EU, including the UK, as member states used the policy to encourage productivity (Baldock and Beaufoy, 1993).

Thus whilst agricultural policy continued along productivist lines, environmentalists were garnering considerable support in light of further information relating to environmental degradation (Sheail, 1985, 1995). In 1977, a Second Environmental Action Programme was adopted (CEC, 1977), reaffirming the objectives laid down in the First Action Programme, including the need for a better understanding of the impact of modern farming techniques on the environment. Furthermore, the Programme's stance towards farmers was also beginning to change. It now noted that "...farmers through their activities perform useful functions in conserving the land and landscape. Agriculture and forestry also have certain consequences on the natural environment owing in particular to modern production techniques" (ibid. p.20).

The acceptance of farmers as guardians of the environment was beginning to erode, even if the CAP remained almost totally unaffected by these environmental demands. The Environmental Action Programme had, however, opened a pathway towards the peripheral recognition of environmental issues as relevant to the CAP (Clark et al., 1997a).

EU Agricultural and Environmental Policy: the 1980s to the need for reform

During the early 1980s the CAP budget continued to expand, with agricultural expenditure rising by 7% each year between 1975 and 1985 whereas GDP increased by about 2%. By 1984 agricultural support was taking up two-thirds of the Community's budget, a direct result of the productivity growth which had been encouraged by price increases (CEC, 1985a). Drastic action was called for and the milk sector was the first (1984) to have supply quotas imposed. The cereals sector had also witnessed a dramatic increase in production (in France for example, cereal

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6 In the Netherlands the Directive was implemented so as to protect traditional farming systems and the Dutch were the first to use the Directive for environmental objectives (Dixon, 1997).
yields increased 38% per hectare between 1969/71 and 1982; Tarrant, 1992). Attempts to curb output had proved futile (see Tracy, 1989) and the use of quotas, set-aside and a co-responsibility levy? were discussed as possible methods for controlling production (CEC, 1985a). In addition the world market was over supplied, world prices were generally far lower than those in the Community, and the export of surplus production was another and growing burden on the CAP budget which fell on taxpayers but had no advantage to farmers.

The need to reduce cereal production led to the introduction of set-aside. The introduction of this policy came from the German and British governments. Jones (1991) notes that the German government and in particular Ignaz Kiechle, a German agricultural minister, sought to persuade other member states to adopt this policy. Set-aside was particularly appealing for the German government because it would allow farmers to remain in business, could be used to tackle environmental concerns and to improve the market situation for cereals, the three primary objectives for agricultural policy in Germany (Jones et al., 1993). Indeed, in some German Länder policies akin to set-aside had been established in 1985 (Jones, 1991). Tracy (1989) suggests that the UK government were instrumental in the introduction of set-aside. Tracy draws on a note to agricultural ministers written by Michael Jopling the British Minister for Agriculture in 1986 which suggested a "voluntary and cost-effective scheme designed specifically to take land out of cereal production, and which could also help to relieve the pressure imposed on some marginal producers by an increasingly market-oriented price policy" (Quoted in Tracy, 1989, p.323) i.e. set-aside. Such an approach would not only reduce the CAP budget but would also support the UK government's wish to lower support for the farming industry in its development of neo-liberal market policies (Marsden et al., 1993). By 1987 the UK was insisting that set-aside be included in a package of measures to reduce cereal production (Tracy, 1989), and a set-aside scheme was implemented in 1988 (Regulation 1094/88, CEC, 1988a). Under this Regulation, member states were required to introduce schemes that would oblige producers to withdraw at least 20

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7 The aim of the 'co-responsibility levy' is to ensure that farmers pay part or all of the costs of disposing production exceeding a given quantity, this quantity normally being referred to as the 'guaranteed threshold'.

30
percent of their arable land for five years. Farmers could opt to remain outside of the scheme, and member states could request exemptions for regions in danger of desertification. The land set aside could be put into permanent or rotational fallow, used for non-agricultural use (i.e. amenity), or be afforested but was to be kept in good agricultural condition (Ilbery, 1990; Hodge, 1990; Potter et al., 1991). Initially, the scheme was directed towards reducing production, although it soon became apparent that conservation benefits could be gained under careful management prescriptions.

Throughout the 1980s environmental concerns for the farmed countryside had also continued to mount. Some individual member states' agricultural ministers were pressed to raise these concerns at the EU level (especially in the Netherlands and the UK) as it became apparent that the CAP would have to address these problems (Clark et al., 1997a). In 1985, a Green Paper 'Perspectives for the CAP' (CEC, 1985b) acknowledged that the social and economic functions of agricultural policy should include a need to conserve the rural environment. Further, the Paper noted that policies should be designed to promote farming practice which encouraged conservation as a public good to which society should be willing to contribute. Such an approach could be used to help overcome falling farm incomes as well as reduce production.

Following consultation on the Green Paper, a 'White Paper A Future for Community Agriculture' (CEC, 1985c) was published. In this the Commission recognised a number of priorities, including the need:

- "to support agriculture in areas where it is essential for land use planning, maintenance of the social balance and protection for the environment and the landscape;"
- "to make farmers more aware of environmental issues" (p.5).

A Regulation (797/85) on agricultural structures was subsequently introduced (CEC, 1985d). The UK government was instrumental in getting this adopted and was helped considerably by UK environmental groups who had mounted a European campaign (Baldock and Lowe; 1996; Tracy, 1989). Under Article 19, Regulation 797/85
authorised member states to introduce special aids in 'environmentally sensitive areas',
designed to maintain agricultural practices compatible with protecting the
countryside. Initially no financial support was available from the EU. The Regulation
was not widely welcomed by the new southern European members of the EU
(Greece, Portugal and Spain) regarding it as a new subsidy for farmers in the northern
states (Baldock and Lowe, 1996). Despite this advance towards agri-environmental
policy, the Regulation was little more than a moulding of environmental concerns so
as to meet the core principles of the CAP (Clark et al., 1997a; Potter et al., 1991).

This incremental approach to policy change was helped by the ratification of the
Single European Act (SEA) in 1987, which sought to integrate environmental
protection into all of the Community's policies. Although this had been first suggested
in the Third Environmental Action Programme (Long, 1998), the SEA was the first
legislation to require environmental protection as a component of the Community's
policies. Long notes that the introduction of the SEA would "put an end once and for
all to the idea that environmental policy and legislation could be confined to a discrete
box managed by Directorate-General XI" (1998, p.108). This would in turn allow the
environmental NGOs more access to European DGs (including agriculture) which
had previously given little regard to environmental issues (ibid.).

DGVI responded to the SEA with the publication of 'Environment and the CAP'
(quoted in Clark et al., 1997a); this along with Making a success of the Single
European Act (CEC, 1987a) would lead in turn to Regulation 1760/87\(^8\) (Robson,
1997). Regulation 1760/87 permitted member states to be reimbursed from the
Community budget for Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) at an agreed
maximum rate of 25% of cost, although certain areas would receive 50% (CEC,
1987b)\(^9\). However, whilst this change consolidated the position of environmental

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\(^8\) Regulation 1760/87 formally required the Agriculture Council to re-examine Article 19 of
Regulation 797/85 (CEC, 1987b).

\(^9\) This additional compensation is available in Objective 1 areas which are those regions lagging
behind in economic development i.e. the poorest regions of the Community, including the whole of
Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain and the most disadvantaged regions of other member states
where the GDP per capita is been below 75% of the Community's average (see also Regulation
2052/88 (CEC, 1988)).
issues into the CAP it did not reflect a significant shift in the 'core policy doctrines'. Instead, it served to strengthen them because whilst the northern member states used Regulation 797/85 to address environmental concerns it had been so structured as to allow each member state to interpret the Regulation to its advantage. Consequently, the schemes could be implemented to support farmers' incomes rather than benefit environmental concerns (Clark et al., 1997a).

The European Parliament is also attributed with influencing the development of EU agri-environmental policy (Jones and Clark, forthcoming). In 1986, the European Parliament's Environmental Committee produced the report 'Agriculture and the Environment' (European Parliament, 1986). This sought to address the destructive nature of current agricultural practices and to integrate environmental issues into the CAP. The European Parliament's Agricultural Committee rejected the report because it suggested that the assertions were too emotional, lacked scientific data and did not suggest how agricultural and environmental concerns could be harmonised (Jones and Clark, forthcoming). Jones and Clark note that at this time the European Parliament's report was not considered important to DGVI because there was little pressure politically to develop agri-environmental policies. However, the ratification of the SEA, continuing pressure for reform of the CAP and the later demands of northern member states for agri-environmental policy, (strengthened by the introduction of national agri-environmental schemes, e.g. ESAs in the UK) pressed DGVI to set about developing legislation to address environmental demands (ibid., see also, CEC, 1987a).

The inclusion of environmental issues into agricultural policy through Regulation 1760/87 did little to reduce public pressure for further change and the Commission proposed a Regulation 'On the introduction and maintenance of agricultural production methods compatible with the requirements of the protection of the environment and the maintenance of the countryside' (COM (90) 366, CEC, 1990), designed to take forward Regulation 797/85. However, at this time the CAP was

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10 Regulation 797/85 was amended so often that in 1991 it was replaced by Regulation 2328/91 (Haigh, 1996). This Regulation also formally introduced the five year voluntary set-aside scheme (CEC, 1991a).
facing a budgetary crisis while attempting to resolve international trade problems resulting from the Uruguay Round of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) talks, and the proposal was shelved. This was subsequently to be amended and elements incorporated into a 'Reflections Paper' (CEC, 1991b), this in turn was modified and included within the CAP reform of 1992 (Jones and Clark, 1998) (see Chapter Two).

The Development of Agricultural and Environmental Policy in the UK

Prior to accession to the EEC in 1973, UK agricultural policy had been dominated by the blueprint set out for agriculture under the 1947 Agriculture Act. The Act's objectives were to maintain a stable and efficient agricultural industry which would produce

"such part of the nation's food and other agricultural products as is in the national interest...at minimum prices consistent with proper remuneration and living conditions for farmers and workers in agriculture and an adequate return on capital invested in the industry" (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) 1947 p.1).

The Act established guaranteed prices for most farm products and deficiency payments to make up the difference between the guaranteed price and the market price, paid by the Exchequer, preserving the access of foreign supplies to domestic markets at world prices. The Act also required the government to consult representatives of the agricultural industry (National Farmers' Union (NFU), Country Landowners' Association (CLA) and their Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland counterparts) when setting the agricultural price support levels (known as the Annual Review). This placed representatives of the farming community in a strong position to negotiate with government over the development and implementation of agricultural policy (Cox et al., 1986a).

The UK first began negotiations for membership of the EEC in 1961. Its food and agricultural policy mechanisms differed greatly from those under the CAP. The most contentious issues included the abolition of duty-free imports (mainly from the
Commonwealth), the end of deficiency payments and the loss of control over the agricultural budget by the UK Parliament. The negotiations ended in failure. A second attempted was made in 1967. This was vetoed by the French before negotiations began. A third round of negotiations opened in 1970\textsuperscript{11} (Nicholson and East, 1987). When agreement was reached in 1972, it was clear that Britain would have to adhere to the Community Regulations for the CAP and that farmers and Commonwealth food exporters would have a shorter transitional period (5 years) than had been agreed for the industrial sector (Neville-Rolfe, 1990).

Accession in 1973 led to higher support prices for UK farmers, but this was less related to entry to the EEC and more to the global commodity price boom of the early and mid 1970s. Even so, many farmers were under the impression that price improvements were policy rather than market driven. This in turn led to higher capital investment and increased intensification of production methods (Harvey, 1990). The UK's accession (also accompanied by Ireland and Denmark) was hoped to relieve the original EU-6 of growing budgetary problems and to provide a market for agricultural products that were already in surplus within the Community.

Although measures had been put in place to protect UK consumers from rising food prices on entry to the EEC, world price increases led to a steep rise in prices for some goods, especially cereals and dairy products, which relied on imported feedstuffs. The high cost of imports led to a need to further increase home production. In the UK White Paper, 'Food from Our Own Resources' (MAFF, 1975), the Government sought to expand production by 2.5% per annum, further encouraging farmers to invest. But the initial benefits of these policies to farmers were short-lived. As the level of production increased in the UK and across the EU and world market prices fell through the 1970s and 1980s, measures were introduced to reduce support prices

\textsuperscript{11}The main areas of disagreement during these negotiations concerned imports into the UK of sugar and dairy products. The UK felt morally obliged to maintain trade links with Commonwealth members in the Caribbean and the Pacific who relied heavily on sugar exports and with New Zealand who depended on its exports of lamb and butter. EEC member states, and especially the French sugar beet lobby, felt that the UK should be supplied from Community sources, with the UK providing an important market for butter which was already in surplus in the Community (Tracy, 1989).
in real terms (Harvey, 1990). Consequently, rising costs and falling incomes tended to
deflate farm incomes in comparison to other economic sectors, compromising the
long-term objectives of the 1975 White Paper and the 'core policy doctrines' of the
CAP.

The 1975 White Paper also indicated that the government was aware of mounting
concerns for the preservation of the countryside, but argued that increased output
would not compromise environmental aspirations. For example, it claimed that further
improvement of grazing and hill land would contribute to a better looking as well as a
more productive countryside. Others, however, regarded this as an outrageously
complacent position. For example, the Countryside Commission had recently
published its report 'New Agricultural Landscapes' (Westmacott and Worthington,
1974), which concluded that the rate of loss of hedgerows and trees was far greater
than the replanting programmes being undertaken. Current trends would eventually
lead to an alteration of the landscape on a scale akin to that resulting from the
Enclosures Act of the eighteenth century. The authors argued that these landscape
changes could only be addressed through legislation or compensatory payments to
farmers if they were not to be penalised through the resulting constraints on
production. Some of the alternatives put forward, such as the planting of steep banks
and marginal land (i.e. measures which would not interfere with modern farming
practices or the desire to increase production), artificially separated environmental
concerns from agricultural objectives, and emphasised aesthetic issues at the expense
of other fundamental changes such as the rapid loss of species rich grasslands and
heaths (see Mabey, 1980; Shoard, 1980). Westmacott and Worthington's proposal
that farmers should be compensated for losses which would result from restrictions
on their right to alter the landscape was not readily accepted by conservationists at
the time, although the resulting Countryside Commission projects to ameliorate these
changes (i.e. grants for tree planting and drawing up of agreements to preserve
certain landscapes under the Countryside Commission's Demonstration Farms
Project) may have gone some way to slowing down the changes Westmacott and
Worthington had feared (Rogers et al., 1985). More significantly their report
contributed to the setting-up of the Countryside Review Committee (CRC) by the
Secretary of State for the Environment in 1975. The CRC was chaired by the Department of the Environment (DoE) but also included officers from the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), the Countryside Commission, the Forestry Commission and MAFF amongst others. Its terms of reference were:

- "to review, in relation to land outside urban areas, the state of the countryside and the pressures upon it,

- to examine the effect of existing policies for, or having an impact upon, the countryside and the extent to which they are adequate to contain or modify or accept the pressures,

- given the existence of other major policy objectives, including the maintenance of agricultural production, to consider whether changes of policy or practice are necessary to reconcile these objectives where they conflict with the conservation of the countryside, the enhancement of its natural beauty, and its enjoyment by the public, and,

- to make recommendations" (Countryside Review Committee, 1976, p.iv).

The Committee published five papers. In the first it acknowledged the growing pressures on the countryside as being social, economic and physical, but did not place them in any order of importance. It noted that demands for increased food production from the 1975 White Paper could clash with the countryside's other users, unless planned, managed and monitored with skill, while arguing that it was necessary to save on imports and so increased production must be seen as praiseworthy.

The statutory conservation agencies did not agree and in 1977 the NCC published 'Nature Conservation and Agriculture' in which it flatly stated that:

"all the changes due to modernisation are harmful to wildlife except for a few species which are able to adapt to the new simplified habitats. The reason is very simple: the new agricultural habitats do not contain the basic requirements which are essential for many species" (p.12).


13 The NCC was formed out of the Nature Conservancy in 1960. In 1991 the NCC was restructured further and became the Joint Nature Conservancy Council (JNCC) with three country councils English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. These agencies are the Government's statutory advisers on nature conservation policy.
To counter this the NCC suggested that tax concessions and financial incentives should be offered to farmers who were willing to forgo increased productivity so as to retain the ecological diversity of their farms.

The NCC's report was backed up a year later by the CRC discussion paper 'Food Production and the Countryside' (1978). Unlike its first report, the CRC now chose to emphasise growing conflicts between agriculture and conservation as a result of changes to farming practices. It stated:

"We have a situation where for the first time in our history there is an increasing divergence between farming on the one hand and landscape and nature on the other: and the farmer, far from being accepted as the guardian of the countryside, is in danger of being regarded as its potential destroyer. It can be argued that efficient and increased food production is so important that it should have over-riding priority and that, in any case, considerations such as conservation are a luxury which, if pressed, we can manage without or in a much reduced scale. The Committee emphatically disagree with such a view" (CRC, 1977, p.13).

The Committee was also aware of the highly uneven distribution of funding for conservation (based on geographical location) when compared to grants available for land 'improvements' (available to all farmers) an issue which still raises concern, although this is now shared by both the conservation and agricultural lobby. In addition, the CRC echoed the demands of the NCC for the need to provide conservation advice to farmers and suggested that the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS)\textsuperscript{14} was in an ideal position to do this. ADAS was not only widely accepted by the farming community for giving advice at an individual farm level on food production, but it was hoped that the provision of advice from one body would lessen any problems of contradiction that might arise.

A second White Paper 'Farming and the Nation' (MAFF, 1979) followed. This Paper was more even-handed than its 1975 counterpart (Rogers 	extit{et al.}, 1985). It stated that the primary purpose of agricultural land was to continue to increase food production,

\textsuperscript{14}This point was also taken up by the Strutt Report (Advisory Council for Agriculture and Horticulture, 1978). The CRC report sought to ascertain ways to reconcile the problems associated with the changing national values associated with the use of the countryside. Whilst the report did little to address these changes, it marked an important step towards agricultural interests understanding the needs of other users of the countryside.
but acknowledged that a balance should be struck between agriculture and conservation so as to minimise losses in familiar landscapes and wildlife. However, the emphasis still lay with the need to increase productivity as a way of maintaining farm incomes rather than to look to other methods of support.

In 1979, in an attempt to bring UK conservation law up to the standards being set in other member states, a Countryside Bill was promoted which would eventually become the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Evans, 1992). The Labour government's proposals were set out in six consultation documents, put together by the Rural Directorate within the DoE and not by the government's statutory advisers for conservation issues, the Countryside Commission and the NCC. The views of the conservation agencies were not sought until the public consultation phase (Cox and Lowe, 1983). The Bill sought to address the loss and damage occurring on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and to moorland within National Parks. This was to be secured through voluntary co-operation with farmers. Where necessary management agreements and compensation packages would be drawn up by the NCC. The NCC would not receive any additional funding to implement the Bill and it seemed that the NCC were broadly in agreement with the government's plans (although the lack of additional funding was perceived as a major problem), and appeared weak in standing up for conservation objectives (Cox and Lowe, 1983; Cox et al., 1985a, 1986a). The non-governmental conservation organisations took a very different view of the Bill and in an attempt to co-ordinate their activities the Wildlife and Countryside Committee\textsuperscript{15} was formed (Evans, 1992; Whitby, 1996).

Under initial consultations, the government had proposed that only a small number of exceptional SSSIs should require extra safeguards (approximately 40 sites out of 3500). The conservation NGOs thought this would lead to further degradation of the remaining SSSIs and pressed for the extra safeguards to be applicable to all. Considerable lobbying of the NCC by the conservation NGOs finally persuaded the

\textsuperscript{15}The Wildlife and Countryside Committee (now known as Wildlife and Countryside Link) was formed in late 1979 as a body to co-ordinate the activities of the conservation NGOs. Original members included the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC), World Wide Fund for Nature UK (WWF), Friends of the Earth (FoE) and Greenpeace (Evans, 1992).
NCC to change tactics and oppose the Bill, although the NCC would not enter into an agreement with them because it felt the proposals were beyond what was politically possible. Such a stance meant that the conservation bodies were unable to put forward a united front (Cox et al., 1985a). In contrast, the agricultural lobby groups were well prepared for the Bill having been consulted by MAFF and DoE during the drafting stage, a reflection of the strong corporatist links between MAFF and the agricultural lobby in what was a very closed policy community (Smith, 1990). The farming lobby was keen to maintain the voluntary approach to conservation which fell in with the Government's own views (Cox et al., 1985a). The lobby was also anxious to set the rules for compensation so as to ensure their members would receive annual payments for profit forgone.

Under the Act, farmers would be compensated if proposed agricultural operations on a SSSI, (which might be eligible for grants under the 1970 Agriculture Act) were opposed by the NCC. When this happened the NCC would be obliged to enter into a management agreement with payments to the landowner. To conservationists, it appeared that farmers had been given a legal right to agricultural grant-aid from MAFF, or compensation from the NCC, depending on the outcome of the review of the proposed agricultural operations. The conservation bodies were concerned that this would restrict the potential of the NCC to protect sites as the organisation was already underfunded and would be unable to meet the demands for compensation (Cox and Lowe, 1983, 1984).

Essentially, the Act was seen as a victory for the agriculturists (Rogers et al., 1985), although it also 'represented a defeat for agricultural exceptionalism', whereby the farming industry now had to develop a dialogue with other participants who held an interest in countryside issues (Winter, 1996, p.208).\footnote{In the Act as finally legislated, some ground was won back for the conservationists through the requirement that all landowners, and those farming SSSIs or moorland within National Parks, would have to notify the NCC or the National Parks Authority of the intention to carry out any potentially damaging operations. The counter to this was the provision that the NCC must inform all farmers with a SSSI of its features of importance requiring protection and the operations that were likely to cause damage to them.}
The close working relationship established between the agricultural lobby groups and MAFF after the 1947 Agriculture Act had grown in intensity over the intervening decades (Self and Storing, 1962; Smith, 1990). By the time of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, the NFU were involved in every aspect of agricultural policy development and implementation (Cox et al., 1986a and b) but, as Cox et al., (1985a) note, within such corporate relationships there is an inherent need for self-regulation. The NFU had fought for and won its retention during the development of the 1981 Act. Specifically, self-regulation allowed farming and landowning interests to maintain the voluntary approach, keep a tight rein over their property rights and to seek compensation for profit forgone. Naturally, the conservation lobby remained highly sceptical of the ability of the farming community to achieve the aims of the Act through self-regulation. Nonetheless, the Act did shift the 'onus of proof' over environmental protection onto farming interests and away from conservation interests, and this alone required the Country Landowners' Association (CLA) and NFU to pressurise their members to take positive steps towards the maintenance of SSSIs. Only 'good behaviour' would help to restore the farming industry's public image which had been severely damaged during the debates and, more importantly allow them to continue with self-regulation (Cox et al., 1986b). The Act had brought the conservation organisations fully into the political arena and allowed them to erode some of the agricultural lobby's dominance over legislation affecting the countryside (Cox et al., 1986a).

The Aftermath of the Wildlife and Countryside Act

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 became an important milestone in the development of agricultural and environmental policy in the UK. Although UK policy was heavily guided by Directives and Regulations drawn up in the EU, interpretation of these policies by the UK government left room for lobbyists to influence how they were implemented. The environmental lobby took full advantage of their new political substance. In 1984, the House of Commons Environmental Committee wrote a report
on the 'Operation and Effectiveness of Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981' (House of Commons, 1984). It called for reform of agricultural support to stop the illogical practice of one part of the government (MAFF) giving financial incentives for farmers to increase production whilst another part of government (DoE, through NCC) were paying them not to do so. The report noted that, in the case of SSSIs, it was absurd for the NCC to have to reimburse farmers for not carrying out grant aided agricultural 'improvements' which would degrade areas of high ecological value. The Committee also made it clear that even if their recommendations on the operation of the Wildlife and Countryside Act were adopted, the wider agricultural structures would still fuel the 'engine of destruction' and that the responsibility for this lay with the government and not with farmers. Taking this point further the report argued that:

"The DoE has, both at official and ministerial level, shown its commitment to conservation, financially and administratively. We cannot, unfortunately, say the same for MAFF. Without fundamental changes in the structure of agricultural finance, conservation will continue to be set in weak opposition to the forces of intensive and, paradoxically, frequently unwanted production, instead of being an integral part of good husbandry, as it should be. MAFF must reappraise its attitudes" (House of Commons, 1984, p.Xlii).

MAFF was now under pressure not only to reduce agricultural production, so as to lessen the surpluses accumulating across the EU, but also to take the protection of the countryside more seriously. Publications by Body (1982 and 1984); Mabey (1980) and Shoard (1980) reinforced growing public opinion that farmers were destroying rather than protecting the countryside (see also Bowers and Cheshire, 1983; Pye-Smith and North, 1984). As important, for the first time, policy statements by the CLA and NFU recognised that agricultural policy would have to change to meet environmental demands and reduce output, including the need to encourage diversification (see Cox et al., 1985b; Evans, 1992; Hodge, 1990). In 1985 MAFF responded by establishing the Agricultural Improvement Scheme designed to modify schemes for capital works such as land drainage and field boundary removal, by also providing grants for environmental projects such as planting hedgerows and repairing dry stone walls.

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17This was later to be replaced by the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme in 1989.
The 1986 UK Agricultural Act encouraged the agricultural Minister to achieve a reasonable balance between food production and the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside. Under the Act, ADAS had to introduce charges to farmers for its services, but an exception was made to continue free conservation advice (but see Sheail, 1995). More practically, the Act enabled the Ministry to introduce an Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) Scheme. Out of a list of 46 proposed areas in England and Wales and 10 in Scotland, five were designated in England, one in Wales and two in Scotland in the first round in 1987 (FoE, 1992 as quoted in Whitby and Lowe, 1994). Further designations were made in 1988, 1993 and 1994 (see Table 1.1). The introduction of the ESAs provided the Ministry with an opportunity to appease the environmental lobby and to show that they were committed to caring for the countryside (Jones and Clark, 1998; Potter, 1988).

The proposals for the ESAs, and another package for the support of farm woodlands, came from a policy group on rural Britain which involved the DoE and MAFF. These became officially known as ALURE (Alternative Land Use and Rural Economy). The proposals sought to alleviate the budgetary problems of the CAP and to give the government some credence over environmental issues in the run up to the 1987 general election (Cloke and McLaughlin, 1989). Despite their source, the proposals did not signal a new consensus between the agricultural and environmental departments of government. To the contrary, the proposals were launched amidst "an atmosphere of controversy and interdepartmental rivalry" (ibid., p.238). Whilst ALURE indicated that MAFF had begun to acknowledge a wider remit for the countryside beyond food production, the Ministry still failed to take a balanced position. It allocated a paltry £25 million to be spent on the ALURE package against the £1,600 million paid to farmers under the CAP’s support system in 1987. The proposals were dismissed as rhetoric, more driven by the urgent need to reduce cereal production than preserve the countryside (ibid.). They also led to the introduction of

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18 Whether the provision of free conservation advice was continued because the government was committed to the protection of the countryside or whether it was seen as a means of reducing surplus production (through the encouragement of extensive farming techniques) and hence high budgetary costs is unclear (Sheail, 1995).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESA</th>
<th>Year designated</th>
<th>Type of habitat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Broads</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>drained marshland, marsh/dyke, fen/carr woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset Levels and Moors</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>wet grassland, rhynes, pollarded willows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennine Dales</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>wet pasture, haymeadows, woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Penwith</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>coastal and inland heath, sods and wetland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Downs</td>
<td>1987/8</td>
<td>chalk downland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>heath, calcareous grassland, wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Peak</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>moorland, grassland, ditches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire Border (Clun)</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>rough grazing, woodland, hedges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk River Valleys</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>reedbed, wet grassland, ditches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test Valley</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>chalk stream communities, chalk grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avon Valley</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>water meadows, grassland, woodland scrub / willow carr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exmoor</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>moorland, coastal heath, grassland, wooded valleys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake District</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>fells and valleys, lakes, woodland, ancient fields systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kent Marshes</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>coastal marsh, ditches, ancient field systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Wessex Downs</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>stream valleys, wet pasture, archaeological remains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West Peak</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>moorland, blanket bog, enclosed grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackdown Hills</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>moorland, mires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotswold Hills</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>limestone grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dartmoor</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>moorland, hedgebanks, walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Coast</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>coast grazing marsh, permanent grassland, archaeological interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shropshire Hills</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>open moorland, rough grazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Thames Tributaries</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>wet meadows and pasture, historic fields systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: MAFF, 1994a-f; Whitby and Lowe, 1994
a five year set-aside scheme in 1988, although environmental benefits were not explicit in the initial justification of the set-aside scheme (see above). In the first year of voluntary set-aside, 1,800 farmers joined taking some 60,000 hectares of land out of production. Of this total over 90% went into permanent (79%) or rotational set-aside (12%), 7% was registered for non-agricultural use and 2% afforested (Robinson, 1991, see also Ilbery, 1990). Several organisations, such as the Game Conservancy Trust and RSPB (Game Conservancy Trust, 1992; Osborne, 1989), recognised that set-aside could deliver environmental benefits, but the scheme lacked any financial incentives for farmers to adopt a conservation-based approach. The widespread criticism that ensued led to the development of the Countryside Premium Scheme run by the Countryside Commission which quite explicitly encouraged participants to undertake positive management for the benefit of wildlife, landscape and the local community. The scheme, only available in seven counties in eastern England, was criticised for the short time scale of five years and its lack of integration into other aspects of agricultural policy (Hodge, 1990; Ilbery, 1992; Potter et al., 1991). This particular case illustrates that, even at the end of the 1980s, agricultural policy would require further substantial reform if environmental concerns were to be integrated into agricultural policy. The farm lobby had tried to maintain its position within the Government's closed agricultural policy community by advocating a voluntary approach to conservation regulation and by putting forward policies to address environmental issues (Cox et al., 1990). However, the need for radical reform weakened its position towards the end of the 1980s, especially as it became apparent that farm and conservation groups would need to work together if politically acceptable changes to agricultural policy were to be drawn-up. It was clear that environmental organisations had gained a place within the agricultural policy network (Marsden et al., 1993), which they would subsequently use for securing a place for environmental issues in the future CAP reform.
Conclusions

The changes to agricultural and environmental policy over the last quarter century provide some important insights into the development of policy networks. The importance of agriculture, not only to individual nations but also to the EU, plus its associated large public budgets, allowed a strong, privileged and small policy community to form around this sector. Up until the 1980s it was able to formulate policies largely independently of other interests, including environmental departments and lobbyists. When challenged, it was capable of deflecting revisionary perspectives by appearing to address these concerns whilst creating final outcomes that continued to meet, and even strengthen, its 'core policy doctrines'.

Throughout this period the problems of rising budgetary costs and falling agricultural incomes dominated the debate of the agricultural policy community. Although the negative effects of modern farming techniques were acknowledge by agricultural interests from the 1970s onwards, the sector was forced to concentrate on policies which would attempt to alleviate the extensive primary problems of the CAP. Consequently, environmental issues were at best placed on the margins of policies produced during this period and more generally were ignored. However, the rise in public awareness and, as a result, the political need to address the environmental problems associated with productivist policies required the incorporation of environmental demands into agricultural policy. This led to the agricultural policy community subtly changing its stance of environmental disregard to one which accepted the environment as a relevant issue. This trend was not widely welcomed with some member states (mainly southern) opposing the introduction of such policies which they regarded as unfair to their farmers, a view shared by many farming interest groups.

This was echoed in the UK, where although strong public support existed for the development of agri-environmental policies, these were contested by the agricultural lobby who were concerned that their members' right to manage their land and ability to farm efficiently and profitably would be undermined. Agricultural interests could
not however, ignore the pressing need to introduce agri-environmental policies. To address these environmental concerns efficiently it was increasingly necessary for both government and agricultural interests to build partnerships with conservationists. This would require an opening of the closed agricultural policy community to environmental interests (albeit to only one aspect of agricultural policy). This called for the reparation of relationships that had previously been hostile as in the case of the passage of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act.

In the UK, both the agricultural and environmental interests underwent change in the 1980s. The farming lobby could no longer defend its members as guardians of the countryside in light of the rapid and devastating effect modern farming practices were having on the countryside, backed-up by evidence from conservationists and farmers alike (Body, 1982 and 1984; NCC, 1977). The agricultural lobby therefore needed to find some mechanism through which policies could be developed which would not be detrimental to their members' needs or remove their rights to manage their land. At the same time, conservationists recognised that working with, rather than against, farmers would not only ease their ability to influence policy but would also encourage more farmers to accept environmental conditions. Therefore, through the 1980s agricultural and environmental interests sought to enrol one another to their objectives. The agri-environmental schemes introduced sought to benefit both farmers and conservationists and were developed through negotiation and the building of trust between the sectors (this is examined in more detail in chapter six). The emergence of the Wildlife and Countryside Committee (now Wildlife and Countryside Link) marked an important stage in the development of the environmental community's own network. Through the development of this partnership and the enrolment of a wide range of environmental groups under one umbrella organisation, the environmental lobby ensured a stronger voice for its concerns. This increasing influence encouraged environmental groups to look for further ways to press for the transformation of agricultural policy. It gave them the impetus to extend their effectiveness by altering the membership of the agricultural policy community. This was to be an important factor in the future development of agri-environmental policies.
It is important to note that these changes to the development of the agricultural policy community were still marginal to the 'core policy doctrines'. The main bulk of agricultural policies were not affected by the inclusion of environmental concerns. Indeed, even after the introduction of the ESA schemes only 1% of the total agricultural support was directed towards environmentally friendly farming in 1989 (Appleby, 1994). Whilst the introduction of quotas and set-aside had started a process of reform by the end of the 1980s, the budgetary crisis of the CAP led to the clear indication that agricultural policy would have to radically restructured if its problems were to be overcome and if the requirements of the impending GATT talks were to be met. The next chapter examines the radical reform of the CAP in 1992 and charts the development of further environmental schemes in the UK in light of the changing agricultural policy network.
Chapter Two

The 1990s: Radical Reform of the CAP and the Development of Agri-environmental Policy

Introduction

In chapter one it was shown that the development of agricultural policy within the EU and the UK had been driven by attempts to maintain farm incomes and the viability of the rural economies, although this had not proved very successful despite the spiralling costs of the CAP. More recently, a broadening of policy objectives and instruments, including the introduction of agri-environmental policies, has begun to alter the direction of the CAP and, less significantly, to curb spending. The development of agri-environmental policy had to be couched in terms that did not challenge the 'core principles' of the CAP and their incorporation required considerable negotiation between member states and the EU Commission before agreement on their content and financing was met.

This chapter charts the development of the CAP reform process and the introduction of the 'Accompanying Measures' which would act as a framework for the development of agri-environmental schemes in individual member states. The principle of subsidiarity formed the basis of the Commission's thinking in the subsequent interpretation of the Regulation. In England, it led to a series of consultations between agricultural and environmental interests groups, and their involvement played an important role in the shaping of the schemes. The rounds of consultation also provide insights into the structure of the network that has since formed around agri-environmental policy in England.
The Reform of the CAP

It was noted in Chapter One that the reform of the CAP was top of the agenda for rural policy makers from the late 1980s and the need to integrate environmental concerns into the CAP had already been suggested under COM (90) 366 (CEC, 1990). Although this proposal had been 'put on ice', it provided a framework for the development of the agri-environmental schemes in the future reform of the CAP (Jones and Clark, 1998). The Agricultural Commissioner Ray MacSharry set out the basic principles of the reform package in 'The Development and Future of the Common Agricultural Policy' (CEC, 1991b). The document's most contentious issue was the proposed 35% reduction in the intervention price for cereals over three years, bringing the prices for grains closer to those on the world market. To compensate for this reduction, producers would receive per hectare payments, conditional on the farmer placing a declared percentage of the farm's arable area under set-aside\(^1\). The land set aside was to be rotated about the farm so as to ensure a cost effective reduction in productivity and to discourage farmers from intensifying production on the best land. In addition, the compensation was to be limited to a maximum of 50 hectares per farm. This latter point met with strong opposition from France, Germany and the UK whose farmers would be severely disadvantaged by this policy (Robinson and Ilbery, 1993; Tracy, 1993). The 1992 reform package drew upon COM (90) 366 (CEC, 1990) which had laid out ways for developing set-aside and other schemes that would benefit the environment. Entitled the 'Accompanying Measures', these were designed to encourage farmers to adopt extensive farming methods through reductions in the use of pesticides and fertilizers and a lowering of stocking densities (a reflection of the German influence in the development of this proposal (Jones and Clark, forthcoming)). The Measures would not only have positive impacts on the environment but would also go some way to alleviating problems associated with over production. It was recognised that this approach would require compensation to participants to offset reduced production capacity. In line with previous policies, these measures were to be implemented on a voluntary basis reflecting the need to

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\(^1\)This was not necessary for farmers who produced less than 92 tonnes of cereals in any one year. This has subsequently been adjusted and only applies to farmers with more than 15.62 hectares of eligible crops (MAFF, 1996a).
adopt an accommodatist approach to schemes that went beyond traditional policy bounds (Jones and Clark, 1998).

The market reforms of the MacSharry Plan were met with hostility from farmers and agricultural Ministers alike. While the 'Accompanying Measures' yielded various levels of interest, some members were supportive (notably northern states), a few indifferent, and some southern states (i.e. Portugal, Greece, Spain and Italy) thought the measures would strengthen the dichotomy between the prosperous farmers of the north and their own less developed farm sector (Jones and Clark, 1998). The farming bodies were concerned that the market reforms would signal the end of 'traditional agriculture' (Robson, 1997). The environmental lobby were cautiously welcoming of the 'Accompanying Measures'. Whilst the schemes marked an important step towards the integration of environmental issues into the CAP\(^2\), the fact that schemes were to be accompanying measures rather than central to the CAP meant that they would be ancillaries to the other main agricultural policies. In addition, the proposed budget - ECU 400 million - was paltry by comparison with the ECU 15,000 million allocated for compensation to farmers for the cuts in market prices and the total amount available under the CAP budget of ECU 35,000 million (Baldock and Beaufoy, 1992a). It is important to note that the 'Accompanying Measures' were not only introduced to meet the demands of the environmental lobby, but were also introduced to offset some of the less welcomed aspects of the reform package, most notably cuts in arable and livestock prices. This would be achieved by providing legitimate support to those most economically disadvantaged farmers within the EU (Clark et al., 1997a; Jones and Clark, 1998).

Jones and Clark (1998) note that DGVI used 'The Development and Future of the CAP' (CEC, 1991b) for negotiating between member states and other interested parties during the formulation of the 'Accompanying Measures'. The Measures were significantly revised through the consultation which in turn led to the publication of

\(^2\)It was proposed that the 'Accompanying Measures' should be financed from the Guarantee Section of the CAP budget which is responsible for commodity support. Unlike the Guidance sector of the budget (which had been used to fund the previous agri-environmental schemes such as the ESAs) the Guarantee has a more flexible budget. The 'Accompanying Measures' would not be limited by a ceiling on annual expenditure (Baldock and Lowe, 1996).
COM (91) 415 (CEC, 1991c) later on that year. The Measures were formulated within the confines of the EU Commission drawing on the experience of certain national schemes. Indeed, the EU Commission were not in a position to develop policies which require considerable national or indeed local knowledge, as Jones and Clark stress:

"Irrespective of the source of ideas for its proposals, the Commission is dependent upon member states for their elaboration and refinement, based on their experience of relevant domestic policies. In the case of the agri-environmental proposal, the Commission derived this expertise from a limited number of national quarters" (1998, p.58).

For example, in the UK, the successful development of the ESA schemes had provided not only the government but also the environmental and agricultural lobbies practical experience that could be passed on to DGVI. The development of ESAs in the UK had led to new linkages between MAFF and environmental lobby groups, and MAFF encouraged these groups to work at an European level facilitating the development of agri-environmental policies. This led bodies such as the RSPB and other European ornithological groups (such as Sociedad Española de Ornithología (SEO)) to lobby the Commission for the inclusion of agri-environmental schemes into a reformed CAP (Clark and Jones, forthcoming). In addition, Jones and Clark have shown that, although the UK government was keen to have the agri-environmental measures adopted for political reasons, the incorporation of environmental conditions into the CAP was also seen as an important way forward for restructuring agricultural policy. This involved moving away from the production oriented polices of the past, towards policies which recognised the new demands being placed on the countryside through its provision of amenity, nature conservation and residential goods. This change in direction could also act as a mechanism for reducing CAP expenditure in general and for meeting the demands of the Uruguay Round of the GATT negotiations.

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3 Although the UK government was keen to introduce agri-environmental measures a lack of parliamentary time in the early 1990s meant that new UK legislation could not be drawn up to introduce such policies, and therefore MAFF pressed for legislation at the European level which would pave the way for the adoption of agri-environmental measures in the UK (Jones and Clark, 1998). This approach to the development of domestic environmental policies through EU legislation is commonly practised by other member states such as Germany (Sbragia, 1996).
During the run up to the development of the reform package, considerable changes to the structure of agricultural policy communities both in the UK and at a supranational level occurred. In the UK, the newly formed (albeit tentative) alliances between agricultural and environmental bodies led to an opening up of the policy community, or at least that part which sought to introduce further agri-environmental schemes. In turn, MAFF were keen to use these newly formed relationships to help develop policies at a European level. In practice, whether they recognised it or not, the environmental organisations had been enrolled into MAFF’s framework, and in so doing would secure the legitimacy of its demands enabling the adoption of measures at a European level. This was not a one-way process however as the inclusion of environmental issues had resulted in the environmental organisations influencing policy. However, it could be argued that this was necessary because the lobbying by environmental groups and the high public awareness of their demands had made it politically expedient to include them. Additionally, the demands of the groups would back up the policies being put forward by the UK government and so increase the ‘weight’ behind its lobbying within the EU.

Within the EU Commission, DGVI had been keen to ensure that DGXI did not play a dominant role in the development of the ‘Accompanying Measures’ as this might upset the balance within the agricultural policy community and jeopardise the development of the reforms. However, DGVI could not dismiss entirely the input of DGXI, and DGXI were offered the opportunity to create a grant mechanism to ensure the survival of endangered livestock breeds (Jones and Clark, 1998). This small concession highlights the limited impact DGXI would have on the development of the Regulation.

Jones and Clark (forthcoming) note that the European Parliament also played an important role in the development of the ‘Accompanying Measures’. The European Parliament’s Agricultural Committee proposed 38 amendments be made to COM (91) 415, many of these reflecting members states’ national interests (see below). The pressure from the European Parliament is thought to have strengthened MacSharry’s
negotiating position with the EU's Agriculture Council and to ensure, for example, that 'zonal programming' was accepted in the final reform package (ibid.).

The 1992 Reform Package of the CAP

After considerable negotiations, a significantly altered 'MacSharry' package of reforms was accepted by the European Council in May 1992. The main features of the final reforms were:

- **supply control**: through arable set-aside, suckler cow quotas and ewe quotas;
- **price reductions**: to oilseeds, peas and beans (to world market prices) and for cereals and beef (towards world market prices);
- **compensation**: in the form of arable area payments (limited nationally and regionally) and beef headage payments (limits imposed both individually and regionally) (Neville and Mordaunt, 1993).

The reform package also contained three 'Accompanying Measures' which would address environmental concerns. These were:

- **the Agri-environmental Package, Regulation 2078/92**;
- **the Early Retirement Scheme, Regulation 2079/92**; and
- **the Forestry Aid Scheme, Regulation 2080/92**.

Community expenditure for the period 1993-1997 was expected to be ECU 4363 million for the Agri-environmental Regulation, ECU 1316.5 million for the Early Retirement Regulation and ECU 1324 million for the Afforestation Regulation (CEC 1995). Although this represented an important new era for agricultural policy, the amount of funds allocated to the 'Accompanying Measures' (representing only 3% of

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4Only the Agri-environmental Regulation is mandatory on all member states. The other two are discretionary.
the total CAP budget in any one year\(^5\) was overshadowed by the amount available for the continuation of production. Many of the conservation NGOs regarded the reforms as a missed opportunity for the full integration of environmental and agricultural policy (Appleby, 1994; Baldock and Beaufoy, 1992a). The stance adopted by the conservation NGO is not surprising as their proposals were considerably more demanding than any put forward by agricultural departments.

During the development of the 'Accompanying Measures' northern member states (except the UK) were concerned that finance for the schemes should not come from the Guarantee section (EAGGF) of the CAP budget as it would reduce spending on more traditional forms of support, but DGVI were keen to include the measures under the Guarantee sector as it would allow a significant increase in funds available in comparison to the budget for the previous agri-environmental schemes (Baldock and Lowe, 1996; Jones and Clark, 1998).

To aid the implementation of the Regulations, the Community would co-finance the schemes. Under the original negotiations, the Commission had proposed a 50% contribution with the remaining costs made up by national government contributions as this would encourage a better use of the funds, but this was opposed by the southern states leading to the rise in co-financing to 75% in Objective 1 areas. Moreover, the schemes were to be implemented under the principle of subsidiarity, allowing each member state to tailor the schemes to domestic environmental concerns. Whilst this would assist the development of the schemes, it was also of benefit to the EU Commission who would not be expected to devise the schemes itself thereby passing on the associated difficulties (primarily the harmonisation of agricultural and environmental interests) and costs of administration on to member states. In the UK, this would play an important role in the further development of the relationship between the two interests.

\(^5\)In 1995 from a total EU budget of ECU 73,555 million, CAP expenditure amounted to ECU 34,503 million of which ECU 485 million was spent on the AER, representing 1.4% of the CAP budget (CEC, 1997a).
The general aims of the Agri-environmental Regulation (AER) are to encourage farmers to adopt farming methods which will protect and maintain the rural environment. Farmers participating in the schemes would be compensated for losses of income resulting from a reduction in output or increases in costs (e.g. labour). Article 1 of the Regulation outlines what the schemes seek to promote (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1 Article 1 of the Agri-environmental Regulation 2078/92

“a) the use of farming practices which reduce the polluting effects of agriculture, a fact which also contributes, by reducing production to an improved market balance;
b) an environmentally favourable extensification of crop farming, and sheep and cattle farming, including the conversion of arable land into extensive grassland;
c) ways of using agricultural land which are compatible with protection and improvement of the environment, the countryside, natural resources, the soil and genetic diversity;
d) the upkeep of abandoned farmland and woodlands where this is necessary for environmental reasons or because of natural hazards and fire risks, and thereby avert the dangers associated with the depopulation of agricultural areas;
e) long-term set-aside of agricultural land for reasons connected with the environment;
f) land management for public access and leisure activities;
g) education and training for farmers in types of farming compatible with the requirements of environmental protection and upkeep of the countryside” (CEC, 1992 p.86).

The general objectives of the Regulation are set out in more detail under Article 2 of the Regulation (see Box 2.2). Under this section, a menu of environmental and landscape measures is given. Member states can choose from this menu in order to develop agri-environmental schemes to suit the requirements of each country.

Initially it was envisaged that each member state would implement the aid schemes throughout their territories via a series of 'multiannual zonal programmes'. These would be distinct areas in terms of environmental and agricultural situations. Alternatively, the Regulation could be applied by way of derogation under which

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6 Each zonal programme would "cover an area homogeneous in terms of the environment and countryside and shall include, in principle, all the aids provided for in Article 2. However, where there is sufficient justification, programmes may be restricted to aids which are in line with the specific characteristics of an area" (CEC, 1992, p. 87).
member states could establish a 'general regulatory framework' providing a horizontal application throughout their territory of one or more of the aids schemes

Box 2.2 Article 2 of the Agri-environmental Regulation 2078/92†

"1. Subject to positive effects on the environment and the countryside, the scheme may include aid for farmers who undertake:

a) to reduce substantially the use of fertilizers and/or plant protection products, or to keep to the reduction already made, or to introduce or continue with organic farming methods;

b) to change, by means other than those referred to under a) to more extensive forms of cropping, including fodder production, or to maintain extensive production methods introduced in the past, or to convert arable land to grassland;

c) to reduce the proportion of sheep and cattle per forage area;

d) to use other farming practices compatible with the requirements of protection of the environment and natural resources, as well as maintenance of the countryside and the landscape, or to rear animals of local breeds in danger of extinction;

e) to ensure the upkeep of abandoned farmlands or woodlands;

f) to set-aside farmland for at least 20 years with a view to its use for purposes connected with the environment, in particular for the establishment of biotope reserves or natural parks or for the protection of hydrological systems;

2. In addition, the scheme may include measures to improve the training of farmers with regard to farming or forestry practices compatible with the environment" (CEC, 1992 pp. 86-87).

† It is possible to link the inclusion of some measures to specific member states. For example, extensive methods of production were advocated by Germany; organic farming by Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK; the reduction of agricultural pollution by France; conservation of the landscape and countryside by the Netherlands and UK; upkeep of abandoned farmland and woods by Mediterranean states; long-term set-aside by Denmark and the provision of training and advice by Spain and the Netherlands (Jones and Clark, forthcoming).

and where appropriate it would be supplemented by a zonal programme. In practice, member states have not adopted the concept of zonal programmes but have instead offered a range of general regulatory frameworks, national, regional and local programmes. Local programmes apply to areas within national or regional borders which have similar environmental or landscape characteristics, for example, national parks, ESAs or wildlife/nature reserves (De Putter 1995). In the UK, the schemes have been implemented under a national programme which consists of the four countries, England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Whereas in Germany, schemes have
been developed according to the country's federal political structure at a regional scale rather than through the national government (Jones and Clark, 1998; Wilson, 1998). This has allowed the sixteen individual Länder to interpret the Regulation and tailor the schemes according to local environmental or farmers' needs (Wilson, 1994). The UK's approach to the implementation of the schemes was not surprising given the centralised character of agricultural policy. Conservation organisations were disappointed that a regional approach had not been adopted as this would have allowed local environmental priorities to be fully addressed (Baldock and Beaufoy, 1992b).

The final CAP reform package had been heavily influenced by the international trade negotiations taking place within GATT. The Uruguay Round included an agricultural dimension for the first time. The US had initially proposed to withdraw gradually all agricultural import restrictions and all subsidies over a ten year period, but the EU rejected such a plan. Further negotiations centred around reductions to the CAP's import levies, production subsidies, export subsidies and to 'decouple'7 income support. This latter point was important to the environmental policies that had been introduced under the 'MacSharry' package which involved direct payments to farmers. This meant that 'green box'8 supports, which include financial aid to LFAs, the 'Accompanying Measures', conservation set-aside and technical advice, or any aid which did not encourage further production, could be excluded from the market liberalisation proposals under the GATT agreement. This gave important impetus to the development of the agri-environmental schemes. Although it is assumed that the schemes were introduced honourably to meet environmental demands, in those member states which opposed their inclusion their final acceptance may have hinged around the possibility of using the AER to support farmers in the most disadvantaged

7Potter describes decoupling as "the process of breaking the link between the subsidies farmers receive and their decisions about production by replacing payments calculated on an output basis (effectively the situation with price support) with payments calculated in some other, production neutral way" (1996, p.6).
8Aid which does not relate to the volume of production would not be subject to a reduction under GATT and so falls into a 'green box'. Those subsidies which increase the production of commodities, and hence were reduced under the GATT agreement, are placed in a 'red box' (Tracy, 1993).
areas, where through farm business structure and environmental constraints these areas have remained ecologically important (Clark et al., 1997a).

It has already been noted that conservation organisations were in favour of the 'MacSharry' package as the introduction of widespread set-aside and moves towards the encouragement of extensive livestock production might help reduce some of the damaging effects of contemporary agriculture in the longer term, even if in the short term farmers might be tempted to intensify production to offset price reductions. However, the World Wide Fund for Nature UK (WWF) and other environmental organisations were concerned that the GATT negotiations had taken little concern for the social or environmental consequences of the price policies it pursued and, as a consequence, the underlying environmental problems of the CAP had not been fully addressed (Baldock and Beaufoy, 1992a). The lack of concern for environmental and social issues with the GATT negotiations is perhaps not surprising given the urgent need to reform agricultural support so as to start to balance aid received by farmers globally, and given the very different attitudes to conservation held by the USA and Europe where the landscape and wildlife of the countryside have been shaped by two very different histories.

**Agricultural and Environmental Policy Development in the UK in the 1990s**

Before examining the implementation of the AER in the UK, it is important to consider in more detail how agri-environmental policy developed in the UK in the early 1990s before the CAP reform and how once the reform had been agreed this would further influence the relationships between conservation and agriculture.

The development of the ESA scheme and continuing pressure from the environmental lobby had together encouraged the government to find other mechanisms through which environmental demands could be met. These would also meet the requirements of the Single European Act 1986 which placed a legal duty on member states to
integrate the interests of agriculture, the rural community and the environment. In
addition, at a time of intense public awareness of environmental issues, the
government could appear to enhance their commitment to the protection of the UK
countryside through the introduction of additional agri-environmental schemes.

The publication of the White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' (DoE 1990) sought to
address a broad range of environmental issues, including support for rural areas and
alleviating the problems of agricultural intensification and habitat damage. These
were:

- "to integrate environmental and economic activity in rural areas;
- to conserve and improve the landscape and encourage opportunities for
  recreation;
- to give extra protection to areas of special value;
- to conserve the diversity of Britain's wildlife, particularly by protecting
  habitats; and
- to provide scientific monitoring and research to support these aims" (DoE,
  1990 p.96).

The government recognised that these aims could not be met through the market
alone and that it would be necessary to provide financial support either through
economic activity or through measures to encourage practical conservation. To this
end, a number of schemes were announced that would integrate environmental and
agricultural policies. These included:

- a pilot extensification scheme for beef and sheep;
- the designation of Nitrogen Sensitive Areas (NSA) to control nitrate leaching;
- the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme;
- the Countryside Premium Scheme to run in conjunction with the five year
  voluntary set-aside scheme in 7 eastern counties of England, plus
  modifications to the set-aside scheme to make it more environmentally
  beneficial;
- 'greening' of the Hill and Livestock Compensatory Allowance (HCLA) so as
  to alleviate the problem of overstocking on moorland;
- to support organic farming through assisting farmers with a grant scheme;
  and,
- ADAS were due to launch a scheme to demonstrate to farmers how to make
  the best use of their environmental assets (DoE, 1990).

The Paper was dismissed by conservation groups as "lacking in vision" and a
"discussion programme, not an action programme" (Evans, 1992, p.220). It lacked
commitment to tackle environmental issues and the proposed schemes still worked within the scope of previous agricultural policies. Participation would be voluntary and, where policies would require compulsion, the government was keen to be seen to be driven by Brussels into adopting certain regulations. For example, the Government was aware that the EU would be setting a Regulation on acceptable levels of nitrates in drinking water in the early 1990s and this would require legislation to combat the problem in the UK (Haigh, 1996). When the Drinking Water Directive (Directive 676/91 (CEC, 1991d)) was adopted, this required the establishment of Nitrate Vulnerable Zones which called for the compulsory adoption of certain farming practices by farmers with land within the zone. As to the integration of agricultural and environmental policy on a wider scale, the Government stressed that this was not so much a matter for them but for the reform of the CAP across the whole of the EU (DoE, 1990). This attitude allowed the Government to appear to be tied by the EU and, in doing so focused attention away from the need to introduce unpalatable (at least to the agricultural lobby) policies except when forced to do so by Brussels.

Within the conservation community attitudes towards farming were beginning to change, encouraged by the positive benefits to the environment arising from the development of ESAs. The NCC attempted to address some of the environmental problems associated with agricultural policy in a paper entitled 'Nature Conservation and Agricultural Change'. (NCC, 1990). There was a clear attempt to try to build some common ground between conservationists and farmers. The NCC extended an olive branch to the farming Community, noting that the farmers' role was vital as guardians of the countryside and that ESA-type payments should be made available to all farmers to help them maintain a rich and diverse countryside whilst running profitable businesses. This marked a considerable shift in the environmentalists' approach to the issue (see also Taylor and Dixon, 1990). In addition, the report indicated that the production of environmental goods would only be achieved at a significant level if farmers were provided with financial incentives, thereby accepting that the costs of such goods should be met by society in general rather than expecting farmers to reduce their incomes. To this end, the report suggested that funds should
be redirected away from productivist policies and towards environmental ones, taking the proposals far beyond anything being outlined by the agricultural community.

By the early 1990s, it was clear that MAFF were also keen to readjust agricultural policies and were willing to facilitate this through stronger relationships with the environmental lobby (Winter, 1996). Environmental interests had been drawn into the policy network, if only to that part concerned with the agri-environmental issues, while farming interests had adjusted their approach by returning to a much older image of the farmer as custodian of the countryside. These new associations would become further established through the reform of the CAP.

Implementation of the Agri-environmental Regulation in England

Although reform of the CAP was primarily directed to problems of expenditure and the demands of GATT, the introduction of the Agri-environmental Regulation 2078/92 heralded a new direction for agricultural policy. The 'Accompanying Measures' of the reform package were widely welcomed by farming and environmental groups alike, but as the House of Lords Select Committee on the European Community noted;

"All witnesses support the view of the RSPB, who said in their evidence, 'we are delighted that the agri-environment measures have been adopted by the Council of Ministers. This is an exciting and positive aspect of the reform. However, we are concerned that this measure has been marginalised in the CAP; it is not a central measure, its funding is unsure and it is not integrated into other measures such as set-aside'" (House of Lords, 1992, p.8).

In an attempt to address these concerns and to set about implementing the Regulation, in 1993, MAFF produced 'Agriculture and England's Environment', a consultation document outlining the schemes to be introduced or included under the AER. The response to the consultation merely reinforced the broad agreement that the reforms failed to tackle the CAP's fundamental problems, and that the objectives of the AER would be in direct conflict with the impacts of conventional agricultural
production practices for which there were no proposals for change (see, for example, RSPB, 1993; Potter, 1993; Wildlife and Countryside Link, 1993; WWF, 1993). The NFU, CLA and Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) were concerned that the cost of the agri-environmental schemes would be higher than necessary because of this competition and that this in turn would reduce farmers' willingness to participate (CPRE, 1993; CLA, 1993; NFU, 1993). Therefore, it was acknowledged that the MacSharry package had been inadequate in addressing environmental issues and that the reforms continued to produce policies within the confines of traditional agricultural preoccupations of the member states. In addition, the agricultural lobby was principally concerned with the significant changes the reforms had on mainstream agricultural support and environmental issues were not seen as a priority for debate.

It has already been noted (see page 57) that the schemes were to be administered through four zonal programmes covering England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, although the Regulation provides the opportunity for more local level operation. It is suggested that the UK government adopted this approach so as to avoid excessive bureaucracy (Jones and Clark, 1998). In its response, the CPRE commented that smaller regions, such as the MAFF regions or those used by the (then) National Rivers Authority, would have been superior as this would have allowed regional/local issues to be fully addressed, and would have facilitated closer liaison with interest groups working in these areas. Taking this further, the RSPB were keen to see an increase in local involvement through the development of advisory panels; these would draw upon local representatives from government departments for agriculture and the environment, statutory conservation and landscape agencies and environmental, recreational and farming interests. Other organisations, such as the NFU, Wildlife and Countryside Link and WWF noted that the schemes would not be available to all farmers and would leave considerable parts of the UK without any environmental incentive measures. Despite these criticisms, the

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9Although the consultation document included the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the Woodland Premium Scheme, open to all farmers independent of their geographical location, the NGOs were concerned that only farmers with suitable land to enter such schemes would be eligible. This would exclude those farmers whose land did not provide them with an opportunity to enter into these types of conservation schemes. In addition, the majority of funds allocated to the agri-environmental schemes would be spent on locationally specific areas such as ESAs (see below).
organisations involved in the consultation process believed that the Regulation would provide a structure for future CAP reforms (as it was clear that the reforms of 1992 would not overcome the deeper problems affecting the CAP) and would "probably be the foundation of the CAP in the 21st century" (Birdlife International, 1994, p.2). It was therefore in their interests to seek to develop the schemes, however imperfect they were, rather than to reject them. This marked at least a partial enrolment of the conservation interests into the policies being put forward. Although the schemes would not fully address the concerns of the conservation bodies, their involvement within the policy process would allow them to influence the shape of the schemes and possibly future policy proposals.

The consultation document contained new proposals which would complement the five environmental incentive schemes already in place. These are: the SSSI and National Nature Reserve (NNR) management agreements, including the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, Nitrate Sensitive Areas and ESAs, all of which are restricted to specific areas, and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, funded by DoE, and the Farm Woodland Premium Scheme\textsuperscript{10} run by MAFF. In addition to these established schemes MAFF proposed:

- an additional 6 English ESAs bringing the total to 22;
- the introduction of an access scheme (the Meadowland Scheme) to encourage access by the public on set-aside land and to provide farmers with an option to increase the environmental benefits through rotational or non-rotational set-aside;
- the Habitat Improvement Scheme, which would encourage the creation or improvement of a range of valuable habitats;
- an Organic Aid Scheme, to encourage farmers to convert to organic production;
- the Moorland Scheme, akin to the ESA scheme but open to farmers outside of an ESA but within an LFA;
- new opportunities to encourage public access to suitable farmland under ESA agreements; and
- new nitrate measures which would build on the experiences of the pilot Nitrate Sensitive Areas scheme and would introduce measures to protect ground water catchments (MAFF, 1993).

\textsuperscript{10}This scheme was included under the Forestry Regulation (2080/92) rather than the Agri-environmental Regulation (2078/92).
The 22 ESAs in England form the major component of the AESs covering over a million hectares of land (MAFF, 1993). The ESAs cover a wide range of habitats (see Table 1.1). Payments to farmers are based on a tiered system with the more stringent management prescriptions commanding a higher annual payment. The ESAs would receive the bulk of the money (£43 million, out of a total forecast expenditure of £100 million from MAFF for 1995/6 (MAFF, 1993)) allocated to environmental incentive schemes.

The Countryside Stewardship scheme was the second largest scheme to be included in the agri-environmental package. The scheme aims to protect important environmental features on farmland that would otherwise be affected by intensive methods of production. Key targeted habitats/features include, amongst others, alkaline grassland, lowland heaths, hedgerow restoration and historic landscapes. Although the scheme is open to all farmers (and indeed all landowners including conservation bodies and local government) and covers the whole of England, entry into the schemes is discretionary. This limits the application of the scheme to those responsible for the management of the targeted habitats. However, the adoption of this approach would allow the limited funds available for conservation schemes to be better targeted. As Tim Allen, the Scheme’s leader at the Countryside Commission, explained:

"payments made under Countryside Stewardship agreements are not an automatic subsidy...[this scheme] turns on its head the old notion that whatever the scheme, agricultural support or conservation, if you are in the right area, and fit the rules, you get the money. We are buying the service on behalf of the taxpayer and we only pay when applicants convince us that what they propose will give value for money" (Davies, 1995, p.4).

Other AESs would also introduce elements of this approach; for example, the Moorland Scheme, the Habitat Improvement Scheme and ESA Access payments. English Nature’s (EN) and the Countryside Commission’s response to the consultation particularly welcomed a ‘targeted approach’ (EN, 1993; Potter, 1993). It has been noted that, this approach has enabled the scheme to conserve particular habitats and

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11Originally set up as a pilot scheme in 1991 run by the Countryside Commission and funded by DoE. It was transferred to MAFF in April 1996 (see Chapter Four).
landscape features, but it has done little to reduce the impact of intensive farming practices across the wider countryside. In addition, the limited funds available, and the competition they face from contemporary farm subsidies, have meant that the schemes have not encouraged the recreation of declining habitats such as heathland (Young and Morris, 1997).

The Habitat Improvement Scheme sought to encourage the long term withdrawal of land from agricultural production in carefully selected areas for the creation or improvement of a range of valuable wildlife habitats (e.g. saltmarsh and waterside habitat protection), and to continue the existing five year voluntary set-aside scheme. Its introduction received a mixed response. For example, EN (1993) believed the Scheme offered considerable potential to deliver wildlife benefits in the lowlands; the NFU (1993) would have welcomed a broader programme involving greater elements of habitat creation and management; CPRE (1993) and WWF (1993) argued that existing habitats should take priority before attempting to recreate new ones; the RSPB (1993) suggested that the government should explore the option of using livestock without premium quota (i.e. those released from the uplands under the moorland scheme) to graze these areas and so aid the development of environmental benefits, although the NFU (1993) was concerned that this might encourage fraud. The Countryside Commission noted that the Scheme offered opportunities for enhancing landscape features, but regretted that its use for the provision of amenity had not been included (Potter, 1993).

The Moorland Scheme sought to address problems of overgrazing in the uplands exacerbated by the payment structure of the HLCA. It was widely welcomed by respondents to the consultation document who viewed it as a genuine attempt to address the complex problems of overgrazing, but it was argued that this would only be overcome through a further restructuring of livestock payments in general.

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12The inclusion of the voluntary Five Year Set-aside Scheme (FYSS) as part of the package was important. It had been feared that as the FYSS agreement period came to an end farmers would have been forced to revert this land to arable production leading to the destruction of newly created wildlife rich habitat. Its inclusion within the proposals was important for showing MAFF's commitment to these areas. Although, this had only been achieved through considerable lobbying by both the conservation and agricultural lobby.
Consequently, the Moorland Scheme would still be in competition with mainstream agricultural support. Additionally, the scheme provided no incentive to farmers who maintained low stocking levels (Potter, 1993). The introduction of the Moorland Scheme would provide farmers in upland areas with a number of environmental schemes to choose from, namely Countryside Stewardship, the Moorland Scheme or ESA (dependent on designation), plus one-off start-up grants from the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme. Therefore, farmers would not necessarily be aware of which scheme(s) would be most suitable for their land or farming system.

This issue was raised by some interest groups who were concerned that the plethora of schemes available would prove confusing to many farmers, especially in light of the need to develop the Integrated Administration Control System (IACS) as part of the overall reform process. WWF (1993) pointed out that the complexity of the IACS might dissuade farmers from considering the range of environmental schemes, and there were calls for the development of 'Countryside Menus' which would help farmers select the most suitable schemes (Wildlife and Countryside Link, 1993), and the establishment of a 'broking agency' (WWF, 1993). It was also widely recognised that good advice would be essential and the RSPB (1993) were hopeful that the government would adopt the measures included in the Regulation to improve the training of farmers in conservation issues. More generally, the NFU were concerned that the Government's stated objectives were not adequately supported by delivery mechanisms and suggested that MAFF staff should be retrained (NFU, 1993).

Subsequently, MAFF launched (or re-launched) the AESs in England through 1994 and 1995. The consultation process was important in allowing the interest groups access to the development of the AES, although the development of 'Agriculture and England's Environment' (MAFF, 1993) had itself been through a select consultation process before publication. The exercise not only facilitated MAFF's development of the schemes through the thorough discussion of topical issues but also allowed them to set the focus of debate at a later stage because of this initial consultation process. This process was examined through the empirical study (see Chapter six).

13In the final suite of schemes offered this was not included.
The Continuing Development of Agri-environmental Policy in the UK and Europe

Although the reforms of 1992 amended the shape of the CAP, it was clear that further changes would be needed if it were to comply with the demands of the next round of the GATT talks and if future expenditure was to be controlled. The NFU and CLA sought to prepare the ground for these further negotiations with the publication of 'Real Choices' and 'Focus on the CAP' respectively (CLA, 1994; NFU, 1994). Whilst these two papers were primarily concerned with the need to redefine the financial basis of agricultural policy, through mechanisms such as output or input quotas, decoupling or bonds, and the introduction of land management and stewardship schemes, they also mark the acceptance of agri-environmental measures into mainstream policy support. Inevitably, perhaps, their acceptance was judged in terms of the benefits they bestowed on farmers rather than on the environment. For instance, the NFU's stance towards decoupling was to ensure that farmers still received financial support and noted that if decoupling were to include cross-compliance for environmental benefits it would be difficult to include modulation as part of the package. Accordingly, under the NFU proposals all farmers would still be able to receive financial support, and any attempts to reduce this kind of expenditure would be resisted. The CLA adopted a more environmentally aware stance. It noted that the level of funding available for agri-environmental measures was meagre and regarded their introduction as a 'missed opportunity' (CLA, 1994, paragraph 80). Indeed, the CLA were keen to go further and to stress that the sustainable development of the countryside would only be possible if environmental concerns were fully integrated into the CAP. But whilst these papers were extremely encouraging in their position

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14 During the Uruguay round of the GATT talks the World Trade Organisation was established 'to supervise and adjudicate implementation of international trading agreements and arrangements' (Mitchell and Baldock, 1996, p.36).
15 In the NFU paper a bond "refers to a policy of capitalising agricultural support payments in the form of a convertible bond. Farmers could then either hold the bond and continue to receive payments, or opt for a one-off capital payment and then lose the entitlement to support. At the end of a bond's life agricultural support would be withdrawn" (NFU, 1994, Appendix p. i).
16 Cross-compliance requires farmers to comply with environmental stipulations as a condition of receiving payments from other agricultural policies (NFU, 1994).
17 Modulation restricts the amount farmers can receive from support payments by setting a limit according to particular farm characteristics e.g. size of holding or number of stock.
towards the environment, it is difficult to ascertain if their wish to protect the
countryside was directed at the need to maintain resources valued by society as a
whole or to look to ways of stabilising the rural economy and hence farming and
landowning interests.

In 1994 the Minister of Agriculture, William Waldegrave, set up a CAP Review
Group to find ways of moving from the 'out-of-date rationale behind the CAP of the
1960s and 1970s (and indeed behind Britain's own post-war agricultural policies)' (MAFF, 1995 p.ii). Membership of the Group included both agricultural and
environmental lobbyists (e.g. Fiona Reynolds of CPRE and Ewen Cameron of CLA)
as well as influential farmers and academics. The thrust of the Group's
recommendations was to remove production related support and to encourage further
streamlining of the agricultural industry so as to increase its competitiveness on the
world market, whilst maintaining "the viability of rural economies" (MAFF, 1995,
p.7). The Working Group recommendations primarily focused on liberalising
agricultural policy through removing the constraints placed on farmers under the
CAP. This is a marked departure from traditional policies of farmer support.
However, the inclusion of agri-environmental payments would allay fears that the
introduction of these policies would lead to either very intensive or extensive
production techniques or possibly abandonment of unprofitable land, at least in the
UK. Given the very different attitudes held by other members of the EU to the reform
of the CAP, the Paper acknowledged that this stance was very unlikely to be adopted
by other member states. As such, it was felt that unless environmental issues were
seen to hold the future for rural areas by other member states such proposals would
not be woven into future CAP reforms.

In November 1994, countryside interest groups were invited to submit proposals for a
UK rural White Paper, generating 380 separate responses (Traill Thompson, 1995 in
Hodge, 1996). In October 1995 the DoE and MAFF published 'Rural England: A
nation committed to a living countryside' (DoE and MAFF, 1995). The Paper echoed
the findings of the MAFF Working Group suggesting that the development of an
efficient and competitive agriculture would benefit rural areas, but this would have to
be achieved within a framework of sustainable development which would require policies to maintain the socio-economic and environmental fabrics of these areas.

The paper was important as it built upon new relationships, not only between the non-governmental bodies such as the agricultural and environmental lobby but also between government agencies such as the Countryside Commission, English Nature and the Forestry Commission. Indeed, the joint publication of the White Paper marked an important development in MAFF's and DoE's attitudes towards each other given their perceived tension (Hodge, 1996). However, it did little to address the fundamental problems still facing agricultural policy (especially budgetary costs and the need to further reduce prices for commodities to bring them into line with those on world markets). More positively, the White Paper acknowledged the need to look beyond designation as a way of protecting environmentally important areas and to find new mechanisms which would allow all areas containing important biodiversity resources to be included. In addition, it suggests that savings from cuts to production-related support should be targeted at environmental schemes and to encourage cross-compliance (see Chapter Eight). More specifically, the White Paper did little more than lay out preferred routes for agri-environmental policy, although it made some significant administrative proposals including the development of a National Agri-environmental Steering Group and the establishment of a Regional Agri-environmental Fora. The Steering Group includes MAFF, DoE, the Countryside Commission, English Nature and English Heritage. The aim of the group is to give MAFF

"advice on: the objectives, targets and priorities of environmental land management schemes; their development, deployment, monitoring and evaluation; their role alongside other regulatory and advisory mechanisms for enhancing the environment" (DoE/MAFF, 1995, p.112).

The National Forum was established so as to allow "for regular consultation with a wide variety of interested parties to inform our [the government's] thinking" (ibid., p.112). In addition to the National Forum, Regional Fora were also to be developed so as to ensure that agri-environmental incentive schemes are "responsive to local and regional character" and "to harness the expertise of local organisations to get the best value out of the schemes" (p.112) (Chapter Six examines the Steering Group and
For a in more detail). The development of these groups sought to strengthen the agri-environmental policy community in both Whitehall and the Regions (ibid.). This kind of approach is a key element of the White Paper more generally and shows that government has sought to readjust the processes through which policy is drawn and to encourage the empowerment of rural communities (Hodge, 1996).

In 1995 the EU Commission published a strategy document on 'the development of relations in the field of agriculture between the EU and the associated countries with a view to future accession' (CEC, 1995). This document suggested that the reforms of 1992 would need to be continued so as to adjust the CAP to allow the accession of Central and Eastern European Countries and to strengthen the EU's position during the next round of the WTO talks in 1999. In addition to reform of the commodity sectors, the document also emphasised the need to revise rural development policies. The Strategy Document was presented and accepted at the Madrid European Council in 1995 (CEC, 1997a). The proposals of the strategy paper, were further debated at the Rural Development Conference convened in Cork in 1996. The conference culminated in presentation of the paper 'Rural Europe-Future Perspectives'. Unlike the previous Strategy Paper the Cork Declaration was not warmly received by the German and French governments and some southern European member states, principally because these states were concerned that the reformed CAP would severely disadvantage smaller farmers and hence the rural economy. In contrast, those states with a predominately industrialised agricultural sector (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the UK) welcomed the move towards liberalisation of the agricultural market (Lowe et al., 1996).

The reforms suggested in the 1995 Strategy Paper were further developed and presented as Agenda 2000 in July 1997 (CEC, 1997b). These have been subsequently refined and the Commission proposed the draft Agenda 2000 Regulations in March 1998 (CEC, 1998). Agenda 2000 notes that the additional reform of the CAP is needed for three primary reasons.

- To reduce the current level of commodity prices in the EU so as to take advantage of the expansion of world markets and to ensure against market imbalances.
• To provide the EU with a strong position during the next round of the WTO talks.
• To prepare for the accession of Central and Eastern European Countries.

Although the reforms are principally concerned with the reduction of prices for cereals, beef and the dairy sector, they also include the development of a new Regulation to support rural development. This seeks to replace the Structural Funds, the four Objective 5a Regulation and the three 'Accompanying Measures' and will convert LFA payments from a headage to an area basis so as to simplify Community legislation. Furthermore, the Commission proposes that member states should apply cross-compliance to market support schemes so as to secure environmental objectives and modulation should be introduced. The changes to the CAP outlined under Agenda 2000 are likely to meet with the same hostility encountered during the MacSharry reforms of 1992. Additionally, it is still not clear how the proposed Rural Development Regulation will affect agri-environmental policy.

Conclusions

The 'Accompanying Measures' of the reformed CAP provided an important step towards the 'greening' of the EU agricultural policy although the Measures have remained marginal. The environmental lobby and indeed some members of national agricultural departments (e.g. the UK) are concerned that the reforms have maintained traditional methods of support which will continue to be detrimental to both the EU and the environment. It is not perhaps surprising that the reforms have not fundamentally challenged the main tenets of the CAP given the strong backing by the member states to the 'core policies' it has maintained for the last forty years. In England, there has been significant change to the structure of the agricultural policy network over the last decade. This has required the recasting and realignment of the relationships between the actors involved. Within Whitehall, the publication of the 1995 Rural White Paper signalled that MAFF and the DoE had at last recognised

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18Objective 5a is one of five Objectives included under the EU Structural Funds. Objective 5a is aimed at the adaptation of agricultural structures throughout the Community (see Haigh, 1996).
that the issues facing the countryside could only be met through the co-ordination of policies which would address the increasingly complex demands being made on rural areas. The White Paper also signalled the empowerment of actors within this policy network thereby emphasising the shift from government to governance. This move towards 'advanced liberal' policies (Murdoch, 1997) will affect the structure of the agri-environmental policy community as more groups and individuals are stitched into its fabric.

Through the 1980s environmental groups have evolved as key members of the agri-environmental policy network. The introduction of the 'Accompanying Measures' and the consultation process that followed cemented their position within the network. The policy process into which the environmental lobby has been drawn has allowed them to enrol agricultural interests to their demands but has also required them to be enrolled. This two-way process of enrolment is an essential feature of policies which aim to meet the needs of both sectors. However, whilst conservation and agricultural interests may have been enrolled at one level (e.g. in the development of the ESA schemes) this has not restricted their lobbying on other issues. Consequently, where these interests are not confined by specific policies or schemes their demands continue to press for far greater reforms than those put forward under the agri-environmental banner. The agricultural lobby (at least part of it) has also been transformed by these developments, and now accept the need to include environmental issues within agricultural policy. Indeed, the agricultural lobby have stressed the need to expand the schemes so as to give their members the opportunity to reinstate their position as custodians of the countryside. The terms of this enrolment (towards environment issues) are not clear. Whether this represents a change of focus by the farming/land owning lobby or the accommodation of environmental issues into agricultural policy so as to allow the continuation of support to farmers is not clear.

The development of the AER and the subsequent AESs has led to the formation of a complex policy network which extends from the local (e.g. farmers) to the international (e.g. WTO). In England, the network has grown with the aid of formalised groups such as the Regional Agri-environmental Fora to include not only
those working in Whitehall and interested NGOs but also those working at a regional and even local level. This extension of the agri-environmental network echoes other developments within the political process and the shift towards governance. To fully understand the mechanisms which led to the development of AESs, it is necessary to examine the policy process in more detail. This will enable the evaluation of the changes occurring within the agricultural policy community, and can be used to assess the impact agri-environmental policy has had on the 'core policies' of the CAP. The next chapter examines the different approaches used for understanding the policy process and draws on the concept of enrolment to explain how the actors involved attempt to shape policy.
Chapter Three

Analysis of the Policy Process

Introduction

It was shown in Chapters One and Two that the development of the Agri-environmental Regulation and subsequent schemes in the UK involved a series of complex political processes through which various actors sought to influence policy outcomes. Although it is argued that the Agri-environmental Regulation remains outside the 'core' of European agricultural policy, its achievement is a milestone and, as a new initiative, its subsequent implementation is almost certain to raise other issues about the nature of the policy process and the evolution of policy. In an attempt to make sense of this particular process, this chapter examines the ideas and methods that have been put forward in the academic literature to understand the policy process. The review highlights the difficulty of defining and evaluating any one approach, but concludes with ideas about policy networks and the concept of 'enrolment' to suggest how actors attempt to strengthen the linkages within policy networks to their own advantage, even if all the actors have vested interests, albeit different ones, in making the Regulation work successfully.

In the Introduction it was noted that problems associated with the outcomes of policy are related to 'gaps' that are perceived to appear between policy intent, delivery and outcome. This chapter explores the approaches that have been developed to address these 'gaps' and questions the applicability of the term 'gap' to describe the problems that arise. The concept of 'gap' is often focused around particular issues within the policy process, and is frequently framed in terms of break down or failure of communication between specific actors. It is shown that the adoption of this approach fails to appreciate the complex exercise of negotiation, bargaining and exchange that
occurs throughout the policy process or to acknowledge that the process is not reducible to single events.

In drawing on the concepts of enrolment and the development of networks formed around certain policies, the approach outlined below attempts to move away from the idea that policy is produced according to a set process of development, implementation and evaluation. Instead, the process is viewed as cyclical with no tightly defined boundaries or sequences connected to particular phases. It is suggested that policy is made reactively and recursively, which requires the adoption of a more holistic approach to the study of the policy process so as to understand the mechanisms at work.

The inclusion of a wide range of actors into the policy process marks the development of a new style of policy making. Under these conditions, interested parties, both public and private, are drawn into partnerships. This marks a radical shift away from earlier public policy making which sought to control the process through legislation, and towards policies centred on stakeholder arrangements which depend on a 'contractual' relationship between the interested parties. This shift in the structure of governance has altered the position of some interest groups within the policy process, and has become more important as policy makers have been faced with increasingly complex issues that cut across traditional areas of policy or introduce new ones altogether. These changes have allowed interest groups to position themselves so that they can provide decision makers with information (resources) which they hope to exchange for influencing the direction of policy. Majone has noted that:

"this development is closely related to the expansion of the area [i.e. of public policy making] where science, technology and public policy meet, the consequent growth of "regulatory science", and the emergence of powerful movements demanding a social assessment of new technologies and greater environmental and consumer protection. Under such conditions, obtaining and co-ordinating expert opinion in fields like nuclear power, environmental protection, or occupational health and safety has proved to be a much more difficult problem than the early advocates of government regulation could imagine" (1991, p.455).
The chapter will discuss how analysis of the policy process has moved away from the assumption that the production of ideal policy models can lead to the production of efficient and effective policy to the development of policy networks, and the roles individuals and organisations play in the policy process. This shift echoes changes advocated more generally in government where it is now accepted that policies will only be successful when interested parties are not only given the opportunity to influence the development of policy but also to have some input into its delivery and evaluation. The chapter will discuss five approaches that have been developed for policy analysis. These are:

- top-down,
- bottom-up or behavioural,
- hybrid or adjoint,
- governance and the role of central-local relations, and
- network analysis.

None of these perspectives alone are capable of explaining how policy is made and implemented. The conceptual framework (Figure 3.1) illustrates how elements from each of the policy analysis methods reviewed have been combined so as to provide an enhanced approach for investigating the agri-environmental policy process in England. The examination of the different approaches for policy analysis has stressed that while each has valuable merits, none of these approaches alone is capable of explaining the key issues of this study. The conceptual framework depicts how elements from each approach can be used to develop a refined analysis of the policy process, and how the principal weaknesses identified in each can be strengthened by reference to other models. Coupling together these various approaches enables a more detailed and thorough investigation of the policy process to be developed. This has formed the approach adopted in the thesis to study the design and implementation of the AESs and the network of actors involved in the policy process.
Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework for Understanding how Different Policy Analysis Approaches can be Combined for the Study of the Agri-environmental Policy Network in England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Themes</th>
<th>Top-down</th>
<th>Bottom-up</th>
<th>Hybrid Model</th>
<th>Bottom-up, Bottom-up, Hybrid Model and Central-local Relations</th>
<th>Top-down, Bottom-up, Hybrid Model &amp; Central-local Relations</th>
<th>Policy Networks</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Network Relationships</th>
<th>Network Relationships</th>
<th>Approach Adopted for Studying the Policy Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main tenet</strong></td>
<td>Top-down</td>
<td>Bottom-up</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>Top-down, Bottom-up, Hybrid Model and Central-local Relations</td>
<td>Top-down, Bottom-up, Hybrid Model &amp; Central-local Relations</td>
<td>Policy Networks</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Network Relationships</td>
<td>Network Relationships</td>
<td><strong>To identify 'gaps' between policy intent and delivery it is necessary to take a holistic view of the network and the actors involved.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle Weakness</strong></td>
<td>Separates policy development from implementation.</td>
<td>Process of policy formulation does not stop at the phase of implementation (Lewis &amp; Flynn, 1979).</td>
<td>Policy is made through a causal chain originating from the 'top' (Pressman &amp; Wildavsky, 1973).</td>
<td>Policy is not fixed but a focal point around which to negotiate (Cloke &amp; Little, 1990).</td>
<td>Process of governing has changed towards a 'differeniated polity' (Goodwin &amp; Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997).</td>
<td>Explains interactions between government and interest groups (Haas, 1992; Jordan &amp; Richardson, 1987; Sabatier, 1991).</td>
<td>Process of governing has changed from 'control &amp; command' ideologies towards a 'differeniated polity' with actors from public and private sectors working together (Goodwin &amp; Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997).</td>
<td>Actors from both the private and public sector are linked to all stages of the policy process (Murdoch &amp; Marsden, 1995; Muntz, 1995).</td>
<td>Within the network actors seek to define 'passage points' where there is common agreement (Callon, 1986) thereby allowing the policy process to progress.</td>
<td><strong>The different actors involved provide resources for the functioning of the policy process (Callon, 1986; Peterson, 1995; Richardson, 1996; Sabenius, 1992).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main tenet</strong></td>
<td>Policy process is dynamic rather than top-down.</td>
<td>Policy continues to be developed during the phase of implementation (Lewis &amp; Flynn, 1979).</td>
<td>Policy is made though a process of interaction and negotiation between those who 'implement' and those who 'write' policy leading to the development of networks of decision (Barrett &amp; Fudge, 1981; Ham &amp; Hill, 1993).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Principle Weakness</strong></td>
<td>Does not take account of policy 'history' or future, and the role of implementers in shaping policy.</td>
<td>Does not establish how implementers feed their experiences back to the 'policy makers'.</td>
<td>Does not establish how implementers feed their experiences back to the 'policy makers'.</td>
<td>The approach does not suggest who is engaged in the process of negotiation.</td>
<td>Does not establish how actors gain access to the policy process.</td>
<td>Does not consider the inter-organisational relationships between interest groups.</td>
<td>Does not consider the inter-organisational relationships between interest groups.</td>
<td>Does not consider how the interests work together.</td>
<td>Does not consider how interests work together.</td>
<td><strong>The different actors involved provide resources for the functioning of the policy process (Callon, 1986; Peterson, 1995; Richardson, 1996; Sabenius, 1992).</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Governance</strong></td>
<td>Policy networks and 'governance' are valuable concepts for understanding these changes.</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Governance</td>
<td>Network Relationships</td>
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<td><strong>To identify 'gaps' between policy intent and delivery it is necessary to take a holistic view of the network and the actors involved.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main tenet</strong></td>
<td>Stresses importance of negotiating between central and local actors (Rhodes, 1981; Young, 1981).</td>
<td>Policy is made though a process of interaction and negotiation between those who 'implement' and those who 'write' policy leading to the development of networks of decision (Barrett &amp; Fudge, 1981; Ham &amp; Hill, 1993).</td>
<td>Process of governing has changed towards a 'differeniated polity' (Goodwin &amp; Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997).</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Policy networks and 'governance' are valuable concepts for understanding these changes.</td>
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<td><strong>Main tenet</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Main tenet</strong></td>
<td>Policy is developed and implemented through a range of actors from both the public and private sector (Goodwin &amp; Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997).</td>
<td>Policy networks and 'governance' are valuable concepts for understanding these changes.</td>
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<td>Overviews the role of government in the policy process.</td>
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Top-down or Sequential Approach

It is widely accepted that many policies fail to deliver stated objectives and that this represents a 'gap' between intent and final outcomes. This failure is often referred to as an 'implementation gap' (Cloke, 1987; Dunsire, 1978; Gilg and Kelly, 1997; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992a). In an attempt to explain why these problems arise and to offer solutions, a top-down or sequential approach to policy implementation was put forward (Ham and Hill, 1993; Sabatier, 1991).

Pressman and Wildavsky's book 'Implementation' published in 1973 was one of the first studies to attempt to address the 'gap' in the policy process. The authors were aware that the study of policy implementation, as opposed to policy formulation, had been overlooked and that rather than the policies themselves being the cause of failure it was often the implementation phase of the process that was defective. The authors were keen to separate policy formulation from implementation. They stressed that it was often the mechanisms of putting the policy objectives into effect that were at fault. Building on this claim, Pressman and Wildavsky suggest that:

"Policies imply theories. Whether stated explicitly or not, policies point to a chain of causation between initial conditions and future consequences.... Implementation, then, is the ability to forge subsequent links in the causal chain so as to obtain the desired results" (1973, p.xv).

Such an approach suggests that the 'causal chain' is formed by different sections of government and those involved at ground level. This view fits well with a theory of the state which presumes that the state is in a position to 'command and control' civil society and the market. The success of the policy in achieving its objectives therefore rests with the ability of the various actors within government to work together so as to avoid divisions and to develop the policy, if necessary, in ways that allow initial aims to be fulfilled. The approach presumes that the policy process is wholly or very largely dependent on government departments and agencies, with the state itself being responsible for policy outcomes. It largely ignores the involvement of other interest groups, including the consumers of the policy outcomes. Whilst such an approach may be appropriate to a state which adopts a regulatory style of government, the
move towards a more open, consultative method of policy making which has been a feature of many advanced democratic societies in the last two decades (see Rhodes, 1997) has reduced the value and relevance of this type of analysis. In addition, the approach does not place much emphasis on the process of evaluation, or specifically who decides if a particular policy has failed and the reasons that underlie this.

In an attempt to reveal the flaws in this line of thinking, Hogwood and Gunn (1984) developed ten preconditions for establishing where problems may be encountered during implementation through a command and control style of policy development:

- That circumstances external to the implementing agency do not impose crippling constraints.
- That adequate time and sufficient resources are made available to the programme.
- That not only are there no constraints in terms of overall resources but also that at each stage in the implementation process the required combination of resources is actually available.
- That the policy to be implemented is based upon a valid theory of cause and effect.
- That the relationship between cause and effect is direct and that there are few, if any, intervening links.
- That there is a single implementing agency which need not depend upon other agencies for success or, if other agencies must be involved, that the dependency relationships are minimal in number and importance.
- That there is complete understanding of, and agreement upon, the objectives to be achieved; and that these conditions persist throughout the implementation process.
- That in moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify, in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each participant.
- That there is perfect communication among, and co-ordination of, those various elements involved in the programme.
- That those in authority can demand and obtain perfect obedience (pp.109-206).
Hogwood and Gunn argue that such an approach would be extremely mechanistic and far removed from the reality of the policy process. They stress that it is not expected that the policy context will meet the pre-conditions, but these can be helpful in explaining why policies may fail and at which points failure has occurred and, in doing so, they provide a tool for the policy analyst to define certain points which require further refinement or examination. Furthermore, to formulate policy using these pre-conditions relies on a number of factors which by the very nature of policy making in a complex world are not attainable. For instance, most policies require the involvement of a wide range of interests, nor is it be expected that 'perfect obedience' would occur in a democratic society. Additionally, the conditions can only be met if each individual policy works in a vacuum removed from previous antecedents and will not form the basis of future policies.

Using this description of the top-down model assumes that the objectives to be followed have been agreed and finalised, and that clear goal statements have been produced. The decision maker has only to select the best course of action to solve the problem. The objectives are then formalised into documents and plans which can then be followed as they move through a pre-conceived process that describes the further development of the policy and its implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975). Such an approach fails to take account of the fact that:

"decisions are not discrete events; they are part of a process that extends over time, that is affected by many variables, and that no single individual or even group of individuals can actually be identified as having made" (Palumbo and Wright 1981, p.26).

Furthermore, decisions are rarely made with the luxury of an unspecified time limit which allows each option to be thoroughly investigated. Even if time is not a limiting factor, policy makers knowledge of the outcomes of the various alternatives is necessarily incomplete, and evaluating the effect of policy involves considerable uncertainties (Ham and Hill 1993). Additionally, the 'unintended consequences' of policy or 'policy mess' that arise because of the development of new issues and generation of new information through time highlights the need to develop a recursive and, in some cases, flexible approach to policy making if objectives are to be met.
(Rhodes, 1997). These factors need to be incorporated into any understanding of the phases through which policy proceeds. The framework also omits the phase of evaluation. Whether this phase is omitted because it is assumed that policies which follow a top-down approach will not require evaluation as they will have met the desired outcome, or whether evaluation is regarded as a quite separate phase, is not clear.

The top-down approach, as outlined above, does not address the social and political context in which the policy is written. Consequently, issues of power which may exist in terms of constitutional and legal structures are conveniently ignored. Other features which remain unrecognised or underestimated include the degree of accountability of the actors involved and the level of uncertainty in which they operate (Barrett and Fudge, 1981). It also ignores the 'sunk capital' that exists in the actors involved. 'Sunk capital' includes the actors' existing knowledge, skills and experience as well as their 'job' and their own particular positions over which policy is 'best'. Drawing on this 'capital', actors will not only have interests in the outcomes which have been formed before and during the policy process, but will also have interests in the future development of the policy. Moreover, organisations are not made up of individuals who all share the same goals (Ham and Hill, 1993).

Although the top-down approach proved useful in providing an initial framework for understanding the problems associated with the implementation of policy, research soon showed that governments and authorities have variable levels of control over those charged with implementing policy (Barrett and Fudge, 1981). This led to the adoption of models for understanding how implementation shaped policy outcomes, or the bottom-up approach.
The Bottom-up Approach

This approach stresses the importance of what actually happens on the ground, or as Lewis and Flynn (1979) put it, 'how to get things done'. Actors involved in the implementation of policy are not just seen as a point through which a policy must pass but also as mediators between other individuals within their organisations and between those who seek to influence policy from outside (Lewis and Flynn, 1979).

The bottom-up approach (also known as the behavioural approach) is important because it argues that policy making and the production of policy objectives are not instantly translated into action on the ground. It allows for the policy to be shaped as it moves through various organisations and individuals who each attempt to match the problems of the real world to the policies that have been offered as a solution. However, in this model the channels of action open to individual actors are held within a well established framework and therefore their choices are constrained. This approach focuses on

"the interactive nature of decisions, that they are never homogeneous bundles of neutral assessments, but compromises resulting from the friction of political dissensus, competing professional definitions and bureaucratic and financial constraints. The actors involved in taking decisions have a variety of objectives, perceptions and values, and conflicts of interest between actors are inevitable" (Lewis and Flynn, 1979, p.129).

Those charged with actually putting policies into action, as opposed to those who make them, have been coined 'street-level bureaucrats' (e.g. teachers, policemen, etc.) (Lipsky, 1976, 1980). These 'street-level bureaucrats' (SLB) are given a high degree of discretionary freedom in the allocation of particular goods and services. Discretion is even more pronounced where the schemes require highly trained and focused officers, and can accentuate the 'gap' between policy and practice as a result of the suitability of the policy, or otherwise, to meet the issues as they present themselves on the ground. Consequently, discretionary freedom can be viewed positively, where it allows SLBs to mould policies to their own objectives, or negatively when polices are evaluated on their attainment of the original set goals which do not appear to have been met (Gilg and Kelly, 1997).
Hjern and Porter (1981) take the approach further by stressing that implementation is reliant on a pool of organisations and actors involved in the process who hold a 'variety of goals and motives', which in turn are influenced by their commitment to the problems at hand. They go on to suggest that the operation of policy is based on a 'programme rationale' where the actors involved assess the resources they have to put policy into practice. These issues, amongst others, are taken to form an 'implementation structure' which, as it becomes more developed, focuses on negotiation and consensus building between clusters of individuals and organisations which become inter-dependent on each other for the success of the policy.

The behavioural approach highlights the understanding of localised action, rather than seeing it as merely a product of a long sequential chain of decision making. It gives preference to those working at 'ground-level'. In terms of planning decisions and land development, it is those charged with the control of building regulations, planning officers, district councillors and land developers who could be considered the 'street-level bureaucrats'. They have to move between organisations dealing with structure plans, the supply of utilities, sources of finance, parish councils and pressure groups. All these actors play an important role in the development of policy and consequently the final outcomes (see for example, Rocke, 1987), even if each constantly believes that more power lies in the hands of other involved in the process (Goodchild and Munton, 1985). Understanding how these individuals move between the different organisations involved is very important in developing a better understanding of the policy process.

The bottom-up approach also has weaknesses, especially when it loses sight of the complexity involved in bringing the policies to fruition and concentrates on the day-to-day operations of the SLBs. Once this happens, the approach restricts rather than enlightens the understanding of the policy process (Cloke and Little, 1990) because it focuses excessively on one aspect of the policy process, implementation. In doing so, other key players in the policy process are ignored. For example, the approach fails to establish links between those working at the 'ground level' and those who are continuing to write policy and allocate resources. The process of evaluation, and the
importance this plays in linking SLBs with policy makers, is also often not addressed. Consequently, the ability of the SLB to influence future policy initiatives is not examined. This is an important omission.

The Hybrid model or Adjoint Approach

It is evident that neither of the approaches outlined above are capable of giving a clear account of the processes at work. Barrett and Fudge (1981) attempt to combine the ideas of the two and suggest that

"rather than treating implementation as the transmission of policy into a series of consequential actions, the policy-action relationship needs to be regarded as a process of interaction and negotiation, taking place over time, between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends" (p.4).

The hybrid model develops the policy process as a decision network which involves numerous actors making a series of choices rather than one decision being made by someone at the 'top'. Such webs of decision are extremely complex. Some actors will be involved in the process over a considerable period of time and they will bring to it stances not only on past policy production but also views of how they might influence policy in the future. These viewpoints do not remain constant as priorities and objectives develop. The flow of actors between organisations will influence the process as their own perceptions and contexts change. Consequently, policy evolves through a series of decisions in a process which is dynamic rather than static (Ham and Hill, 1993). Moreover, all actors are not 'equal' in their significance, because of their differing levels of resources and expertise, and these levels change as priorities change too.

The approach also seeks to address the 'policy implementation gap'. It argues that while policy is often seen as the starting point for action, it should not be regarded as 'fixed', but as a focal point around which actors negotiate and bargain to maximise their own objectives and goals (Cloke and Little, 1990). Barrett and Fudge (1981)
argue that implementation is part of the negotiated process, and they regard the policy process as a 'policy/action continuum' (see Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2 The Policy/Action Continuum**

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Policy  ►  Reformulation

Action  ►  Reaction
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and they stress that this is "more appropriate than a simple linear progression indicated by the 'conventional' formulation":

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Policy  ►  Action
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(Barrett and Fudge, 1981, p.25)

It follows that at "any point in time it may not be clear whether policy is influencing action or whether action is influencing policy" (Barrett and Fudge 1981, p.25), and thus implementation must be regarded as an integral part of the policy process rather than an administrative 'follow-on' from policy-making. Furthermore, the approach stresses that the policy process does not stop once decisions have been made, but that the actors will continue to feed into the process so as to further refine or develop policy to secure their own aims (Barrett and Hill, 1986).

Gore and Nicholson (1991) point out that each of the agents involved in the process will hold resources that have to be exchanged if there is to be progression in policy development. They state that:

"The fact that these resources are controlled by different actors means that there exists a mutual interdependence between them if the process is to operate successfully" (p.718).
This view of implementation leads us away from the traditional stance that formal institutional hierarchies and methods of communication and control lead to the production of policy. More emphasis is put instead on the roles of the numerous actors and agencies involved in the process, and the variety of linkages and negotiation and bargaining that goes on between them (Hill, 1981; Whitmore, 1984). However, it is important to recognise that the ability of individuals and organisations to influence is not evenly distributed. Consequently, it is the ability of some to influence others, based on their control of resources and information, that becomes important to the process (Gore and Nicholson, 1991).

The hybrid model views evaluation in terms of constraints placed upon the policy/action continuum, for example, where there is a lack of discretion to implement policy (Cloke and Little, 1990) or evaluation is limited to the outcomes or impacts of policy (Barrett and Fudge, 1981). It fails to identify how evaluation can be used to provide the analyst with the information necessary to ascertain how current policy will be used to shape those in the future. Furthermore, although the approach is concerned with the negotiation and bargaining that leads to the development and implementation of policy, it does not consider how the actors are drawn into the network and how this in turn affects the policy process.

However, the hybrid model, as described, still fails to take an holistic view of the policy process. Although it is concerned with the negotiations that take place between the actors involved, the actors included are limited to those who have a direct effect on policy and its implementation. Other factors, such as the impact of pressure groups, are excluded from the analysis. The concept of governance can be used to develop a more accurate account of the policy process.
Governance and its Effect on the Policy Process

The term governance is used to explain the way the process of governing has changed in the UK over the last two decades, rather than as a substitute for government (Goodwin and Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997). This change relates to a move away from a system based on centralised command and control, and towards "a 'differentiated polity' ...characterised by functional and institutional specialisation and the fragmentation of policies and politics" (Rhodes, 1997, p.7). This altered pattern to the way policy is produced and implemented has expanded the number of actors engaged in the development and delivery of policy, drawing together both elected and non-elected members of government, private business, non-governmental organisations and individuals (Goodwin and Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997). The formal officials of government (both elected and non-elected) are now less concerned with the need to power policy change but with steering the final outcomes of policy so as to meet the disparate needs of the actors who have become involved.

Building upon the uses of the term governance, Rhodes (1996) has concluded that governance is composed of four interrelated elements:

1. "Interdependence between organisations. Governance is broader than government, covering non-state actors. Changing the boundaries of the state meant the boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors became shifting and opaque.
2. Continuing interactions between network members, caused by the need to exchange resources and negotiate shared purposes.
3. Game-like interactions, rooted in trust and regulated by rules of the game negotiated and agreed by network participants.
4. A significant degree of autonomy from the state. Networks are not accountable to the state; they are self-organising. Although the state does not occupy a privileged, sovereign position, it can indirectly and imperfectly steer networks" (p.660).

Rhodes' definition of the term of governance is useful in providing a starting point from which to unravel how governance has affected the development of policy in the UK. The growth of interested bodies in all areas of policy making from industry to the environment, and their ability to influence the government (and indeed other useful allies such as the media and the public), has led to the need to find new
methods of policy making which allow these groups more access to the policy process. In addition, the diverse range of pressures now being enacted on particular policy areas such as those which affect the countryside (see Marsden et al., 1993) has meant that under increasingly constrained budgets, policy makers have sought to spread the cost of gathering information by allowing interest groups to fulfil this role and to incorporate some of their findings (appropriately interpreted) into the processes of policy construction and refinement. The rise in self-regulation that has arisen from private interests’ ability to influence government has in some circumstances led to ‘agency capture’ or the decline of the government to control networks (Rhodes, 1997). For example, Harrison et al. (1997) have examined how major food retailers have developed food quality standards for both themselves and their suppliers and this removed these retailers from the bounds of public regulation. This has allowed them to become self-regulatory.

Because of these changes to the role of the state, it is interesting to discuss Rhodes fourth point which considers that, although networks formed under the concept of governance are ‘self-organising’, the state is still able to influence the final direction of policy. If this is the case then the interest groups are also being used by the state to provide not only a comprehensive background to the issues at hand, and possible solutions to these, but also to legitimate final outcomes. Consequently, the rise of governance can be suggested as providing the state with a legitimate means of steering policy along trajectories to suit its own purposes, even if it is no longer possible for it to determine policy independently of these interests, whilst still being seen to take into account the diverse range of views being developed within any one policy area. Murdoch (1997) has suggested that although this shift in the process of policy development empowers local communities “it might be portrayed as the government creeping away from its responsibilities under the cloak of local empowerment” (p.116). With these thoughts in mind, some caution must be applied to the ability of a system of governance for resolving ‘gaps’ in the policy process arising from the use of either top-down or bottom-up approaches of analysis (see Harrison et al., 1997).
The incorporation of many varied interest groups into the policy process has meant that the policy process is no longer confined to any one spatial scale i.e. the local, regional or national, but may be made up of actors who move across these scales. As Goodwin and Painter (1996) argue: "an institution which operates locally may act in the interests of groups or organisations which are national or international" (p.637). This will have a significant impact on the policy process as the actors involved will bring into the debate issues which affect themselves and others across spatial scales (see for example, Mazey and Richardson, 1992; Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). Therefore, through the development of regional, national or international policies, each area is linked to others and this influences the policy's direction and subsequent outcome. Rhodes (1994) argues that changes to the way policies are produced and implemented have led to a 'hollowing-out of the state'. This is linked to a number of key changes taking place within the British government. These pertain to:

1. "Privatisation and limiting the scope and forms of public intervention.
2. The loss of functions by central and local government departments to alternative delivery systems (such as agencies).
3. The loss of function by British government to European institutions.
4. Limiting the discretion of public servants through new public management, with its emphasis on managerial accountability, and clearer political control through a sharper distinction between politics and administration" (Rhodes, 1994, pp.138-139).

The reduction and division of the public sector associated with these changes have important implications for the way public policy is produced, implemented and evaluated. The resulting increase in actors associated with, for example, the implementation of policy reduces the government’s control over the services delivered and hence blurs who is accountable for these actions (Rhodes, 1997). In effect, the government now finds itself attempting to steer rather than control the direction of policy through the network of actors which are involved in this process. To start to understand how this affects the policy process, it is necessary to move beyond the confines of traditional policy formats and to consider how the many actors involved are drawn into the policy network. Once this is established it is then necessary to examine how the attitudes of these actors are shaped through their experience of policy and their interactions with others from across the network.
Towards Policy Networks

In the 1970s and 1980s policy analysts sought to address problems of policy implementation through the study of central-local relations. This approach assumed that policy problems arose because the central policy makers did not understand the "values, perceptions, motivations and definitions of the situation held by the peripheral actors" (Young 1981, p.35). The approach stressed the need to include negotiation between the centre and the local if workable policies were to be produced.

During the mid-twentieth century, the UK government's attempts to influence all aspects of society had led to the creation of complex institutions to perform these tasks. The institutions formed work closely with the centre thereby making those at the local level their subordinates. The study of central-local relations was concerned with the level of discretion available to those working at the local level. In general, many of those working at the local level felt that the policies they had to implement were imposed on them from the centre and these local actors were left little opportunity to alter policy so as to suit local situations (Cloke and Little, 1991).

Observing the difficulties of working policy in this way, Young (1981) argues that:

"the desired ends of central policy-makers often diverge from those of the mediators of policy in the peripheral agencies. Where divergence is recognised, it has usually been attributed to crude clashes of organisational interest, as in the perceived tension between 'central control' and 'local autonomy'" (p.35).

What this demonstrates is that, although policy makers have often sought to close the 'gap' between implementation and policy making, the structures under which the process operates are positioned so as to reinforce the dichotomy. Where divisions of labour result in a separation between policy making and implementation it is likely that those working at the local level will resist change, especially where it upsets the status quo. When the introduction of a policy results in change, and this change affects the ideologies, attitudes and value systems of those implementing the policy, it will also affect the bargaining and negotiation necessary for its implementation. Even
if the proposals are warmly accepted by the implementers, if their freedom of action is threatened they will look for ways of resisting change (Towell, 1981).

The study of central-local relations also highlighted the problems of evaluating policy outcomes as it called for policy analysts to move away from rational models based on central command and control logics and to acknowledge that the policy process was dependent on negotiation and manipulation of policies to meet local needs. Therefore, without the 'rational' framework put forward by traditional policy approaches, attempts to evaluate policy outcomes became more difficult for policy analysts to judge (Gilder, 1984). The complexity surrounding the process of evaluation and the continuing need to assess further policy developments resulted in this side of the policy process being neglected.

Although the central-local approach tries to stress the importance of interactions between actors and how this influences the negotiation and bargaining that takes place in the development and implementation of policy (Rhodes, 1986), the approach is limited by the traditional framework for policy analysis it adopts (i.e. top-down). The approach does not take account of the 'differentiated polity' that results from the incorporation of numerous actors into the policy process; this has led to the adoption of policy networks as a better way to explain the development and subsequent outcomes of policy.

**Policy Networks**

The increasing influence of interest groups in the policy process called for the introduction of a method which went beyond the confines of traditional policy analysis perspectives (Jordan and Richardson, 1987; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b; Richardson and Jordan, 1979). The policy network approach has been suggested as a way of explaining the interactions of government and interest groups in policy.
making. Although this approach is not applicable to all policy arenas, it is especially useful where policy production requires the interaction and exchange of resources between numerous actors who wish to have some input into the policy's development (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b; Rhodes, 1990) and this includes agri-environmental policy.

The terms 'policy network' or 'policy community' were originally used metaphorically to describe the relationships between government and other non-governmental interested parties. These terms were used to encompass other terminology that had been previously used to describe state and interest group relations, such as 'whirlpool', 'triangle' or 'sloppy hexagon' (Dowding, 1995). The early studies that drew on the concepts of policy networks by Richardson and Jordan (1979) did not attempt to form rigid typologies, but sought to allow the terms to reflect the relationships between the actors involved. As such, the term policy network was used to describe the structure of the relationships that formed the network rather than attempt to explain the interactions between the individuals/organisations involved and how these led to the formation of particular policies (Dowding, 1995).

Rhodes (1981) sought to build upon the concept of policy networks and used this to describe the links between national government and local agencies. This in turn was melded with ideas formed as a result of enquiries into central-local relations. Marsh and Rhodes (1992b) sought to define the policy network as a generic term that

1Corporatist and pluralist models have also been used to describe the relationships between government and interest groups. Pluralism suggests that where issues arise interest groups will be formed to lobby government on behalf of those who are affected. In response to this the state remains independent and acts to allocate scarce resources according to the representation of interest groups at any one point in time. Through this system, power to influence the government is available to all who seek it. Power between interest groups may not be equal but where support is strong enough for a particular interest group they will be able to influence the policy process. However, it is unlikely that any one group will assume dominance as opposing groups will be formed to represent other interests. By contrast, corporatism suggests that interest intermediation is confined to a small number of groups, who are drawn into the policy process to represent certain interests and to trade this position of influence by exercising control over their members. In this situation the state decides policy and uses the corporations to implement it (see Smith, 1990, for a full account of how the pluralist and corporatist perspectives relates to agricultural policy). Rhodes (1997) has identified that the main problems with these approaches is that they adopt a top-down perspective and that they fail to take account of the linkages between interest groups and the government and how these vary between different policy areas.
encompasses policy communities and issue networks which are found at either end of a policy network continuum, and to use this to describe the types of relationships formed between government and interest groups during the policy process. Policy communities are distinguished by:

- Restricted membership (i.e. some groups are purposefully excluded).
- Frequent communication between members.
- Within the community there are shared values and there is broad consensus over what policy should deliver.
- All members hold resources which can be used to bargain with and so develop strong relationships.
- Participants have a positive input into the policy process (although this is not shared equally).

In contrast, issue networks are characterised by:

- Multiple membership which is fluid and often changing.
- Little consensus and often conflict.
- Relationships based on consultation with little cohesion between the groups.
- Members may have limited resources and their ability to influence may be weak. (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b; Rhodes, 1997; see also Peterson, 1995).

Policy communities are thought to exist where there are strong relationships between government and interest groups. For example, the relationship that existed between agricultural interests and MAFF prior to the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act may be described in this way. By contrast, issues networks with their fluid membership are more ephemeral and are formed when specific issues are raised e.g. in opposition to a road building project and, as such, once the issue has been resolved or overcome, the network rapidly dissolves. The concept of a policy network continuum allows for the different types of relationships between issue networks and policy communities to be included as it is recognised that networks will not conform exactly to either (Rhodes, 1997). The policy network’s structure is dependent on the historical relationships between the actors and organisations involved and their need to exchange resources so as to facilitate the production of policy. In terms of agricultural policy, the strong links that exist between MAFF and agricultural interests is, in part, related to the long historical associations between them. Within the network the ability of specific organisations to supply resources and/or to influence key players will have important consequences on the structure of the network. For example, the ability of conservation organisations to supply information to government which facilitates the
development of agri-environmental policy has secured them a place within the network. In certain circumstances, the interdependence of the actors will lead to almost permanent coalitions which may in turn lead to the development of "closed" policy communities (e.g. between MAFF and farming interests from the 1940s to the 1980s) with consequences for accountability and the development of policy within a democracy.

Seeking to explain policy networks as a methodological tool, Marsh and Rhodes defined this approach as:

"a meso-level concept...which provides a link between the micro-level of analysis, which deals with the role of interests and government in relation to particular policy decisions, and the macro-level of analysis, which is concerned with broader questions concerning the distribution of power within contemporary society" (1992b, p.1).

The 'meso-level concept' focuses on the development of the network and how it is formed by the pattern of relationships that are established between the actors. It concentrates on the structure of the network i.e. who is involved (ibid.), but not on the negotiation, bargaining and decisions taken by the actors within the network.

By way of critic, Dowding (1995) argues that the use of such an approach does little more than apply labels to policy sectors. He suggests that to fully appreciate the differences between policy networks and how the policy process is influenced by them over time, it is necessary to examine "the characteristics of the actors" (ibid., p.142). By examining these characteristics, it is possible to understand how the membership of the network shifts and evolves as new issues are brought to the fore (Kenis and Schnieder, 1991). As such, the definition adopted by Marsh and Rhodes (1992b) and Rhodes (1997) is useful for providing a 'snap-shot' of the policy network. But, this definition fails to incorporate the dynamics of the relationships formed between the actors or to acknowledge that it is their interaction within the policy network which enables ideas, resources and bargaining positions (amongst other factors) to move between those involved and to subsequently alter the policy's direction (Dudley and Richardson, 1996; Kenis and Schnieder, 1991; Lowndes, 1996; Richardson, 1996).
For example, Dudley and Richardson (1996) suggest that, although policy networks describe the types of relationships between the actors, this is insufficient for informing policy analysts of the processes taking place during the formulation of specific policies. In their paper on changing British trunk road policy, they contrast the ability of the road lobby and the environmental lobby to alter the direction of policy. The authors argue that, although the lobbyists are viewed as belonging to different types of policy community, it is important to understand how the groups use their resources so as to affect change. In this example, it is explained how the debates around road policy were influenced by two broadly separate types of policy community. These consisted of the road lobby who, on the basis of 'policy relevant knowledge', formed an 'epistemic community' and how the environmental lobby, firstly, formed an 'advocacy coalition' based on shared beliefs, and then over time this developed into an 'epistemic community' so as to legitimate its claims within the policy process. Such an approach is useful in highlighting how the groups involved in the network interact depending on the resources they hold. Rhodes (1997) describes this as "power-dependence." This relates to the resources the actors hold, what importance these resources have for the functioning of the policy process and, hence, what relationship an actor will form with a particular network (see also, Benson, 1975, 1977; Daugbjerg, 1997; Leach, 1980). Examining how the actors form alliances can be used to understand the motive forces within the network which require interests to interact and helps to advance the concept of network analysis as a description, and to use network analysis as process and explanation of policy development. Dudley and Richardson's (1996) approach also shows that the actors involved in the policy process may not use identical approaches to influence policy makers and that the types of communities change as the policy develops and issues are altered over time.

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2 Dudley and Richardson (1996) use Haas' definition of an 'epistemic community' which is: "a network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain of issue-area" (Haas, 1992, p.3).  
3 Dudley and Richardson (ibid.) draw on the work of Sabatier (1991) to define 'advocacy coalitions' who has suggested that these are formed when actors from different organisations are grouped according to similar beliefs. Within the coalition actors work together to alter policy through a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations so as to further their own desires for policy change. This approach uses the actors' shared values as a format for their grouping.
Peterson (1995) has shown how the policy network approach is helpful for understanding co-ordination between actors working between 'vertical networks'. For example, how groups concerned with very different issues (e.g. agricultural and environmental lobbyists) interact when policy formulation affects more than one set of interests. By examining the linkages between the different networks, it is possible to consider whether an 'implementation gap' is the result of a "lack of overlapping membership between different networks of actors who formulate and implement policies" (ibid., p80). Where this is the case some of the methods that have been suggested for addressing these problems within the top-down and bottom-up approaches become useful tools for understanding the processes at work in the formulation of policy. Richardson builds on these concepts and states that:

"Focusing on networks of stakeholders may therefore help us to analyse the detailed process by which policy ideas are translated into specific policy proposals via the involvement of the wide variety and large number of stakeholders which can be identified" (original emphasis, 1996, p.36).

Richardson (ibid.) has drawn on the work of Sabenius (1992) to show that the development of policy networks also provides a mechanism through which the actors can exchange resources and may in turn gain from shared problem solving. Indeed, the identification of a problem may in itself work as a resource (Peters, 1994). Actors working together to solve a specific problem can be particularly beneficial in areas where there are no distinct policy solutions to resolve the issues at hand (e.g. in the case of agri-environmental issues). Taking this further, Sabenius argues that:

"beyond understanding technical uncertainties, finding joint gains also requires that each party learn about the other's priorities in order to craft mutually beneficial trades" (1992, p.329).

In order to take this mode of analysis further, it is necessary to establish how the relationships between the actors are formed and how in turn these relationships evolve over time. As this happens, the network becomes more than simply a structure to which actors are joined but also a dynamic forum through which the actors exchange resources and build alliances in an attempt to develop policies which satisfy their demands. To develop this further, it is necessary to understand how actors become part of the network and what resources they bring to it. Kenis and Schnieder's definition is useful here. They explain that:
A policy network is described by its actors, their linkages and its boundary. It includes a relatively stable set of mainly public and private corporate actors. The linkages between the actors serve as channels for communication and for the exchange of information, expertise, trust and other policy resources. The boundary of a given policy network is not in the first place determined by formal institutions but results from a process of mutual recognition dependent on functional relevance and structural embeddedness (1991 p.41-2 original emphasis).

Actors' Relationships Within the Network

Within Kenis and Schnieder's definition of the network, the concept of linkages and the boundary around the network provide a base from which to start to analyse how actors form relationships with others within the network. For example, to become part of the network the actors have to transverse the boundary and to become accepted. Once this has been achieved, the actors then attempt to develop relationships with others so as to strengthen their position and so influence the direction of policy. Callon's work on the 'sociology of translation' (1986) is useful for describing these linkages and this process. Although primarily concerned with the way the social and the technical (or human and non-human, science and nature) are mixed together, and the effect this has on the structure of relationships between the actors involved, his work can also be used to provide some insights into the ways actors seek to impose their ideas on others so as to determine final outcomes. The capacity to influence is based on the actors' ability to enrol others to their objectives and so in turn to represent them by speaking with a single coherent voice. Callon's study focuses on how one group of dominant actors is able to get others to comply with their views, how this dominant relationship is sustained, and the consequences arising from this relationship in terms of the outcomes.

Callon (1986) takes as a case study the dwindling scallops stocks in St Brieuc's Bay, the fishermen of the scallops, and the scientists who seek to restore the scallop populations. In this account Callon explains how the scientists seek to impose their ideas on both the scallops and the fishermen through the use of "four moments of
translation" (p.196). During the 'moments of translation', "the identity of actors, the possibility of interaction and the margins of manoeuvre are negotiated and delimited" (p.203). Consequently, the 'moments' can be viewed as the points where the actors seek to negotiate, bargain or attempt to build a consensus so as to further their own ideas and attempt to ensure that these ideas become part of the policy's final outcome.

The 'four moments' each represent a stage in the building of the relationships between the actors and hence the growth of the network. The first 'moment' is described as "problematization or how to become indispensable" (p.203). During this phase the scientists set a range of questions relating to the life cycle of the scallops and how research on the shellfish could provide the information necessary to increase its population with resulting benefits to the fishermen. Through writing these questions and setting the research agenda, the scientists became a vital component of the network requiring their involvement if the research was to proceed. This led to the formation of an 'obligatory passage point' (i.e. a point of consensus) through which the actors must pass if the network was to develop. In Callon's case study, the actors agreed that a question relating to the life cycle of the scallops needed to be addressed if all the actors involved were to gain from the scientists' research. This question acted as a 'passage point' drawing the actors together and developing a common point from which to proceed. In terms of the policy process, this relates to the raising of agenda issues or the establishment of problems to be overcome (e.g. to maintain farmers' incomes whilst ensuring environmental benefits).

The second 'moment of translation' corresponds to the process by which the other actors 'are locked into place' or 'intéressement'. This is the process by which the key actors seek to define the problems that will link those to be enrolled into the network. Additionally, it includes the key actors' attempts to formulate an identity around which the network will be based so that competing definitions of the problems are excluded and the alliances between the enrolled actors are strengthened. During this step the scientists sought to define and stabilise the congruity of the other actors.
The third 'moment' focuses around the process of enrolment. The establishment of an agreed problem or the identity of the actors does not necessarily lead to a process of enrolment, i.e. the building of alliances. Therefore, to further the desired needs of the dominant actors it is necessary to enrol other actors, to their beliefs. This does not imply the brainwashing of the other actors but the building of accepted beliefs which fit in with those already held by the actors being enrolled. Callon notes:

"To describe enrolment is thus to describe the group of multilateral negotiations, trials of strength and tricks that accompany the intéressements and enable them to succeed" (p.211).

In Callon's example a series of negotiations took place between the scientists and the scallops. These negotiations centred around ways of encouraging the scallops to anchor to collectors which were thwarted by problems of tidal currents, starfish predation and the scallops' preferred growth mediums. Between the scientists and other researchers not involved in the project (i.e. in the academy or government), the process of negotiation focused around the discussion of results and whether these answered questions previously posed. The fishermen passively accepted the conclusions of the scientists and so their enrolment was established without discussion. Consequently, the process of enrolment is not singularly focused around distinct questions or objectives but is framed within the beliefs and attitudes of the range of actors involved.

The concept of enrolment fits well with the notion of the development of policy networks. The development of policy ideas and methods of implementation may be produced through the production of a consensus where the actors are enrolled and/or seek to influence the direction of policy. How this consensus is achieved is then valuable in understanding the processes involved. Murdoch (1994) has taken these ideas forward noting that within the network:

"those who are powerful are not those who 'hold' power but those who are able to enrol, convince and enlist others into networks on terms that allow these initial actors to 'represent' all others" (p.15).

Building upon this, key actors who are successful within the network will seek to increase their influence over other participants so as to encourage the network to
expand and become long-lived, thereby furthering the dominant actors' aims. This will require the key actors to seek to control the behaviour of those enlisted so they do not betray those who enrolled them. During this process, the coalitions that have been formed will be subject to tensions. However, those who seek to enrol will hope to gain benefits which outweigh any conflicts (Callon, 1986). This leads to the development of trust between the actors which is built on negotiation and the bargaining of resources and is an important part of the network's formation.

Within the policy process, key actors will therefore seek to shape the direction of policy so as to meet their demands (Flynn and Marsden, 1995) and this will require actors to form alliances if these goals are to be attained. These alliances may extend across the network linking the local and international (see for example, Munton, 1995; Murdoch and Marsden, 1995; Murdoch and Ward, 1997; Ward and McNicholas, 1998). Murdoch and Marsden (1995) argue that where this occurs "it is possible to do things in one place (the centre?) that dominate another place (the periphery?)" (p.372). This highlights the importance of understanding the way the diverse membership of the network may attempt to influence the direction of policy and to consider that the actors are not necessarily confined to one part of the network. The development of agri-environmental schemes in the UK, through reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, is a good example of how actors can move across these different levels i.e. between supranational, national, regional and local levels and how they will attempt to influence actors within each level.

Richardson's (1996) view of the way linkages are built between those involved in the policy network does not assume total agreement between the actors over certain issues. He argues that the relationship:

"does not imply consensus on values or on outcomes but it does imply a consensus that collaboration will produce efficiency gains all round. There may be considerable and bitter disputation, but the game continues to be played in order to secure mutual gains or to avoid individual losses" (p.39).

This emphasises that the net gains must outweigh net losses for all the actors, or some actors will leave the coalition.
This goes beyond Callon's example which had sought to define the development of the network according to one set of actors and their beliefs. Taking Richardson's view, it is therefore important to understand that actors wishing to enrol others to their viewpoint may not necessarily be trying to change their values but are attempting to develop some cohesion so as to build a policy which provides benefits to all involved. For example, although environmental organisations may work together to lobby government over a single issue, such as reform of the CAP, this does not necessarily compromise the issues they campaign for individually. By working together the organisations attempt to give a stronger, more coherent voice over a single issue on which they are all campaigning in some way or another. Therefore, the actors within the network attempt to build links between others so as to overcome contested values and to work for common benefits. In doing so they may develop new alliances and allow resources to be exchanged so as to further the progression of the policy process (Marsden and Arce, 1995). However, the actors have to ensure that they do not allow the large coalitions that are formed to be weakened by arguing at the lowest common denominator, and that policy is sufficiently developed to enable the attainment of their objectives.

The fourth 'moment of translation', 'mobilisation', focuses around the ability of the key actors to speak on behalf of others. In Callon's example the scientists sought to become representatives of the other actors. This would be achieved through the scallops anchoring to the collectors, the scientists' peers believing in the results put forward, and the fishermen agreeing to support the experiment. Through becoming representatives of the other actors, the scientists became spokesmen for all the parties enrolled into the network. Where this happens and "consensus is achieved, the margins of manoeuvre of each entity will then be tightly delimited....at the end of the four moments described, a constraining network of relationships has been built" (ibid., p.218).

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4Callon notes that the example he gives could be set in terms of the other actors rather than solely the scientists. However, through the story he not only gives an account of the way a network may function but also attempts to "study the role played by science and technology in structuring power relationships" (p.197).
However, Callon showed that within the network the alliances may be broken and the position held by the key actors reduced. In his case study, the scientists were 'betrayed' by both the scallops and the fishermen. The scallops failed to attach to the collectors; the results of the experiment did not support the scientists' hypothesis; their colleagues and funding agencies became doubtful of their claims; and the fishermen, unable to resist temptation, fished the few scallops that had become part of the experiment. In doing so, the scientists lost their claims as representatives of the other actors enrolled in to the network.

In Callon's study the dissolution of the network appears uncomplicated. However, the disintegration of the linkages and the simple ending in this example fail to capture the future possibilities of other networks forming. Indeed, the story does not tell of the previous networks that may have existed, although Callon notes "enrolment does not imply, nor does it exclude, pre-established roles" (p.211). In terms of policy analysis, this story only describes a certain part of the policy process, the way certain actors or organisations seek to gain influence over others and to manipulate the final outcomes. As such, the process of evaluation and cyclical process of policy making where new ideas feed from past experiences are largely ignored. Nor does the example allow for the actors' influence to vary as they bring to the network different resources over time. However, Callon's perspective on the role of enrolment during the building of networks provides insights into the possible mechanisms employed by lobbyists, individuals or government when attempting to influence policy. Indeed, it is likely that all actors within a specific network will attempt to enrol others where it will further their objectives. Therefore, the process of enrolment will transcend the levels of the network.

The exponents of network analysis have suggested that some caution must be applied to its use. Richardson has noted that "it might always be possible to find some kind of 'network' if one looks carefully enough" (1996, p.34). Therefore, if the method is to be useful it must build on the approaches that have been previously suggested for the study of the policy process and not solely rely on the identification of the network structure to provide an analysis of the policy process. The network approach is
especially useful for describing the dynamics of policy formation through the interaction of a wide range of actors. But, it is also important to identify the characteristics of the actors and how they feed their ideas and beliefs into the network (Dowding, 1995). This is why, a) the network itself is not the focus of study - it is the policy process and b) it is necessary to understand the fuel/motive power for the functioning of the network, in order for network analysis to go beyond the descriptive, non-explanatory stage. By examining how the actors interact, it is possible to understand how they attempt to move the policy process forward; this in turn provides insights into the possible future direction of policy.

The incorporation of Callon's observation on the way networks are defined does not attempt to give a theorisation or conceptualisation of the entire process at work, but offers a methodology against which we might understand how actors interact. It provides some insights into how the linkages are formed and how relationships between the actors may shape future consequences. In addition, it shows that policies do not necessarily form out of consensus between the actors involved but are related to enrolment to particular ideas, and that coalitions do not necessarily last. There is not necessarily permanence. By adopting some of the methodologies proposed by Callon and coupling these with network analysis, it is possible to view the production and implementation of policy in an holistic manner. There is no simple pathway along which policy proceeds, but it can best be represented as a dynamic and cyclical process out of which policies may be formed.

Conclusions

Given the complexity of the policy process and the numerous (often competing) actors involved, it is not surprising that policies are frequently thought to fail or that a 'gap' between policy intent, delivery or outcome is observed. Analysis of the policy or scheme may reveal that these problems have arisen through common obstacles, such as lack of funding. In such cases the use of a 'top-down' approach may be all that is
necessary to solve the problem. Policy problems are, however, rarely this simple. The expansion of the policy community, not only through a move towards governance but also because the rise in interest representation, has increased the number of critics of policy. Therefore, it is to be expected that dissatisfaction with policy will multiply.

This leads to questions regarding the notion of a policy 'gap'. The 'gap' is often thought to occur around particular phases within the policy process principally during implementation, yet these seldom lead to a total breakdown in the policy network (Winter, 1996) because the issues of concern still exist. Instead, the 'gaps' highlight disagreement between the actors or where policy objectives have not attained their stated aims. Therefore, the 'gap' should be viewed as a focus around which policy ideas are debated, so as to enable the advancement of policy rather than a severing of the policy process. The 'gap' is to be seen as productive, enhancing progress rather than a point of failure in the context of new systems of governance which are more flexible and dynamic, even if potentially less directed and more chaotic.

The development and implementation of public policy requires the interaction of a diverse range of actors. The relationships formed between these actors will depend on the particular element(s) of the policy process with which they are involved (Peterson, 1995). For instance, the relationship between a farmer and an ESA Policy Officer will be very different to that between a civil servant in Whitehall and an NGO lobbyist. No one approach suggested for understanding the policy process will be capable of meeting all these demands. Additionally, the discussion shows that analysis of the policy process requires an approach which does not restrict its view to a particular set of actors or part of the process, but extends its coverage to include all those involved, especially where the policy process is viewed as cyclical with no set beginning or end.

Whilst the shift in the system of governance will inevitably complicate the policy process, it has also led to the development of alliances between interest groups so as to strengthen, rather than lessen, their ability to influence. These changes have not only altered the structure of the policy community (as in the case of agriculture where the development of agri-environmental schemes has resulted in an 'opening up' of the
community) but also the relationships between the actors involved. This requires not only an understanding of how these changes to the policy network have been formed but also an examination of how the relationships between the various actors have been changed through the process of enrolment.

It is important to view a policy as a point around which action occurs rather than the sole focus for study. The development of any one policy will have required the actors to pass through a 'passage point', such as a consultation process or decision to participate in a particular scheme. The agreement that is required to progress through policy in this way involves considerable negotiation and the building of trust if the policy is to advance. These interactions between the actors continually develop over time as new issues, information or actors are drawn into the policy network. Consequently, the policy process should be viewed as fluid and dynamic with each actor adding stitches to its intricate pattern over time.

It has been noted throughout this chapter that the process of policy evaluation is frequently overlooked or, where it does occur, it is often based on the success or failure of policy to meet its original objectives. Furthermore, evaluation is often confined to one part of the policy process rather than viewing this as an on-going activity. It is important to stress that not only are policy elites (e.g. policy 'writers' in Whitehall or Brussels) involved in evaluating policy but also those who actually implement the policy (e.g. whether the policy has produced the goods it sought to deliver on the ground). Because all actors will evaluate policy (albeit according to different objectives), the distinction between the functions of the actors is increasingly blurred. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an understanding of how actors evaluate policy and what influence this has on their future actions. Additionally, it is important to recognise that evaluation not only depends on formal techniques and monitoring, but is based on the actors' personal conceptions of outcomes; these beliefs and opinions play an important role in the further development and implementation of policy, as these will form part of the actors' resources. These resources are then used during the negotiation and bargaining that accompanies the policy process.
Building upon this analysis of the policy process and enrolment, the next chapter seeks to develop a notional conception of the network that has formed around the development and implementation of the Agri-environmental Regulation in England. This is then used as the framework for the empirical study.
Chapter Four

Describing the Agri-environmental Network and the Fieldwork Methodology

Introduction

The first section of this chapter builds upon the analysis of the network approach presented in Chapter Three and the description of the development of agricultural and environmental policy in Chapters One and Two. These discussions are used to try to anticipate in an 'ideal' way the kind of agri-environmental network that would be formed in response to the evolution of the CAP and the changing nature generally of governance in England, including its response to the kinds of approach to be found in the EU. This notional account of the network and the possible links between its actors are used as a framework from which to develop means to examine the policy process. The second part of the chapter focuses on how this methodology is used to set up the empirical study whose findings are discussed in Chapters Five to Eight.

A Notional Conception of the Agri-environmental Network

Chapter Three argued that a network approach can be used to further our understanding of the policy process. To apply this approach to the development and implementation of agri-environmental policy, it has been necessary to develop a notional account of the network of actors involved, and to use this as a framework on which to base the fieldwork methodology and a referment against which to assess the findings. The positioning of the actors within the network’s structure has been used to analyse the linkages formed by the actors and this has required concepts of how they have been enrolled and how they attempt to influence others. Additionally, through placing the actors in certain parts of the policy network, it is possible to
develop normatively the types of issue and phases of the policy process which each actor should encounter. For example, a farmer and conservation adviser will be concerned with the implementation of a particular scheme, whereas an environmental NGO lobbyist and a Whitehall civil servant may be involved with the development of a new scheme. It is important to note that the actors are not confined to any one point in the policy process and this example has been given to illustrate the types of issue each actor may be involved with at a particular point in time. This conceptualisation is designed to indicate where policy 'gaps' may lie or at least where actors' views may not be convergent.

Typically, a network is thought to be:

"Composed of specialists who share an active interest in a certain policy or set of related policies: academics, professionals, analysts, policy planners, media and interest-group experts. The members of a policy community represent different interests, hold different values and may be engaged in different research programs, but they all contribute to policy development by generating and debating new ideas and proposals" (Majone 1991, p.161).

The approach adopted here attempts not only to include the type of actors mentioned above but also to extend the network to incorporate those actively engaged in the implementation of the policy (i.e. farmers, their advisers and other 'street-level bureaucrats'). The analysis of the actors' membership has not solely focused on the bargaining and negotiation that accompanies formal interactions, such as replies to official consultation, but has also sought to understand how the actors are engaged in shaping other views as an on-going process. Additionally, the study seeks to examine how each of the actors evaluates the outcomes of the policy, rather than to focus on the development of policy alone, so as to develop an holistic account of the policy process.

The agri-environmental network involves a wide range of actors drawn from the local to the supranational. The membership of the network is based on a common thread which links each of the actors in some way to agri-environmental policy. Because of the dynamic and recursive nature of the policy process that is already in operation, there is no clear point at which to start examining the network. However, it is
possible to postulate which actors have the most simple system of linkages and to use
these as a base from which to expand the network and the range of actors involved.
The spatial positioning of actors (i.e. at the local, regional, national and supranational)
leads to development of sub-networks. These sub-networks form around particular
sets of actors who are focused on particular phases of the policy process, but they are
not distinct from the whole because actors' linkages extend across the different scales
(see Figure 4.1).

To further understand the policy process, it is necessary to assess how individuals and
organisations form linkages within the sub-networks (John and Cole, 1995). Drawing
on Figure 4.1, it is possible to conceptualise which actors may be most prominent
within a sub-network and from this to start to identify where linkages may be formed
by the actors. The issues or actions that lead to the development of actors'
relationships and their membership of the sub-networks is examined below.

The Farmers' Network
At the local level, farmers may be viewed as having the simplest linkages to the agri-
environmental policy network. Farmers' initial interactions with other actors are
formed primarily (but not totally) through their contact with Agri-environmental
Scheme (AES) Project Officers (PO) who visit the farms and arrange the agreements
between farmers and the statutory bodies. Farmers also form linkages between
conservation advisers (e.g. from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG),
ADAS or the Farm and Rural Conservation Agency1), agronomists and agro-chemical
advisers whose advice may extend to the environment and whose products may be
scrutinised for their environmental effects (see Lowe et al., 1997), farming unions and
representatives (e.g. NFU and CLA) who may produce literature or organise talks on
conservation issues, buyers of farm products requiring assurance of the production
methods employed, accountants and legal advisers who may be approached to give
advice on the financial and legal consequences of entering agreements, statutory

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1In April 1997 the commercial and statutory sections of ADAS were split. The commercial sector
became a private company and retained the name ADAS whilst the statutory section which includes
the running of the Agri-environmental Schemes and conservation advice became the Farm and
Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA). This split occurred after the interview period.
Figure 4.1 A Matrix Outlining the Various Actors' Anticipated Engagement in the Different Agri-environmental Sub-networks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-network</th>
<th>Supranational</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Regional</th>
<th>Farmers'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAFF/DoE (now DETR) - Whitehall</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Agencies Head Office e.g. EN, Countryside Commission, FRCA</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Agencies Regional Office e.g. EN, Countryside Commission, FRCA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agri-environmental Scheme Project Officers e.g. ESA and Countryside Stewardship</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Head Office e.g. RSPB, CPRE, Wildlife Trusts</td>
<td>low-medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>very low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Regional Office e.g. RSPB</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium-low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO Local or County Office e.g. Wildlife Trusts, CPRE</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming Interests Head Office e.g. NFU, CLA</td>
<td>medium-high</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming Interests Regional Office e.g. NFU, CLA</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>low-medium</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>medium-high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming Interests Local Office e.g. NFU</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>medium-high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Advisers e.g. FWAG, agronomists</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Participating in an Agri-environmental Scheme</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>low</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influential Farmers†</td>
<td>very low</td>
<td>medium-low</td>
<td>high</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Influential farmers are identified as those who engage with other actors from across the sub-networks including, other farmers, agricultural interests and environmental groups through their participation on the committees, councils, etc. of organisations. Within the farmers' network, Influential farmers are likely to be well-known and respected by other farmers (see Cox et al., 1990; Potter, 1986a; Winter, 1985).
agencies or local Wildlife Trusts because their land includes designated areas (e.g., SSSIs or County Wildlife Sites) and, family, friends and neighbours who are concerned with the environmental quality of the farm. By taking the farmer as a point within the network, it is possible to visualise the sub-network in which they operate (see Figure 4.2). In some instances, farmers' linkages with agricultural and environmental issues may include their involvement with the committees of conservation/farming bodies. Indeed, they may act as advisers themselves to these bodies on farming practices. These types of linkages can extend from the local i.e. at a parish level, to county and national levels. Farmers that form these types of linkages have been termed 'influential' because of the expertise they pass on to other actors (see also, Cox et al., 1990; Potter, 1986a; Winter, 1985). Through the empirical work there has been an attempt to ascertain who the influential farmers\(^2\) are within the study area and what views they hold about AES, so as to understand what impact they have on the shape and development of the agri-environmental network.

The relationships between the different actors are formed through the processes of negotiation and bargaining, as in the case of setting up an agreement with the PO of an AES or through the exchange of resources, for example when taking advice on production methods or environmental practices from agronomists or FWAG advisers. The development of farmers' relationships with other actors of the sub-network can be identified as occurring at three different levels; a) formal contacts, perhaps between people they have not met before, linked directly to negotiation over specific AESs or practices, b) continuing discussions with trusted advisers, friends or relations which constitute 'context' in which more specific decisions with 'others' will subsequently be taken, c) background mass-media information (e.g. radio/television programmes and farming magazines) and farm visits/shows which constantly create 'background noise' which leads (or not) to contacts and participation in networks. Through the development of these relationships, farmers may be enrolled to certain ideas and practices. Enrolment is not however a one-way process as the other actors will themselves have been enrolled to the farmers' own ideas and objectives so as to

\(^2\) Influential farmers may either be participants or non-participants of Agri-environmental Schemes.
Figure 4.2 The Farmers' Sub-Network†

†Farmers have only been placed in the centre of the sub-network so as to describe the possible linkages they have with other actors. It is important to note that linkages are also formed between the other actors. As such, this view of the network provides simply one actor's account of the possible linkages rather than depicting every one that may be present, including those that extend from the farmers' sub-network to the national and regional networks. Furthermore, the 'strength' or type of the linkages are not expected to be equal. The relationships between the actors may be positive or negative, well defined or weak, antagonistic or co-operative.
facilitate the development of the linkages between them. This may also affect how the actors develop subsequent relationships with other farmers. The farmers will therefore influence the other actors of the sub-network who in turn may move across the levels and so influence others. It is also important to note that the farmers' influence is not confined to these relationships alone, but that they are themselves important actors in other sub-networks through their positions on committees, councils and executives at the regional and national levels of the network.

The Regional Actors

Moving out from the farmers as locus, the network logically expands to include those who are involved with the implementation of the AESs. Within an organisation such as the FRCA, the POs will have contact with other POs who may work in different counties, or advise on other AESs. In addition to their connections within their particular county/regional office, the PO's network will extend to those working at higher offices such as the MAFF Regional Service Centres or to MAFF in Whitehall. This may be through direct contact or information passed on indirectly by their line managers. Such linkages also exist for other conservation and farming advisers through organisational hierarchies.

At the regional level, networks between the advisers from different organisations are formed through formal and informal linkages. For example, the setting up and monitoring of Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) has led to the formation of working groups to discuss issues relevant to the ESA. These groups are composed of statutory advisers from the range of AESs operating in the area (e.g. Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Nitrogen Sensitive Areas and Habitat Scheme POs) and officials from the MAFF Regional Service Centres. These groups also include; the Wildlife Trusts, county council ecologists, FWAG advisers, NFU and CLA representatives, specialist conservation bodies e.g. RSPB, British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), statutory bodies (e.g. EN and the Countryside Commission) and
other groups concerned with access and amenity (e.g. the Ramblers' Association) as well as Influential farmers (see Figure 4.3). Recently the formation of regional Agri-environmental Fora have formalised these groups working at a regional level (see Chapter Two, p.71). In addition to these formal connections, actors also develop informal linkages through personal contact with the range of actors mentioned above. As in the case of the farmers' network, the linkages are formed through the processes of negotiation, bargaining and exchange of resources. However, the issues under consideration may be different. For example, rather than being solely concerned with practice on the ground, these actors are also engaged in policy development and evaluation, although it is difficult to separate these from implementation. The number of actors that can contribute to the process increases at this level and so the membership of the network diversifies and expands to incorporate other actors who can contribute to the policy process through the resources they hold. The growth of the network and the need to find a consensus between the larger number of actors involved may alter the relationships between the actors. For example, for agri-environmental policy to progress, farming and environmental groups may need to work together so as to develop a mutually acceptable approach. Therefore, it is necessary to examine how these linkages are formed so as to facilitate a better understanding of the policy process.

The National Actors

Another sub-network exists between the national actors. At this level the network is thought to consist of NGO lobbyists, statutory advisers and government civil servants and their associated Ministers (see Figure 4.4). Obviously, these actors are supported by their organisations both at the national and regional levels. These actors can draw on a wide range of resources to secure their position in this sub-network i.e. from regional and national offices, local implementers and farmers. At this level, each organisation's determination to influence others intensifies as the ability to change the overall direction of policy increases. The need to develop a consensus (at least between organisations who share common goals e.g. conservation or agricultural NGOs) is also increased as the lobby groups attempt to strengthen support for their
Figure 4.3 The Regional Sub-Network†

The Agri-environmental Scheme Project Officers have only been placed in the centre so as to provide a point around which to conceptualise the sub-network. This view of the network therefore only depicts the POs may have with other actors. It is important to note that linkages are also expected to be formed between the other actors within the regional sub-network and from across the levels. The types of linkages between the actors are expected to be diverse. For example, they may be positive or negative, strong or weak, opposing or supportive.
Similarly to Figures 4.2 and 4.3 the linkages extending from MAFF only show one actor's account of the sub-network. Linkages are also formed between the other actors and between the different levels of the network. Here too the types of relationships and linkages between the actors are expected to be diverse.
demands and so present a stronger call for change. Consequently, at this level the processes of negotiation, bargaining and exchange may be different to those experienced at the farmers' and the regional levels because of the different demands and needs these actors place on the relationships being formed. As in the regional sub-network, the relationships are formed through formal and informal contact. Recently, the formal linkages have been reinforced at this level through the development of the National Agri-environmental Forum and Steering Group (see Chapter Two, p.71). Additionally, informal linkages play an important role in the exchange of ideas and resources between the actors. The empirical study has sought to understand more fully how these informal relationships are developed, what benefits the actors gain from them and how this may influence the development of policy.

International Actors

A fourth sub-network is based on the supranational actors. In the case of the Agri-environmental Schemes and the Regulation from which these are developed, this network is focused on the European Commission and specially DGVI. The membership of the network comprises the EU Commission, Council, Parliament etc., the various member states associated agri-environmental networks and, interest groups which lobby at the EU level, such as COPA (Comité des Organisations Professionales Agricoles) or Birdlife International who also have links with national non-governmental organisations. This sub-network is also heavily influenced by the WTO negotiations and trade agreements or disputes with other countries. In this sub-network the linkages extending from the actors will be extremely complex (see Figure 4.5). The formulation and evaluation of policy within the European Commission is somewhat different to that experienced in the UK. Mazey and Richardson (1992, 1994) stress that differences arise, first because of the type of policies under discussion (e.g. Community enlargement or international relations) which cannot be easily approached by lobbyists, and second because the European Commission has
Figure 4.5 The International Sub-Network†

†This Conceptual network provides an indication of the links between the staff at DGVI concerned with the Agri-environmental Regulation and other actors who seek to influence its development and implementation. Again it is expected that linkages and relationships are formed between the various actors and between the different levels of the network and that these will have different properties.
not yet developed a standard procedure for policy making. This results in the Commission being more open to the demands of lobbyists, including national interests who may not have a high profile within their associated member state. The different structure of policy making within the Commission may require interest groups to adopt a different approach to lobbying to that used in their member state (Mazey and Richardson, 1993; Peterson, 1995). Consequently, the processes of bargaining, negotiation and exchange of information are altered as the needs and outlook of the actors working at this level are based on different visions of policy outcomes.

Although analysis of this level of the agri-environmental network is obviously important for understanding the development of AESs, this is not a primary focus of the thesis because it was felt that this would be beyond the bounds of a three year project. Additionally, Clark et al., (1997a) have been involved in a major project assessing the European network and it was felt important not to duplicate this research. This should not however constrain the ability of this research to understand the processes operating at the national level because the implementation of the Agri-environmental Regulation by individual member states leads to the creation of distinct networks by each country. Therefore, whilst the national networks has strong links with the supranational policy process it is also possible to study agri-environmental networks found within each member state.

The Network Structure and Actors' Linkages

It is noted above that the sub-networks feed into the wider agri-environmental network which is bounded by a common thread relating to the AESs and policies. It is first important to recognise that, although this notion account perceives a 'geographically' layered arrangement of sub-networks, some of the most powerful actors can move across these levels (see Munton, 1995; Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). Second, the power to exert influence is related to the actors' resources (e.g. expertise, money and reputation) and an ability to tap into the resources of others or speak on their behalf (Maloney, et al., 1994, Rose, 1985). Through developing a
better understanding of the actors engaged in these networks and the linkages between them, it is possible to identify more clearly how policies are developed, why the final policy output has the shape that it does, the problems or ‘passage points’ the actors have had to overcome, the consensus that has been necessary to achieve this, how the actors have sought to influence others, and how actors subsequently evaluate the policy according to their experiences of the policy process.

This examination of the agri-environmental network seeks to understand how the conservation NGOs have become enrolled into the agricultural policy community (at least to one branch), which has previously been considered the domain of agricultural interests (see Cox et al., 1986a; Self and Storing, 1962; Smith, 1990) and how, in turn, they have attempted to influence the direction of policy. This has involved a two-way process. First, the actors seeking to enter are required to accept certain conditions of the network. Second, those who are already members (or at least some) agree to accept those entering, even if they fundamentally disagree with the debates being put forward.

To attain access to the network, actors adopt numerous strategies so as to be enrolled as far as practicable on their own terms. For example, an organisation may seek to remain slightly removed from the network so as to develop their own views and not lose their position as promotional lobbyists (Lowe and Goyder, 1983). Alternatively, groups may seek to develop a consensus so as so strengthen their lobbying powers as in the case of the development of Wildlife and Countryside Link. These different approaches to enrolment result in a complex array of relationships being formed (see Grant, 1989). The influence and possible enrolment that takes place does not alter the identity of the other actors but may allow (at least on specific issues) one actor to 'speak on behalf of others' (Callon, 1986). The empirical analysis has sought to identify how the actors may be enrolled to other ideas and objectives and how actors develop alliances to influence the policy process.

It is also important to recognise that within the sub-networks the actors' ideas will be diverse depending on the issues at hand and the resources available to them.
Therefore, actors should not be categorised according to their position within a sub-network. However, it may be possible to identify the issues pertinent to a particular sub-network and the types of decisions made there. For instance, at the national level actors may be concerned with 'policy setting' - 'what should be done?' (e.g. CAP reform) and at the regional level, actors may work on 'policy shaping' - 'how do we do it?' (e.g. traditional hedgerow techniques) (Peterson, 1995). These characteristics of the sub-networks can be used as a base from which to understand the relationships developed between the actors and hence how actors may attempt to influence policy outcomes. However, these should not be regarded as rigidly set because as the actors move across the network the types of discussions and decisions in which they are involved change.

As ideas change and new issues and information arise, the strength of the linkages and the ability of the actors to influence will be altered. The shift in the pattern of governance is also an important factor in the development and strength of linkages formed. The 'opening-up' of the agricultural policy community and the development of the agri-environmental network have altered the relationships between the agricultural and environmental actors. For example, the conservation bodies may have originally attempted to change policy through lobbying alone. With a more open style of governance, these organisations are now thoroughly involved in the ‘writing’ of policy.

In Chapter Three, it was noted that the strength of the network and the relationships of the actors are more tightly defined when policy has to pass through 'passage points' (Callon, 1986). In the case of the agri-environmental network, these 'passage points' include *inter alia*; responses to consultation documents, agreement to develop new policies, or a farmer's agreement to participate in an AES. The importance and the difficulties associated with developing consensus so as to move through a 'passage point' may vary between the different levels of the network. For example, at the national level the actors may have to agree to a particular set of issues so as to allow the policy to proceed e.g. Arable Area Payments need to be reduced and Agri-environmental Scheme expenditure increased. At the local level, a farmer agreeing to
enter into an AES has to weigh up the benefits of the scheme to the farm business. In
each case, the issues that need to be addressed will be viewed according to the actors’
different terms of reference. Whilst these two different conceptions of a 'passage
point' are not exactly comparable because of the types of decision involved, this
shows that all actors will evaluate the potential impact of a possible future position
and are all involved in ex ante evaluations. This may require the actor entering into
negotiation and bargaining with others so as to derive the maximum possible benefits
that arise from this progression of the policy process.

Evaluation is an important part of the policy process but is often conceived as being a
task performed by those who either monitor policy on the ground or those charged
with assessing whether a particular policy should continue or expand (Holdgate,
1995). However, the evaluation of policy is made by all the actors involved. For
example, a farmer will evaluate whether the management practices adopted under the
AES agreement has increased wildlife on the farm; an environmental lobbyist will
evaluate how successful a scheme has been in changing farmers’ attitudes towards
conservation and agricultural groups will decide if the schemes have been cost-
effective for their members in addition to raising the environmental quality of
farmland. Throughout the network the actors develop their ability to evaluate through
a subtle mixture of 'hard' information produced by monitoring and research and
informal evaluation based on personal beliefs, views and knowledge, this becomes the
actors’ personal evaluative framework (Majone, 1989). Additionally, it is important
not to perceive evaluation as only an ex post event. The recursive and dynamic nature
of the policy process requires all actors to continually evaluate future actions and
decisions by drawing on their evaluative frameworks. This type of evaluation does not
remain constant but changes as new issues and information arise. Consequently, it
cannot be reduced to a formal assessment as this will trivialise the process being
viewed and will not allow the complexity of the decisions made by, and the
interactions between, the actors to be revealed. It is therefore necessary to ascertain
from each of the actors how they assess policy both before and after action so as to
understand that evaluation is not a discreet event but an integral part of the reactive
and recursive policy process. Furthermore, the analysis should follow the actors’
debate and to observe the complex negotiation in which the actors are involved rather than attempt to mould it to a formal structure. By adopting this approach, it is possible to examine how actors' evaluations are continually fed into the policy process and from this to develop a better understanding of its fluid and cyclical nature (see Callon, 1986; Law, 1994; Lowe et al., 1997; Marsden et al., 1993; Munton, 1995).

**Survey Method**

The study of the network started with those actors who were assumed to have the simplest of linkages (i.e. farmers) and built outwards from these to their advisers. The study then moved to those working at the regional and national levels where it was expected that the linkages would be more diverse. This has allowed the network to expand and to encompass those who are the most influential within it at the regional and national levels. The network described here therefore primarily focuses on those who were thought to be the key actors and also includes a number of actors (i.e. participating farmers) whose experiences of one AES have been used to understand issues pertinent to the locality of the case study.

It was decided not to work on ESAs designated during the first three rounds (1986/7, 1988 and 1993) because of the number of studies already being undertaken in these areas (see for example, Morris and Potter, 1995; Brotherton, 1991, Whitby, 1994). There was concern that attempting to research the networks in the ESAs would be difficult, especially if the actors had already been interviewed. Other schemes which focused on amenity, such as the Countryside Access Scheme, or on reducing pollution, such as the Nitrogen Sensitive Areas, were not considered because this study seeks to focus on the way nature conservation had become part of agricultural policy. These limitations still left a wide range of schemes open for examination.

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3 Contact with other postgraduate researchers at the Rural Geography Study Group Symposium held at Kingston University, May 1995, further confirmed that these ESAs were being fully researched elsewhere.
To gain an overview of the working of the schemes in England and to establish some general facts about uptake, a visit was arranged with MAFF’s Conservation Management Department at Nobel House, London in May 1995. This meeting concentrated on the Habitat Scheme, the fourth round ESAs, the Moorland Scheme, the Organic Aid Scheme and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The uptake of these schemes at that time is shown in Table 4.1. The low uptake of the Moorland Scheme, the Organic Aid Schemes and the Waterfringe and Saltmarsh options of the Habitat Scheme ruled these out from further study. This left the fourth round ESAs, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and the Former Set-aside Scheme. Before deciding on which schemes to study it was felt necessary to identify a study area.

The Choice of Study Area

The lack of schemes focusing on lowland agricultural systems and specifically arable farming was of interest because these areas were badly represented under the AES, yet their importance for biodiversity is widely recognised (Andrews and Rebane, 1994; DoE, 1994b). Specifically, these areas are important for what have become rare arable ‘weeds’ (e.g. Corn Marigold *Chrysanthemum sigetum*) and declining bird species (e.g. Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Corn Bunting *Miliaria calandra*). Additionally, farmers entering into agreements in these intensive farming areas would be altering their approach to farming by moving towards more extensive methods of production. This change represented a significant shift in their management focus and would require them to be enrolled into a new set of farming objectives. The site of the study area also needed to be within easy reach of London because of limited fieldwork funds available from ESRC. In light of these constraints, East Anglia was selected. This led to a number of meetings in May 1995 with the Countryside Commission’s Countryside Stewardship Team for East Anglia and with the ADAS Former Set-aside (FS-a) PO based in Bury St. Edmunds. At these meetings the

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4 The introduction of the Arable Aid Scheme in January 1998 has sought to redress this imbalance (MAFF, 1998a).
5 This included the counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. The POs were all based in Cambridge except the Essex PO who was then based in London.
6 The FS-a PO covered Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertford, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, North and North East London and Suffolk. Although the Essex Coast ESA falls into this study area, low uptake in the scheme was seen to be a major limiting factor to its study.
Table 4.1 Uptake of Agri-environmental Schemes in England (1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Options/areas</th>
<th>Uptake (no. of agreements)</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habitat Scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltmarsh</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The significant alteration of land use associated with the scheme was thought to be a major limiting factor to uptake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterfringe</td>
<td></td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Uptake varied considerably between the designated areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Set-aside</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Participation would increase as farmers' Five Year Set-aside agreements came to an end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth round ESAs</td>
<td>Blackdown Hills</td>
<td>over the 6 new ESAs there had been approximately 1,000 agreements, covering 60,000 hectares. This represented approx. 30% uptake</td>
<td>Participation varied widely between the ESAs, this was thought to be linked to familiarity with the scheme e.g. uptake was high in the Cotswold Hills but very poor in the Essex Coast ESA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cotswold Hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dartmoor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essex Coast</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shropshire Hills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Thames Tributaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Aid Scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td>53 agreements</td>
<td>Uptake was considered low, especially as the schemes was open to farmers countrywide. It was thought that most of this uptake was in Southern England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorland Scheme</td>
<td></td>
<td>Only launched on 28th March 1995</td>
<td>Uptake was expected to be low because of low premiums available (these had been capped by Brussels). These fears were confirmed. In 1997 there had only been 14 agreements (EN pers. comm.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside Stewardship Scheme†</td>
<td></td>
<td>At the end of the pilot phase it was envisaged there would be 5,200 agreements spread across the country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source MAFF, 1995 pers. comm, † MAFF/DoE 1995
schemes under consideration were discussed. It was subsequently decided that the
Former Set-aside Scheme and/or the Countryside Stewardship Scheme would be
suitable for the proposed study. These meetings also considered the amount of time
the POs could devote to the study and the problems associated with finding farmers
to interview.

The FS-a scheme was chosen for four main reasons. Firstly, farmers are only entitled
to enter land into the scheme that has previously been under the voluntary Five Year
Set-aside Scheme (FYSS). They would therefore already have a good understanding
of the way the scheme worked. This would place them in a strong position to answer
questions on the practicalities of the scheme. Secondly, farmers' involvement with the
scheme (for at least five years) would have allowed them to establish effective links
with the scheme's PO and possibly other members of the network e.g. FWAG.
Thirdly, because the farmers would have been practising some form of environmental
management for a number of years, it was expected that they would have witnessed
some positive environmental changes from the scheme. Fourthly, entry into the
scheme is conditional on offering significant benefits to wildlife (as judged by the
statutory body awarding the agreement). These two later considerations would help
enable the farmers to evaluate the environmental benefits arising from the scheme.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme was included because firstly, entry into the
scheme is based on the discretion of the awarding body with only the highest quality
applicants (in terms of potential environmental gains) being accepted. This would
allow questions on the discretionary freedom of the PO to be examined. Furthermore,
this approach requires both farmers and POs to make some primary evaluation of the
environmental benefits the scheme would deliver. Secondly, the scheme is based on a
menu approach allowing farmers to match their commitment to conservation and their
local environmental potential to the different options the scheme provides. This is
viewed as an important step towards matching farmers' objectives with the needs of
conservation (Countryside Commission, 1993). It would be valuable to investigate if
this approach led to benefits to both farmers and conservationists. Thirdly, the scheme
seeks to develop a whole farm approach, thereby encouraging farmers to take an
holistic view of conservation. Together these entry conditions require farmers to produce detailed plans of the environmental tasks they would undertake and hence their enrolment to environmental issues.

Initially, it was thought that the farmer survey would draw on participants from both the FS-a and Countryside Stewardship Scheme from the counties of Norfolk and Essex. Norfolk was selected because of the historical links between conservation and farming in the county and especially the establishment of the Broads Grazing Marsh Scheme (BGMS) (see Colman 1989; O’Riordan 1985). This was introduced to stop the conversion of ecologically important extensive grazing marshes to arable production. Later the BGMS was to become the model for the development of the ESAs (MAFF/DoE, 1995; Whitby and Lowe, 1994). Consequently, it was assumed that the agricultural and environmental organisations working in the county would be well versed in the issues surrounding the AESs. The POs noted that the farmers of Essex did not appear to have such a well developed concept of conservation as those in Norfolk and that they might provide an interesting contrast.

Further talks with the Countryside Commission’s Countryside Stewardship Cambridge Team in June led to a change of plan. The Countryside Commission had just started the process of transferring the Countryside Stewardship Scheme to MAFF. It had been agreed previously that after a five year pilot phase run by the Countryside Commission MAFF would take over the scheme. The Countryside Stewardship Team were concerned that this instability would pose some problems for their involvement in the study. Specifically, the staff were unsure if they would still be working on the scheme under MAFF and this would hinder the study’s contact with the POs, and some of the staff might still be working for the Countryside Commission but with no contact to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and would not be in a position to answer questions relating to the scheme7. In light of this it was decided to

7 It transpired that the majority of staff working on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme in the Countryside Commission office in Cambridge were transferred to ADAS in April 1996 to continue administering the scheme. It is also important to note that, although these problems might not have been insurmountable, the decision by the Countryside Stewardship POs to withdraw their help at this stage because of their own fears over the transfer of the scheme could not be overcome.
concentrate on the FS-a for the case study. Although this was a set back, conversations with the FS-a PO assured me that the FS-a scheme would provide sufficient information. The PO believed that there were 40 FS-a agreements between the counties of Norfolk and Essex, although the majority were in Norfolk.

One of the major problems is finding farmers to interview. Given that the study was to address a single scheme in a particular region, it was only possible to find a reliable sample of farmers participating in the FS-a scheme with the co-operation of the PO. The PO was unable to supply a list of the names and telephone numbers of participants as this would be a breach of confidentiality. It was therefore agreed that the PO would contact the participants himself and ask if they would mind taking part in the study before passing on names and telephone numbers. Although this was not a very satisfactory way of finding participants, other methods such as use of the telephone directory or through contacts with the NFU were unlikely to yield good results given the low numbers of participating farmers in comparison to total holding numbers in the counties (see Adams et al., 1994). Indeed, at a later stage in the empirical study attempts to find specific types of farmers without the help of ADAS emphasised the difficulties of tracing farmers through other routes such as the NFU (see page p.136).

It was decided to start the study of the network by interviewing 12 farmers participating in the FS-a, on the assumption that they would act as catalysts, providing links to other members of the network stretching from the local to the national. It is important to note that, although farmers are some of the most visible actors in the delivery of the schemes, they are just an action point of a large and complex network. Since the purpose was to investigate the network as a whole, it was never assumed that the information accumulated from the interviews with such a small number of farmers could be extrapolated so as to explain the effects of AESs on lowland arable systems. Rather, by studying the farmers it was hoped to gain insights into local agricultural and environmental issues. These could then be raised with other actors within the regional and local networks so as to ascertain how the actors seek to overcome problems that arise. The aim was not to establish exactly how the
schemes affected all farmers, but to try to establish how the schemes had affected some participating farmers and how their experiences have been fed back into the network (at the local and regional levels) before attempting to address the dynamics of the policy process at the regional and national levels.

The Pilot Interviews

In May 1996 the Participating farmers survey began. The FS-a PO supplied names of five farmers who were willing to be interviewed. These would act as a pilot before increasing the sample size. The interviews sought to understand how farmers had been enrolled into the scheme, who they had been influenced by or took advice from, how they had formulated their environmental aims, if their aims had changed over time as they gained experience and increased their contact with the PO, like-minded farmers etc., whether they had problems with putting the schemes into action, and their personal evaluation of the scheme's benefits (see Appendix A for the full list of interview questions). The interview therefore not only sought to ascertain a farmer's attitude towards conservation but also to find out who the farmers talked to about conservation issues so as to start building the local and regional network. These pilot interviews did not lead to any significant changes to the interview structure. It was subsequently felt that the interviews were of sufficient quality to be used in the empirical results.

From these initial interviews it was felt that the low uptake of the scheme in Essex would not allow a full investigation of the network in the county. It was assumed that another seven farmers could be found in Norfolk to interview. However, it transpired that the PO had over estimated the number of FS-a participants in Norfolk and 5 out of the 7 participants in FS-a in the county had already been interviewed during the pilot survey. The PO suggested that farmers in Suffolk be interviewed. In turn another seven interviews were held with participants in Suffolk (see Appendix B). In
total this led to 12 out of a possible 32 farmers in the two counties enrolled into F-
FS-a being interviewed\(^7\) (see Table 4.2).

The Advisers and the Regions

The advisers mentioned by the farmers were to form the next round of interviews.\(^8\) These included POs from other conservation schemes such as ESAs and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, other conservation advisers from ADAS, English Nature SSSI Officers, the County Councils and FWAG (see Appendix B for a full list of interviews and their dates). These interviews sought to establish how the actors exchanged views, ideas and information, both internally and externally to their organisation, and with farmers. The interviews covered the schemes the interviewee implemented, the attitudes of farmers towards conservation and the problems they had with the schemes, difficulties associated with evaluating the environmental outcomes of the schemes, and what role they felt they held in the policy process (see Appendix A for full interview schedule). At the end of each interview the adviser was asked who they thought should be the next point of contact within the network. This included colleagues who work in related areas, line managers and people they liaised with at higher levels. Other contacts included individuals and groups who had had some input into the AES either formally through mechanisms such as the ESA review panels and Agri-environmental Fora, or through smaller less formal meetings with conservation NGOs, agricultural groups and other governmental organisations. As the number of interviews increased names of particular individuals were repeated. From this it was soon possible to ascertain who were the main actors in the network at a regional level. Interviews were subsequently held with the key actors at the regional level as previously identified by respondents. The interview strategy followed was very akin to that of the advisers but the focus shifted away from the enactment of

\(^7\) Later on another participant of the FS-a Scheme from Suffolk was also interviewed (see Chapter Five).

\(^8\) Although contact had already been made with a majority of these statutory advisers through visits to ADAS and the Cambridge CSS Team, these meetings had solely focused on the practicalities of the study and so it was necessary to conduct interviews with these actors to explore the research questions.
the schemes and more to the role of the actors in network building, and the exchange of information between regional and national levels. From these interviews a list of contacts at the national level was developed. In total this led to 33 interviews with regional actors (including POs) (see Appendix B). The regional interviewees were also asked about 'influential' farmers, specifically those who in their judgement were the 'respected' farmers in the county (in terms of conservation approach) or who sat on county or national executives of conservation and agricultural organisations. As with the regional contacts, the names of particular farmers were repeated by interviewees and from this it was possible to build a list of influential farmers. 15 interviewees were held with influential farmers (see Appendix B). Their affiliation with the agri-environmental network is examined in detail in Chapter five. Where they were found to be participating in AESs, questions were posed relating to the schemes. Non-participating farmers were questioned on their attitudes towards conservation and why they had not been enrolled into a scheme. The influential farmers were also asked about their contact with conservation/agricultural organisations and whether they felt in a position to speak on behalf of other farmers (see Appendix A for the interview schedule).

The National Actors

Interviews with the actors working nationally included a wide range of NGOs and government statutory agencies and departments. However, to keep within workable limits, interviews were only held with NGOs who were thought to have made a significant input into the development of agri-environmental policy.

In most cases the regional actors named a specific individual who they felt would be best placed within the national office to represent their organisation's actions towards

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9 Advisers from ADAS were not asked to supply names of influential farmers as this might be regarded as a breach of confidentiality.
Table 4.2 Number of Farmers Participating in the Five Year Voluntary Set-aside Scheme 1988-91 and the Former Set-aside Scheme in 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
<th>Total area set-aside (ha)</th>
<th>Average area per participant (ha)</th>
<th>No. of Participants FS-a in 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5448.51</td>
<td>22.27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>4000.29</td>
<td>21.98</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>5000.92</td>
<td>34.43</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>6369.18</td>
<td>31.89</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for England</td>
<td>2320</td>
<td>128676.75</td>
<td>34.70</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n/a not available

† These are aggregate figures over the years 1988-1991 and are not a true picture of the total number of farmers involved as some may have entered land into the scheme on two or more occasions.

Source: ADAS pers. comm.
AESs and who would have further links within the agri-environmental network. On one or two occasions it was necessary to make enquiries within the organisation with named contacts who could, in turn, provide the name of the individual who dealt with agri-environmental issues. These interviews focused on the ability of the individuals and organisations to influence or enrol other actors through negotiation and bargaining to their ideas, how they attempted to influence the direction of policy, the circumstances under which they had been enrolled to particular ideas or issues, and how information from other actors was used to further their ability to shape policy. Where applicable, the actors were asked how their organisation sought to lobby the government. Questions were also asked about the way the schemes are evaluated and how the actors decide if the scheme was providing environmental benefits (see Appendix A for a list of questioned posed). In total 17 people were interviewed at this level (see Appendix B).

Initially, it was hoped to interview a number of the staff in the Conservation Management Department at MAFF. Through the interviews with the national and regional actors it was apparent that five or six people working in Whitehall had had a strong input into the development of the AESs in the Ministry. Interviews with a number of people within the unit would have been used to gain an insight into the workings of the unit and especially how the individual actors viewed their role within the organisation. It was also hoped that this would clearly indicate how other organisations, both governmental and non-governmental, had sought to influence them over different issues. The first point of contact at the Ministry thought this sounded an appropriate way of approaching the questions and agreed to arrange the interviews with his colleagues. However, before the Department members were willing to agree to the interviews MAFF requested written information on the study's objectives. Once this had been provided, it was decided that after Cabinet Office approval had been granted they would be willing to allow one joint interview with a member from each of the two divisions that made up the Conservation Management Department. This was well below what had been hoped for as a 'double-headed' interview would constrain each interviewee's ability to talk openly. In addition, it would no longer be possible to explore how different individuals within the Ministry
had sought to influence policy and the schemes. Consequently, only a singular account of the processes at work was elicited. These problems aside, the interview itself was constructive and still yielded useful information on how the Ministry develops policy through the processes of enrolment and influence. The process, however, unduly concealed the true nature of internal negotiation and cannot disguise the fractured or differentiated nature of polity (Goodwin, 1998; Rhodes, 1997), especially at a time when new environmental policies for agriculture were altering the established shape of the CAP and MAFF itself was in the process of altering its own administrative structure and functions to acquire greater authority and responsibility over environmental issues - most notably the take-over of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme from the Countryside Commission and the restructuring of ADAS to form the FRCA.

In Search of Old Participants

After the interviews with the national actors it was decided that a number of interviews should be held with farmers who originally had an agreement under the voluntary Five Year Set-aside Scheme but, at the end of the agreement, had not entered the FS-a scheme. This would allow some comparisons to be draw between them and the Participators' attitudes towards conservation, to identify any problems they had had with the scheme and, to understand what influences had encouraged them to enrol initially but disengage at the end of the agreement period.

ADAS in Bury St. Edmunds was approached and asked if they could find an additional 12 farmers to interview who were in this position. Initially the PO thought that this would pose no problem. However, it transpired that ADAS thought this would be a breach of confidentiality and would not supply the information. This was another serious obstacle to the conduct of the empirical study. However, it was assumed that these farmers could be found by other means.
Uptake of the Five Year Voluntary Set-aside Scheme had been significantly higher than in the FS-a that followed (see Table 4.2). It was therefore hoped that by making contact with some of the previous interviewees and local and regional NFU offices it would be possible to find an adequate number of farmers to interview. This however proved to be a long and protracted exercise. Firstly, many of the contacts had forgotten who had gone into the schemes as it was now nine years since they were first introduced and up to four years since the scheme ended. Secondly, many of the contacts had not been working in the area over this period and so were unaware of who had entered. Some contacts gave a number of names who were then approached. Of these, the majority had not participated in the scheme. To aid the search, some of the NFU Branch Secretaries agreed to include the appeal for appropriate farmers at their next branch meeting, although this did not yield any response. Finally, a small advertisement appeared in the NFU East Anglian Regional Journal. Again this elicited no response.

Four interviews were eventually held with former Five Year Set-aside participants. Of these, once on site, it was found that two of the farmers had confused the set-aside schemes and had not been involved in the original voluntary scheme. One of the farmers had, at the end of the five year scheme, joined the FS-a and the other had opted for a different set-aside agreement under the AAP Scheme. These interviews yielded very much the same comments as had been elicited from the first set of participating farmers. It was unfortunate not to have interviewed a number of farmers who had returned their set-aside land to arable production as this might have revealed some interesting new insights. Given the time constraints of the thesis, it was decided not to continue trying to find this type of farmer. In addition, given that the project is concerned with the agri-environmental network in general and not farmers in particular, and interviews with other actors had produced considerable material for analysis, it was felt that adequate information for describing and assessing how the network functions could be developed from information already obtained.
Interview Method

It was felt that, given the nature of the issues to be addressed, a formal structured interview format would not produce the depth of answer required and so a semi-structured approach was adopted. The open-ended questions would allow the interviewees to bring their own thoughts and definitions to the questions posed rather than attempting to direct the interviewees to certain kinds of answer. It was however necessary to impose some structure to the opening section of the interviews. This served a number of purposes. Firstly, when interviewing farmers it was necessary to establish a number of factors relating to the farm, such as; size, tenure, employment, rotations etc. so as to gain some information on the farm types. These data were not used to categorise the farmers but to allow some comparison to be made with previous studies of farming and environmental issues. Secondly, the structured first part allowed the farmer to relax, allowing them to open up during the more conversational parts of the interview. The opening section of the non-farming interviews dealt with the individual’s employment history, i.e. how long they had been employed by the organisation, what positions they had previously held and whether they had had any formal conservation or agricultural training. Again this not only served to relax the interviewee but also gave the interviewer some idea of which issues to probe later on. The majority of each interview was however conducted under a semi-formal format.

The approach led to the collection of very detailed information which, although not always relevant to the primary questions of the thesis, allowed a fuller picture of actors’ attitudes to conservation and their relationships with other actors. This approach permitted the observer to ‘follow the actor’ (see Callon, 1986; Law, 1994; Lowe et al., 1997; Marsden et al., 1993; Munton, 1995) and to understand their roles in the policy process. This is important as it gives freedom to the interviewees to describe the network and the processes of enrolment and influence in their own terms. Whilst it was important to let the interviewee talk freely, it was also necessary to ensure all items of importance were included. The interview schedule therefore played an important part in the process. In total five interview schedules were produced for
i) participating farmers, ii) influential farmers, iii) advisers and regional officers, iv) those working at a national level and, v) a separate schedule was written for the interview with MAFF (the interview schedules are given in Appendix A). The aim of the empirical survey was not to produce data which could then be addressed statistically. Instead it was felt that the information gathered was sufficiently detailed to allow a description of the problems associated with the policy process and especially the development of AESs and its policy network (see Lowe et al., 1997; Marsden et al., 1993; Munton, 1995).

To arrange the interviews, interviewees were telephoned and given some background to the project and the kinds of issues the interview would explore. The only problem experienced with the setting up of the interviews were those outlined above relating to MAFF; three interviewees (including MAFF) required written confirmation and two influential farmers declined to be interviewed on the basis of insufficient time. In the case of the Participating farmers, the possibility of rejection had been removed by the FS-a PO who had already gone through this process. Only one of the interviewees (a farmer from the 'old participants' sample) declined to have the interview recorded. The taping of the interviews did not appear to create any difficulties. All interviewees were assured that their identity would remain anonymous. This was seen as an important way of putting the interviewees at ease. The only interviewees who did not appear to relax during the interviews were members of MAFF and, to some degree, DoE. The interviews were held between May 1996 and April 1997. The interviews took between 30 minutes and two and three-quarter hours depending on the openness of the interviewee and their time to spare (See Appendix B).

**Stages of Analysis**

The first stage of analysis involved the conceptualisation of the key issues of the study and the preparation of a semi-structured interview format with predominantly open-ended questions. This approach enabled respondents to express their actions and experiences in their own terms and language. The rounds of interviews with different
groups of actors developed the research questions further which in turn, fed into the themes of later interview schedules. This snowballing technique was important for refining the research issues and for the identification of the actors (see Callon, 1986; Callon et al., 1986; Marsden et al., 1993).

A second stage of analysis commenced after the writing of fieldnotes and the transcription of the interviews. The initial reading of each transcript sought to identify where within the script the respondent spoke on issues key to the study (e.g. bureaucracy associated with the AESs). This led to the production of topic-based notes which acted as guides (through paragraph numbering) to the location of particular issues within each transcript.

The third stage of analysis was to classify the respondents' answers on particular topics into sub-categories so as to develop a greater understanding of the variables and similarities between them. In many cases this raised new questions and issues which required a further examination of the transcripts. As the analysis progressed and patterns or possible connections were drawn between respondents actions and experiences, it was necessary to return repeatedly to the transcripts and fieldnotes so as to verify the conclusions being developed. This required a reflexive approach to be adopted (see below). The process of refining the data sought to identify generalised findings to specific groups (e.g. problems of discretionary freedom encountered by conservation advisers and farmers), more precise findings connected with certain organisations and their staff's attitudes to particular processes (e.g. giving advice) and, case studies, which sought to examine how organisations or individuals dealt with specific situations such as enrolment into AESs or inter-organisational communication.

The writing-up phase formed the final stage of analysis. The previous stages had sought to refine, exclude and develop hypotheses made through the observations of the researcher. Appropriate and selected quotations were used to support the analysis and to enable the reader to understand how the respondents spoke about their situation. The use of quotations required an awareness of introducing bias to the
representations, for example, by only using quotations from articulate or knowledgeable individuals (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and called for reflexivity (see below).

The empirical study adopted a qualitative approach because it sought to enquire into the worlds of individuals involved in complex networks and, to understand the processes which led to their behaviour, relationships and actions. The approach attempted to formulate and examine concepts and generalisations in parallel with the generation and analysis of the research data (Hakim, 1987). This contrasts with a quantitative approach which through inductive reasoning seeks to test pre-defined hypotheses statistically (Patton, 1980). To do this a quantitative approach uses standardised questionnaires, applied to large-scale surveys to determine correlations between certain outcomes and conditions (Lindsay, 1997). It is important to note that each method has both strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative methods draw strengths from the consistency of the information collected, the verification of the results through replication and the ease of repeating the surveys elsewhere. The use of this approach, which involves asking the same questions in the same sequence to a large number of respondents, enables the results to be interpreted so as to provide statistical significance (Sayer, 1992). Further confidence is gained from the use of quantitative methods by the limited social interaction between the researcher and the respondent, although, the effect of the researcher on data collection and interpretation cannot be totally ruled out (Lindsay, 1997; Patton, 1980; Sayer, 1992). By comparison, a qualitative approach draws strengths from the collection of data which seeks to reveal the complexity of individuals' behaviour and actions. This is attained by the researcher actively engaging with the interviewees. What the approach may lose in statistically defined associations it seeks to replace with a better understanding and description of the actual mechanisms that lead to actors' practices and strategies (Sayer, 1992). The use of open-ended questions during interviews allows individuals' experiences to be described in their own terms rather than adapting their answers to specific categories. This seeks to generate a more complete account, and thereby increases the validity of the connections between an individual's (or organisation's) current actions/situation and the factors which influence their decisions and practices (Schoenberger, 1991). Validity of particular accounts was further strengthened by the
researcher having a thorough and detailed understanding of the situation of the interviewee e.g. farm/conservation practices, NGO position statements and statutory agency press releases. This required considerable preparation before each interview. Determining the validity of particular processes e.g. communication within particular organisations, was further strengthened by multiple interviewing within an organisation (Sayer, 1992; Schoenberger, 1991). A qualitative approach requires constant reflexivity that is to say, a continual enquiry of oneself and subject during the phases of data collection and analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1980; Sayer, 1992). For instance, during an interview or when drawing a conclusion from the empirical data, the researcher has to assess their own influence on the observed and conversely, how interactions with the interviewee may have influenced the observer. These problems can be countered during the interviews by guaranteeing the respondents anonymity, whereby allowing them to answer questions without fear of later reprisals, and by ensuring the interview schedules do not inflate the issues under investigation and encourage the interviewees to over emphasise their response. To offset the effects of the observed on the researcher; sentimental/personal thoughts need to be translated into more theoretical ones; the researcher needs to ensure the interview remains focused on the research issues, and if they feel they are being misled, to attempt to understand why and what this additional information tells them about the situation. Additionally, there is a need to interview competing interests so as to gain a greater understanding of the diversity of attitudes being fed into the process and situations. During the analysis of the empirical data problems of researcher bias can be addressed by ensuring they are not inattentive to or over-weight unreliable data, and by cross-checking results with previous studies so as to increase validity (Miles and Huberman, 1994).
Introduction to the Empirical Section

Chapters Five to Eight examine how the policy process has changed as a result of the shift towards more open and consultative governing and as the agri-environmental network has expanded. To understand how these changes affect the policy process, three key themes are developed; how actors are enrolled into the network, either by other actors or by their own ability to provide the resources needed for the network's functioning; how the linkages between actors are sustained through the exchange of resources and the development of consensus; and how all the actors evaluate the actual and possible outcomes of policy.

Chapter Five examines the farmers' sub-network. It seeks to ascertain what links farmers have with other agri-environmental actors and how farmers attempt to influence the policy process. To do this, it is first necessary to understand what factors lead to farmers' enrolment, including the nature of their businesses and their responses to internal and external pressures. The linkages between the farmers and other agri-environmental actors are examined to understand who influences farmers' participation (e.g. AES project officers; FWAG advisers; NFU) and who they in turn seek to influence (e.g. other farmers; Wildlife Trusts; MAFF).

The linkages between actors working at the regional and national levels of the agri-environmental network are assessed in Chapter Six. Firstly, the relationships between the different organisations are established as a way of examining enrolment, essential for understanding why traditionally distinct agricultural and environmental policy communities now work together to facilitate the development of agri-environmental policy. Secondly, intra-organisational linkages are reviewed specifically to comprehend how those who implement schemes convey their experiences to those who develop policy objectives. Communication between regional and national actors is important to ensure that 'gaps' do not arise and resources are procured to maintain particular actors' positions within the network. Internal organisational structure also provides some important insights into the ways different organisations seek to influence the policy process.
Chapters Five and Six thus seek to develop an understanding of the structure of the network by examining how actors are enrolled and how the relationships between them are sustained through communication and the exchange of resources. The material in Chapters Seven and Eight build on these findings so as to understand how the policy process functions in practice, specifically how actors attempt to influence and shape the ideas and actions of others. This is investigated through an examination of the implementation of the AESs (Chapter Seven) and how actors evaluate the schemes' benefits (Chapter Eight).

The first part of Chapter Seven looks in more detail at farmers' enrolment into the agri-environmental network so as to determine whether there is a 'gap' between farmers' environmental objectives and those of their conservation advisers. The evidence helps establish not only how problems encountered during the implementation phase are addressed by the actors on the ground, but also how they feed these issues back into the policy process. Additionally, an understanding of what encourages farmers' enrolment, and especially recognising that they are not homogeneous recipients of policy, emphasises that schemes need to be adaptable so as to meet differing farm conditions. This issue is examined by assessing the discretionary freedom available to the schemes' project officers and whether it is sufficient for the successful delivery of policy. The discussion throws further light on why 'gaps' may appear between actors at different levels within the network and how actors' actions and reactions feed back into the policy process, emphasising its recursive nature.

The final chapter in this section reviews how the actors 'formally' and 'informally' assess the worth of the possible and actual outcomes of the AESs. The analysis begins by examining the 'formal' monitoring undertaken by those governmental bodies responsible for the AESs. This type of evaluation provides actors with some preliminary information on which to make 'broad' assessments of the schemes' success, but because 'formal' monitoring cannot provide sufficient information for a full evaluation, the chapter goes on to investigate how actors use their personal
experience to assess whether the AESs represent 'value for money'. The final section evaluates how the actors 'informally' assess a possible future policy option, namely cross-compliance, as another means of assessing how they evaluate 'success'.

The whole approach to evaluation adopted in Chapter Eight is based upon the belief that all actors are involved in ex ante evaluations which are, by their nature, based on previous experiences, intuition, and views about alternatives (in this case cross-compliance). Actors' ex ante evaluations constantly evolve as new issues and ideas are developed. They change as policy progresses. This makes the notion of assessment complex and its outcomes in a particular case fluid. Thus the survey has not sought to mould actors' assessments into a formal structure but merely to observe how actors' views are developed through debate with, and enrolment of others, and through this process how each attempts, individually or in combination with others, to influence the development of policy. Evaluation is an integral and continuous element of the policy process. It is not confined to any one set of actors or any one point in time.
Chapter Five

The Farmers' Network

Introduction

Studies into policy networks have been primarily concerned with the relationships formed between interest groups and the state (see for example, Cloke and Little 1990; Richardson, 1996; Rhodes, 1997; Smith 1992). This chapter seeks to take a wider view so as to understand how farmers are enrolled into the agri-environmental network before going on to discuss their impact on the policy process.

Law (1992) argues that a network is often seen as an homogeneous group or as 'single point actors' consolidated to appear as a uniform rather than a multifarious assembly. This observation not only applies to the entire network but also to the actors involved within it. For example, in policy terms, farmers are frequently viewed as a single type of actor whose primary purpose is to implement policy, although this is a gross oversimplification (Potter, 1986a; Wilson, 1997a). Not only is each farm unique because of its physical features and socio-economic characteristics, but farmers' own strategies for farming and conservation will be determined by numerous variables, including age, education, succession factors, level of farm income, size of farm and tenure (Battershill and Gilg, 1997; Lemon and Park, 1993; Potter and Lobley, 1992a, 1996 a and b; Shucksmith, 1993: Wilson, 1997a).

In the description of the agri-environmental network given in Chapter Four it was visualised that a farmer's sub-network is presumed to function with its own distinct characteristics. This network may be viewed, in its simplest terms, as consisting of farmers, their advisers (agronomists, agro-chemical specialists, financial consultants, conservationists etc.), the state in the form of MAFF, ADAS, English Nature and the
The organisations to which they belong (e.g. CLA, NFU, FWAG) and other farmers (some of whom may be opposed to the policy on a range of grounds), family, friends and other business associates. Additionally, farmers are influenced indirectly by changing social conceptions of the environment (Lowe et al., 1997; Ward and Lowe, 1994).

This chapter will draw on the farm survey to describe the farmers' network. The first section will consider previous studies of the farming community and how these have been primarily concerned with the need to categorise farmers so as to explain what internal and external influences to the farm business have led to changing farm practices and farmers' attitudes, including why some farmers have incorporated environmental issues into the running of their farms. These attitudes can in turn be used for describing some of the reasons why farmers have become enrolled into agri-environmental networks. The next two sections focus on the network relationships of the Participating and Influential farmers respectively so as to examine which factors have been most influential in enrolling them to conservation practices. The farmers' position within the network is also considered so as to develop an understanding of how they influence the policy process.

Factors Influencing Farm Change

Farming is influenced by many internal and external agents. Externally these include political, economic, social, legal and natural (e.g. the weather) factors, whilst

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1The farming community is seen here as composed of farmers and the organisations with whom they have strong alliances, such as the NFU and CLA. This community is often spatially defined with farmers' contacts being drawn from local organisations' memberships as in the case of NFU Area Branches, or from organisations working at a county scale, e.g. the CLA or producer groups. In addition to these organisational links, farmers are often thought to have strong kinship links with other farmers within their county (Lowe et al., 1997; Newby et al., 1978; Symes and Appleton, 1986). The community is strengthened by these relationships and form the basis of many farmers' social networks. Because of the tight membership of the community, it is often regarded as 'closed' to outside interests, although this is being challenged by contemporary social change in the countryside (see Lowe et al., 1997). It is also important to note that some members of this community will be engaged with other networks whose membership is differently defined.
professional advisers, associations, suppliers and the farm's own natural resources (e.g. soils) shape the internal environment (Giles, 1990, Hodge, 1990). It is not always clear how these influences affect farmers and their businesses, or whether farmers should be viewed as active or passive in the face of their pressure (Potter, 1990; Ward and Munton, 1992). Indeed, the same farmers may be either active or passive in response to the same stimuli depending on how they co-relate with other pressures, particularly those associated with stages in the family life-cycle or chance events, such as an unexpected opportunity to buy more land or illness to a key family member. This means that, although considerable evidence has been accumulated into the extent and speed at which the countryside has been altered through agricultural practices, we still know much less about the influences that have caused individual farmers to contribute to these changes (Potter, 1986a and b; Potter and Lobley, 1996a and c; Potter et al., 1996; Aitchison, 1992).

Previous studies have sought to understand the numerous factors which influence land management and farm business decisions; these are briefly discussed below. The empirical study has attempted to use these as a background against which to contextualise the factors influencing farmers’ decisions so as to facilitate a better understanding of the processes leading to farmers' enrolment into the agri-environmental network.

Considerable research has been devoted to understanding the importance of family succession on the farm business and the subsequent effects this has on land management. Potter and Lobley (1992, 1996a, b and c) have sought to ascertain whether the presence or absence of a successor is a major influence on farm business development trajectories. They established that "elderly farmers without successors lack the incentive and motivation to continue expanding the business and accumulating capital into old age" (1992b, p.331), and so are more inclined to run down their farm businesses, adopting conservation schemes which can be easily incorporated into their exiting plans for the farm. Work by Ward and Lowe (1994) builds upon this issue. They argue that there is a link between farm business trajectories, succession and the rapid social and economic changes affecting the
countryside, and how these issues shape farmers' management objectives and environmental awareness (see also Battershill and Gilg, 1997; Carr and Tait, 1990; Lemon and Park, 1993). Additionally, Ward and Lowe (1994) show that younger farmers appear more environmentally aware (see also Morris and Potter, 1995). Similarly, Marsden and Munton (1991) suggest that occupancy change can have a significant impact on farm business trajectories. They argue that changes to "key decision-making personnel" (such as the entry of a son into the farm business) leads to significant changes in land-management and to the landscape, as the new occupiers seek to intensify or specialise production. Elsewhere, studies by Morris and Potter (1995), Potter, (1986a); Potter and Gasson (1988) and Brotherton (1989, 1991) examine farmers' enrolment into conservation schemes. These studies identify that farmers' commitment and motivation to conservation schemes differs considerably depending on the size of the holding, farmers' age, previous history of conservation practices, attitudes towards conservation and level of financial payments on offer. Drawing on this, Morris and Potter (1995) argue that high levels of participation in conservation schemes may mask the actual level of environmental benefits being delivered because these depend on farmers' "skills, commitment and degree of compliance" to the schemes which vary considerably (p.61). Morris and Potter (ibid.) conclude that participation in AESs does not necessarily lead to a positive attitudinal change by farmers towards conservation, and this may limit the shift towards more environmentally friendly farming in the future. In addition to conservation schemes, farm business and enterprise diversification have also led to changes in land management practices (see Gasson, 1988; Ilbery, 1991; Munton et al., 1989; Shucksmith, 1993). Although these studies are primarily concerned with changing sources of farm income and labour allocations, their findings on farmers' attitudes, behaviour and values can be used to help identify what changes need to be made to agricultural policy so as to encourage farmers to adopt post-productive policies such as AESs. This brief résumé of the range of research that has sought to understand the issues affecting farmers, and the possible factors which influence their approach to land management, and highlights the complexity of the issues involved.
The next section seeks to establish why farmers have been enrolled into the agri-environmental network by examining their objectives for the farm business, and how these influence their decisions for participating in AESs or becoming involved in other aspects of the network. This section is divided into two parts. The first identifies the conditions which have led to farmers' participation in the FS-a Scheme. The second part examines the farm business conditions of the Influential farmers so as to ascertain what factors have led to their adoption of environmental objectives and to use this to start to understand why these farmers are considered influential within the agri-environmental network. The following sections discuss the linkages between farmers and other members of the farmers' sub-network so as to understand who these farmers are influenced by and who they may seek to influence, so as to determine how farmers feed into the policy process.

**Participating Farmers' Farm Objectives**

The farmers were asked to list their objectives for their farm businesses. All bar one of the farmers stated that they want to maintain the farm or to 'survive'. The farmers use these terms to stress that they need to make a reasonable return from the capital invested in the farm so as to allow them to retain its ownership (see below). One farmer declared that he did not have any objectives. This position was based on his age and his feeling that the FS-a Scheme will last his lifetime; as a result, there is no need to have any goals for the farm. In addition to the need to 'survive', half the farmers stated that they want to do something for conservation and one farmer wants to provide the local community with an area for quiet recreation. Another farmer noted that his aim is to stay in the scheme because he feels that FS-a provides the best use of his land and so his only objective is to abide by the scheme's prescriptions.

They were asked if their goals have recently changed. For most Participating farmers, changes relate to alterations in lifestyle or, more specifically, their partial retirement. Six farmers class themselves as retired and another four are employed off the farm
and feel they have 'retired' from commercial farming (i.e. producing crops). Indeed, only two are actively engaged in crop production. The 'retired' farmers have placed their land into conservation schemes and in some cases have rented other land out. These farmers confirm previous work which recognises that elderly farmers are predisposed to reducing their work load by extensifying their production methods or letting or selling land (Potter and Lobley, 1992a, 1996 a and b). The FS-a Scheme allows land to be left fallow with cutting only once a year as a minimum requirement. Although a few farmers have planted some of their land with trees, in the majority of cases the land can easily be brought back into production. The scheme has therefore allowed these 'retired' farmers to continue to receive an income from the land and maintain future options, whilst considerably reducing their workload. Apart from retirement, the small size of Participating farmers' holdings has required them to seek alternative use for their land. The Participants' farms are nearly all below 150 acres (see Table 5.1). By joining the scheme they have effectively entered into a contract with the state which will last their lifetime and provide a modest income and will also allow them to maintain possession of the farm.

Ward's work on pesticide adoption allowed him to class farmers as either "developers, diversifiers, expanders, adjusters or disengagers" (1994, p.156). In this survey 10 of the farmers participating in the FS-a can be classed as "disengagers". They have withdrawn from commercial full-time farming by going into the scheme, but have continued to occupy the farm and carry out minimal management. The other two farmers can be classed as 'diversifiers', both have introduced non-agricultural enterprises (e.g. livery yards, fishing lakes and holiday accommodation) into the farm.

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2The physical extent of an holding is not necessarily an indication of it economic viability. However, a farm which cannot provide full-time employment for one person is considered small, that is a farm of less than 4 British Size Units (see Ansell, 1996). The majority of the participants' farms fall into this category.

3The five development trajectories are described as follows:
  Adjusters: seek to remain in agriculture and to improve profitability through improvements in efficiency.
  Expanders: aim to remain in agriculture and to improve or maintain profit through expansion in stock or land.
  Diversifiers: attempt to remain in agriculture with the aid of enterprise diversification.
  Developers: aim to stay in agriculture but to sell some land for development.
  Disengagers: are slowly reducing production either through extensification or contract farming (Ward, 1994).
Table 5.1 Size of Participating Farmers’ Holdings (acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farmer group</th>
<th>&lt;50</th>
<th>51-100</th>
<th>101-150</th>
<th>151-500</th>
<th>501+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Farm Survey

It was noted earlier that there have been attempts to understand the importance of family succession to farm business trajectories, and how this relates to farmers' willingness to enter conservation schemes. Of the Participating farmers, only three do not claim to have successors, but another seven note that, although they will pass the farm on, the size of the holding will preclude their children from making a living from it. As one farmer who had originally wanted to expand the farm (in the early 1970s) said:

'I couldn't get any more land. This is the problem, it is difficult to buy land. Although it was cheap when I bought this land [mid-1960s], within six or seven years the price went over the top, and I wasn't able to get any more, unless you had a lot of money....you've got about four big farms in Old Buckingham...when a small farm gets split up one of the big farmers have promptly bought it' [Participating farmer no. 2].

As a consequence of these problems, he subsequently sold land to realise capital, altering his farm business objectives and leading to his participation in the FS-a Scheme. The Participating farmers generally exhibit a strong desire to keep the farm in family possession, either because of long historical ties and/or because they recognise that the property represents a considerable financial asset. When asked what they think will become of the land, one suggested 'people would probably keep horses on it', whilst another noted 'the children are keen conservationists, so they would probably keep it on'. The farmers without successors are cautiously optimistic that the land will be kept out of production and for conservation, but in the interim they are happy to remain in FS-a. At the time of the interviews the scheme had at least 18 years to run, by which time many noted 'I'll be gone', or 'I'll be lucky to see it out'. The problem of what to do with the farm is being left to the next generation. Two farmers from the Participants' sample know they will pass the farm on as a going concern and they are the only two not to have retired. Their participation in the scheme reveals that at least some of those actively engaged in farming will enter conservation schemes with long agreement periods (but see Morris and Potter, 1995),

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4 The importance farmers attach to maintaining the farm in family ownership has been examined thoroughly elsewhere, see for example: Gasson and Errington, 1993; Symes, 1990.
even if they explain that their involvement is due to the poor quality of the land they farm - 'It isn’t better paid, but it suits the land and does the best for the environment.'

To summarise, the majority of participating farmers can be categorised as "disengagers". Their retirement, the small size of their holdings and the lack of a viable economic future led the farm away from production and towards conservation.

Influential Farmers' Farm Objectives

The majority of Influential farmers stated that their main objective for the farm is either to optimise production as dictated by the farm's resources (i.e. carrying capacity of the land or available manpower) or to maintain the farm as a viable business which some farmers refer to as survival⁵ (see Table 5.2). For the Influential farmers, these objectives centre around maintaining the farm as a viable production unit. It does not necessarily mean trying to realise maximum profits from the resource base but to farm within certain constraints, the most frequently cited being the wish to do something for the environment. As one farmer explained;

'I'm trying to set it up, so as to not be pushed into maximum profitability, so I am actually able to farm a lot with conservation in mind. But I don't know how much I will be able to go down that road. I don't want necessarily to go organic or anything like that, but I ... do want to farm properly, but I also want to make room for wildlife.... In the 80s when I worked full-time on the farm and I worked a sixty hour week and you really don't have time to think about a lot and I realised that that kind of rut that you get into leaves you unable to see to things like conservation' [Influential farmer no. 5].

Although four farmers argued the need to maximise profits, this objective does not imply necessarily an increase in specialisation or intensification, rather the optimum utilisation of capital and machinery, and only one did not include conservation as an objective even though he had filed an application for an agreement to replant hedges

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⁵ For these farmers the term survival was often used somewhat melodramatically. For example, one farmer with a holding of 5,000 acres described themselves as trying to 'survive'. The use of this term is perhaps a reflection of the problems faced by many farmers with significantly smaller holdings but because all farmers are affected by the same external forces they feel some affinity with those whose businesses are under resourced and most threatened.
Table 5.2 Influential Farmers' Farm Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential farmer</th>
<th>maximise profits</th>
<th>optimise/maintenance/survival</th>
<th>conservation</th>
<th>contribute to the community</th>
<th>increase stock/holding</th>
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1 Profit maximisation is taken to mean attempting to achieve the highest net return possible for the farm business, although this objective is qualified within certain parameters (see above).

2 Many farmers spoke of either optimising, maintaining or surviving. These terms relate to ensuring that the farm remains financially viable (see above).

3 Some farmers express a need to incorporate 'conservation' into the overall structure of the farm as an additional objective to 1 and 2.

4 Four farmers spoke of attempting to contribute to the community through the provision of employment to the rural population.

5 One farmer wants to increase his number of stock and another wants to buy more land so as to establish an 'estate'.

Source: Farm Survey
under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. In almost all of the interviews with Influential farmers, it became clear that they wish to be regarded as business people, utilising their farms in a responsible manner without stripping the farm of its environmental resources (i.e. hedgerows, permanent pasture or uncultivated areas). To do this, they seek an equilibrium whereby they will produce 'enough' income but with as little risk as possible. This will allow them to weather bad years whilst not requiring them to maximise the cropped area. Their stated objectives mark a significant shift away from the productivist attitudes dominant prior to the 1990s, allowing them to include conservation, diversification and rural employment among their management objectives (see also, for example, Ilbery and Bowler, 1998; Lowe et al., 1997; Lowe et al., 1993; Shucksmith, 1993; Ward and Lowe, 1994).

The Influential farmers were asked if their objectives have recently changed and, if so, what pressures have led them to alter their farm business strategies (see Table 5.3). For the majority of Influential farmers, their reasons for changing their objectives show them to be akin to "adjusters" (see footnote 3 page 144), adapting the farm business so as to remain viable but without continuing to expand the farm business or to improve yields through capital outlay (e.g. through increased mechanisation). This is primarily because of their mixed motives for being in farming which lead them to carry out conservation works or provide employment to members of the local community. Only one Influential farmer is seeking to increase production through purchasing more stock whilst another is buying land so as to establish an estate which will 'endure as an agricultural gem', and one could be viewed as in the "disengager" category (see below). Thus whilst most of the Influential farmers are running well established farm businesses, they are reluctant to borrow money and risk debt. They are keen to adjust their farms within current resources and, not being burdened by debt, feel better placed to meet new challenges as they arise. The size of these farmers' holdings also contributed to their ability to adopt such a position (see Table 5.4). Many are wary of the future and, although most have experienced
Table 5.3 Influential Farmers’ Reasons for Farm Objective Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influential farmers</th>
<th>Reasons for objective change</th>
<th>retirement¹</th>
<th>wildlife/landscape²</th>
<th>Increase viability³</th>
<th>no change</th>
<th>less driven⁴</th>
<th>mindful of future⁵</th>
<th>social needs⁶</th>
<th>market conditions⁷</th>
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1. Retirement from running the farm as a commercial unit because of age.
2. To increase wildlife/maintain landscape features through changing farm management practices.
3. Increasing the farm’s viability related to diversifying their range of farm enterprises or increasing/number of stock so as to increase profitability.
4. Two farmers spoke of how as they have grown older they feel less driven to increase their income or size of holding as they are satisfied with their current situation.
5. Given the uncertainty of support for farm production two farmers feel that their objectives have changed so as to be able to respond to future alterations to agricultural policy.
6. The restructuring of the farm labour force has alerted some farmers of the need to maintain employment for rural communities or to ensure that they themselves do not become isolated in their work place.
7. Two farmers feel that the changing demands of the market, specifically the need to produce crops and livestock in ‘environmentally/welfare friendly’ ways have led them to change their production techniques.

Source: Farm Survey
Table 5.4 Influential Farmers' Farm size (acres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm size (acres)</th>
<th>&lt;50</th>
<th>51-100</th>
<th>101-150</th>
<th>151-500</th>
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Source: Farm Survey
extremely good profits over the last few years this was attributed to the after effects of Black, or in the farming world, Golden Wednesday. A majority of the farmers interviewed are aware that support could be reduced or even withdrawn under further reforms to the CAP, and they want to be in a position to farm profitably if this happens and to continue with conservation work by reducing their costs now (see Lowe et al., 1997 and Chapter Seven). In other words, the Influential farmers appear to have largely adopted a post-productivist perspective already (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998; Lowe et al., 1993; Shucksmith, 1993), even though they farm in what may be regarded as the arable heartlands of the UK. Because of their size and general financial viability, this shift in emphasis has not required them to fully disengage from what they believe is their responsibility to produce food but, instead, they have sought increasingly to couple this responsibility with wider aims of environmental awareness. This shift represents a major one, however, in terms of values even if it is not always fully reflected in the farming system, at least at first. As Lowe et al. have argued

"the crucial distinction between productivism and stewardship as a set of values is that the former are embodied in the techno-economic system within which farmers are embedded, whereas the latter is individualised and seen as a matter of personal responsibility" (1997, p.202).

The significance of this alteration in values may help to explain why these particular farmers are considered influential amongst their peers.

Family succession may also play an important role in the development of the Influential farmers' farm strategies, 11 stated that they have successors to their businesses and a further three hope to pass it on but their children are too young to have made a decision. The only farmer in this group without a potential successor has

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6 On the 16th September 1992 when the UK dropped out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), green rates were retained. These shadow the market rates for currency and are never allowed to fall outside closely prescribed limits. Consequently, a 20% rise in the green pound after Britain's withdrawal from the ERM led to rises in support prices, and farming incomes rose by approximately 45% in 1995 (Grant, 1995).
enrolled his land into the FS-a Scheme. Moreover, his farm only extends to 100 acres and it is supported by the family haulage business. As a keen conservationist, the scheme has allowed him to retire and manage the land for wildlife.

In summary, the majority of the Influential farmers occupy large farms, are actively running them as a business and expect to pass the farm on as a viable business, although they exhibit little enthusiasm for expansion and are instead attempting to meet other objectives such as local social needs, conservation, reducing chemical inputs and the efficient use of agro-chemicals through Integrated Crop Management (ICM).

It is also clear that both Influential and Participant farmers are keen to incorporate environmental concerns into their land management strategies but, because their opportunities and approaches to farming are very different, their attitudes to conservation and enrolment into the agri-environmental network can be expected to differ. The next two sections will examine the Participating and the Influential farmers' sub-networks respectively so as to attempt to understand what factors have encouraged farmers to enrol into conservation schemes, whether farmers themselves influence other actors, and the positions they have subsequently adopted within the farmers' network and where appropriate other parts of the agri-environmental network.

**Participating Farmers' Connections to the Sub-Network**

To start to build a picture of the Participants' connections to the sub-network, the farmers were asked to list their membership of what can be loosely termed countryside organisations\(^7\) (see Table 5.5). From Table 5.5 it is clear that the majority

\(^7\) The interviewees were shown a card which listed a wide range of farming/conservation organisations (see Appendix A).
Table 5.5 Participant Farmers' Membership of 'Countryside' Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>NFU</th>
<th>CLA</th>
<th>FWAG</th>
<th>GCT</th>
<th>NT</th>
<th>RSPB</th>
<th>FoE</th>
<th>NWT/SWT</th>
<th>BFSS</th>
<th>Local Fishing/Shooting Club</th>
<th>Local Farming Groups</th>
<th>Soil Association</th>
<th>Parish/District/County Council</th>
<th>Others</th>
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Those marked in parenthesis are past members.

‡ - Another member of the family living at home is a member.
a - Formerly a member of the Farm Workers' Union.
b - Other membership included; Greenpeace and International Federation of Animal Welfare (IFAW).

GCT Game Conservancy Trust
NT National Trust
NWT/SWT Norfolk Wildlife Trust/Suffolk Wildlife Trust
BFSS British Field Sports Society

Source: Farm Survey
of these farmers have a wide range of links with 'countryside' organisations; however, only five are (or have been) members of the NFU or CLA respectively, whilst another three are members of more general environmental groups. None of the farmers has been 'officially' involved with these groups, for example as a committee member. Therefore, whilst eight farmers appear to have good links with 'countryside' organisations, they only have limited involvement with these organisations. Other Participants explained their lack of membership of the CLA or NFU in terms of 'the fees were too high for a small land owner like myself' or 'we felt there would be little benefit from membership'. When probed further, these farmers feel that, because of the small size of their farms, large organisations such as the NFU or CLA are not concerned with representing their needs. As a consequence, they feel marginalised from the organisation which they view as the dominant force in representing farming as a whole.

The farmers were asked who they take conservation advice from (see Table 5.6). Five of the Participants have only taken advice from ADAS (solely through contact with the F-FS-a Scheme) and have not actively sought other advice. They feel they do not need to do so because the management agreement drawn up under the FS-a Scheme is simple to effect and they have no intention of going beyond the agreement prescriptions. As one of the farmers explained;

'Other than getting the rules sorted out with the Ministry, knowing where you are going with them. Then it was straightforward, there was no specialised job about it, we are not growing anything as such' [Participating farmer no.6].

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8 Murdoch's (1995) account of the development of the Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW) as a breakaway Union from the NFU in the 1950s confirm these thoughts. The Welsh farmers were disillusioned by the NFU who they felt paid scant regard to the issues affecting these small farms. It is interesting that none of the Participating farmers have looked for other organisations which could represent them such as, the Small Farmers' Association or the Tenant Farmers' Association.
Table 5.6 Conservation Advisers Used by Participating Farmers

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<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>ADAS†</th>
<th>FWAG</th>
<th>CoCo‡</th>
<th>EN</th>
<th>Wildlife Trusts</th>
<th>Other Farmers</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Agronomists/ Agro-chemical Reps</th>
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† At the time of the interviews the FS-a Scheme was run by ADAS; it is now administered by FRCA.
‡ Advice from the Countryside Commission came from farmers' participation in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme
   a-British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV).
   b-Contractors for tree planting.
   c-Personal friends from Otley Agricultural College.

CoCo - Countryside Commission.

Source: Farm Survey
This kind of response confirms observations from other studies on farmers' attitudes towards conservation (see Morris and Potter, 1995; Potter and Lobley, 1992a) which suggest that enrolment into a scheme does not necessarily mean that a farmer is committed to conservation. It is also interesting to note that such farmers regard conservation (or at least implementation of the FS-a Scheme) as easy, whereas growing a crop requires advice. The majority of the Participating farmers have in the past taken advice for crop production (and especially crop protection) noting that this was essential for growing a profitable crop. The lack of need for conservation advice may be linked to the 'softly-softly' approach adopted by the AES POs, where enrolment is seen to be facilitated by the production of simple scheme prescriptions which do not require detailed conservation management (see Chapter Seven). Four farmers have consulted FWAG for conservation advice. They have done so because they want to go beyond the management prescriptions of the FS-a Scheme (or where applicable Countryside Stewardship Scheme or Environmental Sensitive Area prescriptions). Other advice has been delivered through their enrolment into other conservation schemes (see Table 5.7). Although these farmers do not think individual conservation advisers are more influential than others, some farmers did suggest that different advisers are better for certain sorts of advice. As one farmer put it;

'If you [want] scheme advice, old Bob is very good, and some of his compatriots have been very helpful, but... if you want a day-to-day analysis of something specific, then FWAG is excellent. Lizzy and her confederates are very helpful. If you want to know something particular then you can always ring up and say I found this, or done this, or this is happening' [Participant farmer no.12].

The farmers who have sought advice from other advisers are also those who are keen to develop their conservation skills further and recognise that a more detailed understanding of conservation management is necessary. The findings here, confirm those of Fearne (1990) who suggests that older farmers or those with small holdings are less likely to actively seek advice. Additionally, some advisers are thought only to be interested in serving those who can most easily afford to pay rather than those most in need (Jones, 1996). None of the Participants feel that they need more advice other than what they have already received. There appears to be no 'gap' between these farmers' needs for advice and its availability, but whether this is a reflection of
### Table 5.7 Participant Farmers' Agri-environmental Scheme participation

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CSS - Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

Woodland - Farm Woodland Premium Scheme or the Woodland Grant Scheme.

Source: Farm Survey
their limited knowledge of conservation possibilities on their farms is examined in Chapter Seven.

Farmers’ enrolment into FS-a can perhaps be best illustrated by taking three case studies drawn from the farm survey (see Box 5.1).

**Box 5.1. Participating Farmers' Enrolment**

Example one. Mr Mayfield farms 130 acres (half owned, half tenanted). He inherited the farm ten years ago from his grandfather. The farm has been in the family for 150 years. Mr Mayfield could be described as a ‘downshifter’, for on inheriting the farm he left his full-time professional job to move back to Norfolk from Hull. To supplement his income he still works on an *ad hoc* basis for the local council. His aim is to restore the farm’s wildlife to that recounted in his great grandfather’s diaries. When he first moved to the farm he realised that given its size it would not support his family. Although, he thought that organic vegetables would be profitable, he had yet to *get the key of how to do it* and realised that the scale of production and availability of a market would hinder this aim. In light of this, most of the farm has been enrolled into agri-environmental or woodland schemes (100 acres). The areas not under an agreement are either permanent pasture, grazed by his small herd of White Park Cattle, or other woodland. He feels easily drawn into the schemes *the grants have been there and it's easier to go to nature than struggle with it*. His lack of farming and conservation skills have led him to seek advice from as many people as possible. This included the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and FS-a POs and FWAG but also the local Wildlife Trust and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. The conservation advice he has been given is good but *when you got the advisers on to economics they were very cagey*. He is keen to have local people involved in the conservation projects and to visit the farm to enjoy the wildlife. Whilst he speaks to local conservation groups, he feels that the local farmers would regard him as somewhat odd because of his different farming approach (the surrounding area is dominated by intensive wheat/sugar beet).
Example Two. Mr and Mrs Grayson own 38 acres which had originally grown wheat but now is under the FS-a. Mr Grayson had worked on a neighbouring farm and had a contract with this farmer to crop his land. Mr Grayson is now semi-retired; he now drives children to school, helps his tree surgeon son-in-law and does other odd work. They had entered the Five Year Set-aside Scheme (FYSS) in 1988 because this would give them a greater and more secure return on the land than if it remained under wheat. If the FS-a had not come along they would have sold the land. Under the FYSS they had also entered the Countryside Premium Scheme which gave them a higher premium for allowing public access. The access option was not part of the FS-a scheme but they 'liked sharing it with other people' and still allowed access as they feel that 'it's for the public and there for them, and if they can't enjoy it then maybe it's a waste of money'. The Graysons have not approached anyone else for conservation advice because 'we haven't set out to be conservationists it just sort of happened'. Mr Grayson noted that 'when I was at agricultural college you got paid to fill in ditches and cut hedges and that was right as far as I was concerned. It was a bit difficult to change one's attitude'. But, 'as I get older the more conservationally minded I'm getting'. Mr Grayson now only has limited contact with other farmers, and when he does talk to them he feels they are more concerned with the amount he is being paid and the management of the land rather than the benefits to wildlife or the local community.

Example Three. Mr Smyth owns 550 acres approximately divided between 200 arable, 160 woodland, 90 grass and 90 set-aside and there are also extensive ornamental gardens and a large Georgian house to maintain. Other income from the property is drawn from a livery yard, fishing lake and the rental of cottages. The farm has to make enough money to 'keep the rest of it going'; by this he means the upkeep of the house. The area which is now under the FS-a is an interesting historical landscape feature of wooded fields, which he suspects had been paddocks for stags laid out in the 1720s or 30s. This land is very heavy, shaded and now wet because of old blocked drains. The land has never returned good wheat yields and needs to be
fenced if it is to be put under grass. The area has always been interesting for wildlife because of its situation. Mr Smyth had originally been advised by an agricultural consultant to plant trees on the area but was reluctant because 'it would lose its charm and historical background'. The FS-a Scheme has therefore allowed Mr Smyth to 'keep it like that, with a small return to do that'. Without this unusual feature Mr Smyth would not have gone into the scheme 'because you want to make money out of the land and to grow food' and he noted that 'very few people will go in with good agricultural land because it will only be a tiny percentage return on the land'. Mr Smyth has taken advice from the FS-a PO and has had occasional visits from FWAG. He thinks the most influential advice has come from ADAS 'because they run the thing'. He also seeks advice widely for the woodland and the arable areas. He is keen to mould the advice he is given to meet his own objectives. Mr Smyth has spoken to other farmers about the scheme on an informal basis, but he noted that 'you don't influence farmers, they are very independent and they have a living to make'.

It can been seen that each of the farmers has a very different approach to farm management, influencing their motivation for enrolment and how they use advice. Each farmer had to passed through a 'passage point' to enter the scheme. For Mr Mayfield, this focused on the realisation that he would not be able to grow organic vegetables on the land and the FS-a scheme has offered him a means of increasing the wildlife on the farm whilst maintaining some income. Advice for the most part has been easily obtained and, because of his limited knowledge of farming, readily accepted. For Mr and Mrs Grayson enrolment has been encouraged by retirement. The scheme will provide them with a reasonably secure income and they enjoy giving the local community access to the countryside. Because they are retired and not in the scheme to further the conservation potential of the land per se, they do not feel the need for additional advice. Mr Smyth's enrolment is based on a personal desire to maintain an interesting historical feature on his land. The FS-a scheme serves him well for this purpose. Advice has been taken from a number of different people and used
to strengthen Mr Smyth's own objectives, but when it does not fit he has no problem in ignoring it. In each case, enrolment into the scheme has been easy. There were no major concerns or questions to be overcome and the scheme matches each farmer's personal objective for the land. The relationship between the farmers and the advisers is developed very much on the farmers' own terms, aided by the voluntary nature of the scheme which relies on the farmer replying to a mailshot from MAFF, rather than being approached by an adviser, and the resulting relationship between them and the adviser is very open. Additionally, the loose prescriptions of the scheme, the ability of the farmers to match these to suit their own needs and the discretionary freedom available to the advisers (see Chapter Seven) also facilitate enrolment.

It is often thought that farmers have a tight, closed community through which they disseminate information amongst themselves (see Carr and Tait, 1993; Lowe et al., 1997, Newby et al., 1978); this is another important dimension to the network. Respondents were asked what contact they have with other farmers. Because of their low membership of formal farming organisations, most contact with other farmers is with them as neighbours and none of the sample spoke of members of their family, or indeed friends, as being farmers. The contact they do have with other farmers appears very superficial and they seem somewhat removed from the farming community. This suggests that these farmers are marginalised from the farming community. This can be explained by a number of factors. Firstly, many of the farmers are retired. Their lives no longer revolve around farming and this has removed them from regular contact with other farmers. This is compounded by the increasing fragmentation of the farming community as small farms have been amalgamated into larger holdings or sold to newcomers who use the land for non-agricultural activities. Secondly, three of the farmers have recently inherited the land and have moved back after a considerable time away. Thirdly, farmers with very small holdings have never been fully integrated into this particular local farming community because they have derived most of their income from elsewhere and these off-farm activities have shaped the community to which they feel they belong.

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9 Lowe et al., (1997) have found that the relationship between farmers and advisers is very different when dealing with the enforcement of regulations.
Even though their relationships with the rest of the farming community are limited, they were asked if they had attempted to enrol other farmers into the scheme, especially given that the scheme has proved beneficial to them. Most of the farmers have mentioned the scheme to neighbours but conversations tend to be based on payments or the management of the land rather than trying to encourage them to join. As one farmer said, and many others implied, 'I'm not a great one to try to encourage anyone to do anything'. More importantly, these farmers feel that the scheme is only applicable to farmers in similar situations to themselves with odd pieces of land which will make a better return placed in a long term scheme than if they are left vulnerable to the price fluxes of arable commodity markets. When these factors are coupled with their marginalisation within the farm network, it is easy to understand why they have not been great advocates of the scheme to other farmers. It is also interesting to note that none of the farmers have had any contact with other FS-a agreement holders, even allowing for the low uptake of the scheme and their diffuse distribution across the counties (see Figure 5.1).

These farmers appear to be an 'outsider' group within the otherwise 'close-knit' farming community. It is important to note that, whilst the farming community in general is becoming less closed because farmers live in a more urbanised society and the pressures on farming are increasingly coming from outside the agricultural sector, it is likely that these marginalised farmers will remain outside even though the shift in the community to a more open state is expected to continue further.

In Chapter Three it is argued that those who are charged with the implementation of policy are often viewed as being at the end of the policy chain. When the respondents were asked if they knew how agricultural policy is drawn up, opinion varied widely from 'I haven't got a clue...stuff comes through the post and you comply with it or not', to more informed and sophisticated analyses of the continuing pressures to reform the CAP, rapidly evolving markets of products linked to the demands of supermarkets, and mounting concern for the environment. But these replies do not place them in a position to answer questions on how policy is made which helps to explain why only two think they can influence policy development. More cynically,
Figure 5.1. Distribution of Participant and Influential Farmers

[Map showing distribution of Participant and Influential Farmers in various locations such as Cambridge, Kings Lynn, Norwich, Lowestoft, Thetford, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and Cromer. The map includes symbols for Participant Farmers and Influential Farmers, with a scale indicating 10 miles.]
the majority of the farmers feel that they would not be listened to either because 'I don't think a lot of big farmers would listen to me, they would just walk off' or as this farmer summed up:

'You never get in there, you've got to be the right person in the right place, you've got to be big enough to do it. I mean how many small farms do you know that are on committees, government benches or any other thing? Plus the fact they are too damn busy carting straw, they haven't got time to sit and watch their men...which is a pity because like I say, people go to the wrong people all the time for advice’ [Participating farmer no.12].

This final statement sums up what many feel to be the real circumstances of their situation, even if they are interested in influencing policy. Firstly, they lack standing within the farming community because they only managed small farms in an area of large farms. Secondly, they are either fully employed running the farm or have to supplement their income through activities off the farm, with little time to devote to committees or becoming involved in farming organisations. Thirdly, they feel large organisations like the NFU or the CLA do not represent their needs. Their low self-esteem is, indirectly, reinforced by the fact that, although they have received visits from ADAS for compliance monitoring, none of them had been consulted by ADAS and or any other conservation group in relation to the environmental monitoring of the schemes (although two farmers with SSSI had been visited by English Nature).

In summary, the Participating farmers' contact with the agri-environmental network appears limited and simple. The linkages are mainly made through the scheme project officers. In this sample there is no direct contact with the NFU or CLA who are involved in lobbying for policy changes, and neither do these farmers have many opportunities to influence or represent other similar members of the farming community. They are at the end of a policy cul-de-sac from which feed back on policy development - including the extension of policy to other like-minded individuals - is highly restricted. This situation is not necessarily a problem to these individuals because they are largely content with the scheme. They feel they understand what is expected of them; they do not perceive a 'gap' between their aims and those of the government. The scheme's longevity has allowed them to settle into a pattern which benefits them financially and (where appropriate) environmentally. They are also
delivering the environmental goods that the government, conservation lobby and public want. These findings are, however, problematic in other senses. As a marginalised group they will not influence uptake in the farming community more generally, risking that the policy remains on the margins of agricultural practice. This may, of course, be the preferred position of agricultural policy makers from DGVI downwards who remain primarily committed to efficient food production. Moreover, this group is very uncritical of the policy and as such will contribute little to its evolution, either in principle or in practice. They represent the safe 'bankers' for policy officers which need 'numbers' of participants to demonstrate the 'success' of the policy in terms of 'uptake', but they contribute little new knowledge and experience of value for expanding (and modifying) the scheme among the majority population of larger farms still committed to managing economically viable farm businesses.

Although these farmers' connections with the agri-environmental network are severely constrained, this does not necessarily mean they are unable to influence the policy process. For example, farmers' enrolment into FS-a and other AESs brings them into contact with the schemes' POs who may be influenced during the negotiation which leads to an agreement. These interactions form part of the POs experiences and understanding of how farmers are affected by the AESs and why farmers decide to participate. These interactions help form the POs' resources which are then used in other phases of the policy process. Consequently, it is important to understand how farmers and POs develop relationships if our understanding of the policy process is to be developed beyond a description of the network; this is examined in Chapter Seven.

**Influential Farmers' Contact with the Sub-Networks**

The Influential farmers are a highly respected group of land managers who have varied connections with organisations working at both regional and national levels. What is of interest is how they fit into the farmers' sub-network and their ability to influence it. These farmers were also asked about their membership of countryside organisations (see Table 5.8). All the farmers are members of FWAG, thereby
### Table 5.8 Influential Farmers' Membership of 'Countryside' Organisations

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† Relative living at home is a member.

a-Director of County Show.
b-Vegetable co-operative.
c-Suffolk Horse Society, Bobdale National Apple Society, Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE), Hawk and Owl Trust and Severn Wildlife Trust.
d-British Organic Farmers, FoE.
e-National Sheep Association.
f-Soil Association.

TFA Tenant Farmers' Association.
BASC British Association of Shooting and Conservation.
SPS Suffolk Preservation Society.
Agron Agronomist.

Source: Farm Survey

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showing their strong interest in conservation. Additionally, the majority were members of the CLA and NFU. They were asked if they participate in any conservation schemes so as to establish if they have links with the network through this route (see Table 5.9). 13 of the 15 farmers are either current agreement holders, are in the process of applying for funding or have received a grant for conservation work in the past. The remaining two have both considered joining a scheme, one had previously started to draw up an ambitious scheme involving the Countryside Commission, the then National Rivers Authority (NRA) and Anglian Water but this had failed to materialise. The other farmer has not found a scheme which suits what she wants to do on the farm. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that 11 have spoken to ADAS and a quarter have spoken to the Countryside Commission for advice on conservation schemes. Others contacts include English Nature, although this is primarily for advice on SSSIs, or the Wildlife Trusts concerning County Wildlife Sites. Other assistance has come from the County Council for two farmers, and the RSPB and Game Conservancy Trust (GCT) have been contacted by three farmers respectively. How they seek this advice is very different to the experiences of the Participant farmers. In particular, their links with other actors of the agri-environmental network at the local level have primarily come about through their membership of FWAG. As members of FWAG, each farmer receives a free visit when s/he first joins, and then is entitled to a free visit bi-annually. If they so wish, FWAG will visit more frequently but a fee is charged. FWAG’s role during these visits is not only to try to encourage farmers to adopt best conservation practice for the cutting of hedges, digging of ponds or coppicing of trees, but also to help farmers with their applications to AESs. The FWAG officer will direct farmers to the most appropriate scheme and will help them draw up any management plans that are required. As a consequence, these farmers have a more pro-active approach to their enrolment into the schemes. Firstly, they have decided to join FWAG. Secondly, FWAG informs these farmers of schemes which may be of benefit to them. This has shifted the process of enrolment. The Influential farmers have actively sought to be enrolled
Table 5.9 Agri-environmental Scheme Participation by Influential Farmers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Fs-a</th>
<th>CSS</th>
<th>ESA</th>
<th>F&amp;CGS†</th>
<th>woodland</th>
<th>other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influential Farmers</td>
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<td>*(applied)</td>
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<td>none</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>•</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>*(applied)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>•</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

a - Project sought with Countryside Commission, NRA and Anglian Water but failed to materialise.

CSS - Countryside Stewardship Scheme.
F&CGS† - The Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme (this scheme terminated in 1996).
Woodland - Farm Woodland Premium Scheme or the Woodland Grant Scheme.

Source: Farm Survey
through their desire to develop their environmental activities. This is very different to the majority of the Participant farmers who seek to match the schemes to their purposes, rather than consider what their farm could offer to conservation. In part, this reflects the fact that the Influential farmers' objectives for their farm business are more diverse than for the Participant farmers. Consequently, their enrolment to conservation, and subsequently AESs, has required them to go through more complex decisions or 'passage points'. These decisions are linked to their understanding of the conservation tasks they can carry out and their objectives for increasing wildlife on their farms. How farmers have developed these and matched them to their other objectives is examined in Chapter Seven.

The wide range of conservation advice received by this group of farmers means they are better placed to say whether they have found conflicting views between the conservation organisations. Over half said they have received conflicting advice, but they are well aware this is in part due to the different objectives of the organisations. They do not see this as a problem, as they do not feel that the conservation organisations have vastly different views and anyway the Influential farmers are keen to point out that the advice they receive is 'weighed-up' against their own objectives, especially when the project will significantly reduce profitability, divert staff from other more important (financially) tasks, or reduce their ability to adhere to what they view as 'good farming'; for example, producing weed seed free cereals.

Those who feel qualified to make a judgement agree that FWAG is the most influential source of advice. Explaining why this might be, a member of a FWAG county executive noted:

'well FWAG is the amalgam of all of them because the executive committee is made up of the County Council, the Wildlife Trust [and] ADAS. And I think FWAG is quite influential because of the fact it is representative of a broad spectrum of views...they can say things that ADAS can't or the County Council is constrained from doing because of politics ....So it has been able to speak with a sometimes clear voice, and sometimes it gets into problems with the national organisation. But then, I think that perhaps Suffolk FWAG is unique amongst the FWAG movement because it has bigger membership base, and it has worked quite well in this county [Influential farmer no.1].
By being an amalgam of organisations FWAG appears to have won the respect of the Influential farmers. The farmers recognise that FWAG advisers are capable of understanding the farm as a business and the need for an integrated approach to conservation and farming if conservation practices are to be widely adopted. What tends to infuriate these farmers are groups calling for dramatic changes to their farming systems (e.g. going organic or changing from specialist to mixed systems) as this farmer explained:

'The ones that get up farmers' noses are the extremists who make all sorts of demands - which will definitely cost the farmer a lot of money and take no account of the need to make a living or the people who work for him...at the end of the day we all want to make a living...there has to be room for compromise' [Influential farmer no.11].

As was noted at the beginning of the chapter, these farmers have definitely moved away from a purely productivist approach to farming. They enthusiastically place themselves in the roles of food producer and environmental guardian. They view this strategy as essential if they are to continue to be allowed to manage their land without externally enforced constraints in the form of regulations. More positively, they feel they are at the forefront of the changes taking place. As one farmer commented; 'I'm slightly ahead of my time - it has only been popular for two or three years and I've been interested in it for five or six'. Pragmatically, however, the cost of the environmental projects has to be met, at least in part, through grants from AESs. Without these many of the farmers could not have adopted environmental objectives at a time of contracting farm profits and increasing management costs\(^{10}\). For them, enrolment is a two-way process. They cannot carry out conservation tasks without grants and the grants would not exist if they are not willing to enter schemes. Thus, whilst they may choose to see themselves in the environmental vanguard, this belies the fact that they are heavily influenced by strong signals from government and the environmental lobby.

Given that the majority of the Influential farmers want to develop an integrated approach to farming and conservation, they were asked if other advisers, and

\(^{10}\) It is frequently noted that larger and more profitable farmers are the first to adopt new innovations or apply for grants (see Eldon, 1988; Fearne, 1990; Munton et al., 1987)
especially those dealing with agro-chemicals, mention the environment when giving their recommendations. The extent of environmental awareness amongst these advisers is quite variable, and responses ranged from;

'no, none at all. Everyone at that level is only geared to maximum profits, they don't talk about environmental concerns. Its just getting on to the agenda, but he does listen to me' [Influential farmers no.5].

to

'I think it probably is a particular chap that I have is actually very keen, he has worked on people to go to FWAG...he's all right, maybe that's the sort of adviser I wanted' [Influential farmers no.1].

However, the general opinion is that the advisers do not talk about environmental concerns unless prompted. A common theme emerged. To the respondents, the advisers have either been chosen because of their environmental concerns or they have become aware of the need to give information on the environmental effects of products as this has been demanded by their customers. From this it appears that advice is 'negotiated' rather than 'given' and this process is not confined to 'commercial' advice but also to conservation advice. Whilst farmers want advice that is reliable, they will seek out those who can deliver advice which matches their own attitudes. As one farmer said:

'we tend to have one chap. He knows our farm and we have a degree of mutual respect and trust, and you know the advice you will get is sound' [Influential farmer no.1].

It would seem that no matter what type of advice farmers use, the dialogue that builds up between farmer and the adviser is an essential part of a long-term negotiation. FWAG advisers have developed this facility through their professional understanding of the complexity of the farming system. Thus conservation advisers not only provide a service but also attempt to persuade farmers to adopt environmentally friendly techniques. This complicates the process of enrolment, as it is no longer always clear who is being enrolled by whom. Indeed, it may not be a question of enrolment of one by the other, but the development of a mutual trade with both parties benefiting from the relationship, and the two sides agreeing to pass through a 'passage point' or overcome a problem so as to facilitate the development of the relationship (the
'bargaining' between farmers and conservation advisers during the setting up of AES agreements is discussed further in Chapter Seven).

The Influential farmers participating in conservation schemes were also asked if they have attempted to encourage other farmers to go into any of the Schemes. Those with a keen interest for conservation replied with answers such as, 'I never stop...neighbours, friends, people I bump into' or 'oh yes, always nattering away'. Whether they think they have been successful in this regard is less easy to establish.

For those who are less keen on conservation, other important objectives they have adopted for the farm business are their topics of conversation, such as converting to organic production or ICM. Another farmer said he tries to encourage people through the organisations into which he has an input;

'Through LEAF and all that kind of thing, and through FWAG, of which my brother is chairman of the local county, yes we do, I mean obviously we do, that is part of what we are about... we are sort of organisation type people, I suppose' [Influential farmer no.12].

In general, these farmers are keen to share their views and experiences with others, and they are often known to each other (Figure 5.1 shows the locations of these farmers). Whilst none are neighbours, they have made contact through organisations to which they belong. Some belong to the same NFU Area Branch and others have met on FWAG walks. Three farmers are members of Farmers' Link, a forum set up to develop a more sustainable approach to farming in Norfolk (Farmers' Link, 1996). Through these various contacts, the farmers are able to share experiences and, perhaps more importantly, to bolster their views and find legitimisation of their 'new' approach to farming. The network linking these farmers is also developed through their position on local, county and national committees (see Table 5.10). Through these positions they acquire the responsibility of speaking on behalf of other farmers on a wide range of issues. Nearly half of this group have served on a FWAG committee (although this is also influenced by the way these farmers were selected for the sample). Cox et al. (1990) have noted that:

"Usually, a chairman [of FWAG] is a well-respected and well-connected local farmer with a long standing interest in conservation, typically someone who has been or is a senior officer or committee member of the local NFU or CLA and may have also served on the committee of the local trust" (p.91).
Cox et al., do not describe what makes a farmer influential or why these farmers are chosen to represent other farmers, and so the Influential farmers were asked to explain why they think they have become involved with these committees. A number of explanations were offered. Firstly, the majority employ at least one other farm worker, releasing the farmer for off-farm commitments. Indeed, one farmer noted that he has purposefully expanded the farm\textsuperscript{11} in the past to overcome problems of isolation. As he put it;

\textit{'We only had 250 acres when I first came (in the mid 1960s). That size was barely viable for myself and one employee and I didn't want to get to the point where I had to run it on my own because it is lonely enough out here. Nice to gear it up to two and let me do other things like this co-operative job and I'm quite involved with the NFU'" [Influential farmer no. 12].}

The interview with the NFU Regional Policy Adviser also touched on this issue. The NFU are concerned that the loss of farm labour is constraining their members' ability to voice their opinions and are trying to improve this situation by encouraging farmers to use fax and other forms of information technology. Secondly, Influential farmers are also aware that small farmers are limited in the amount of time they can devote to non-gainful activities such as committee membership. However, the factors of size and time are not the only reasons why this sample of farmers are regarded as influential. There is the question of personality. Representatives of the organisations upon which they serve note that it takes a certain type of farmer to be willing to talk on behalf of other members of the farming community, and they are described as 'articulate' or even 'vociferous'. But this ability to speak on behalf of others is also problematic because, however well informed, it is difficult for any one individual to unravel the complicated and often locally-specific issues surrounding conservation and farming.

\textsuperscript{11}This farmer has increased the holding by purchasing a additional 150 acres and farming under contract another 350 acres.
### Table 5.10 Influential Farmers' Committee/Executive/Council Membership of Farming and Conservation Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>NFU</th>
<th>CLA</th>
<th>MAFF†</th>
<th>CoCo</th>
<th>FWAG</th>
<th>GCT</th>
<th>NWT/SWT</th>
<th>Farmers' Link</th>
<th>LEAF</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of farmers†</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

†Some farmers may have served on more than one committee.

‡ Agricultural Minister's Regional Panel.

a - Member of Parliament (now retired).

Source: Farm Survey
Through these relationships with conservation and agricultural organisations, the farmers are not only being influenced by the POs and other advisers on the ground, but also by the other members of the committees to which they belong. The organisations noted that it is difficult to discern the degree to which they are influencing farmers on these committees or how strongly farmers are influencing them. Most of the organisations note that these farmers are not dogmatic in their approach, although they had expected them to be. A member of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) council noted: 'I am surprised by farmers on the committee, they are willing to listen and their minds are frequently changed.' He had expected the farmers to hold to their productivist views. However, these descriptions of their apparent ease of enrolment should be treated cautiously. Farmers on committees of organisations such as FWAG or SWT are already 'converted' (Westmacott and Worthington, 1974). By agreeing to be on these committees they are showing their considerable commitment to conservation. As such, their agreement with ideas being put forward at these meetings is not surprising. Yet these farmers are still having to pass through 'passage points'. The farmers and the other members of the committee have to agree to certain policy or scheme conditions so as to move the agenda forward. This may be represented as a problem to be overcome, such as delaying the cutting date of herb-rich pasture to increase benefits to wildlife but in doing so reducing the quality of the hay the sward will produce. Reaching a consensus is not an easy task and does not always lead to total agreement, but at least a working agreement (which may be experimental) that allows ideas to move forward. The development of such consensus is built on trust. The farmers have committed themselves to conservation ideas through involvement with the NGOs, and the NGOs have decided to work with farmers through seeking their ideas and their involvement on their committees.

To establish if the Influential farmers feel they are in a position to influence the policy making process, they were asked if they see themselves at the bottom of the policy chain. Opinion varies widely from 'definitely at the bottom' to;

'I don't because I'm a member of the Norfolk CLA committee and I think our input is valuable and we are listened to as a lobby. If you want to influence things you easily can...through lots of committees, there are so few activists' [Influential farmer no. 9].
Another farmer who belongs to a number of regional and national committees suggested;

'we are basically at the bottom of the chain but I have always found that the people I talk to are receptive to ideas when they are put forward' [Influential farmer no. 13].

Farmers who do sit on committees, and especially those at a national level, believe they do contribute to the decisions taken, although none elucidated exactly what impact they have made. Their feelings are not perhaps surprising, as they are unlikely to give up their time to such committees if they do not feel that their efforts yield benefits. It is interesting that these farmers see their chance to influence environmental and agricultural interests and, in some cases supermarkets, on the problems and practicalities of farming and conservation through their membership of committees rather than through their enrolment into AESs or their contact with conservation advisers. Their view of the policy process is very top-down. Influence is only gained by speaking with regional and national actors. By contact with these actors, the farmers feel they are in a position to directly influence those who decide what shape policy should take. They do not appear to have any conceptualisation that their relationships with conservation advisers could influence the policy process and they view the POs as simply deliverers of policy. Nor do they recognise that their enrolment in AESs and the process of negotiation which accompanies the development of management agreements may too be a route through which ideas can be fed into the policy process.

Conclusions

It is clear from the differences between the Participants' objectives and those of the Influential farmers that the two samples represent two very different types of farmer. However, it is difficult to draw direct comparisons between the two groups as they have been chosen according to very different requirements. Drawing on the work of Ward (1994), it is possible to categorise these farmers (broadly) as being either 'disengagers' or 'adjusters'. In this sample, those farmers who have been enrolled into
the FS-a Scheme have used the scheme to disengage from farming, supporting their wish to retire from full-time work or farming, whilst not necessarily requiring them to be fully committed to conservation at the level of principle (see Morris and Potter, 1995; Potter and Lobley, 1992a). Their enrolment is built upon what they can gain from the scheme rather than what they can do to increase wildlife. Their enrolment is reactive; it has often been in response to a letter through the door rather than being actively sought out. The extent of the wildlife benefits these farmers will provide will depend on their further enrolment to conservation ideas. This increased enrolment may be restricted by their limited connections to the rest of the agri-environmental network. Conversely, the Influential farmers' enrolment has been pro-active. They have developed a positive relationship with FWAG in particular, a body they trust and which has led, in many cases, to their involvement with other conservation advisers through the AESs. However, these farmers' conservation objectives are also generated by the schemes and grants on offer and so the process of influence is multi-directional.

The Participating farmers' links to the sub-network are much more limited than those of the Influential farmers. The Participants’ linkages appear to be constrained by the size of their farms, the time they have to spare and the financial resources they have to use on other activities. This in turn reduces their understanding of other farmers’ needs and concerns, and inhibits them from voicing their own problems as they do not feel they would be listened to. In light of this, these farmers appear passive recipients of policy. Indeed, why should they be concerned about future policy developments as long as the FS-a Scheme is not threatened? (and they are quite sure that it is unlikely to be withdrawn). The scheme will last their lifetimes and so there is no need to become embroiled in debates which are unlikely to affect them. Their passive approach is also witnessed in their use of advice. In the majority of cases they do not appear to question the advice they receive or at least they do not say if they disagree with it. Instead, they appear to accept and abide. To encourage further enrolment of such farmers seems simply to be a question of devising a scheme which matches their disengaging outlook.
By comparison, the Influential farmers are considerably more dynamic. As "adjusters", these farmers are keen to develop their approach to farming so as to not only be good farmers in the financial and technical senses, but also to restore themselves to a position of guardians of the countryside. To achieve this, they are actively involved in the farmers' sub-network and they have contacts, not only with the 'street-level bureaucrats', but also with the regional and national actors of the agri-environmental network. Through these links the opportunities for them to be influenced and to influence others is increased. Whilst they do not always believe they can represent others, it is apparent they believe that what they do is the right way forward and others should also be encouraged to adopt their approach. Consequently, the use of Influential farmers as advisers must be viewed cautiously, so as to avoid any one voice being heard above others. Such farmers are however, open to influence because they treat advice and their roles on committees as negotiated processes developed interactively between themselves and other actors. They seek to influence, but allow themselves to be influenced, leading to a complex relationship between them and the other members of the network. The exchange of advice is a two-way process. Relationships are built on a basis of trust, with each party agreeing to work with, rather than against, the other. The further enrolment of these farmers will depend on not only their increased understanding of conservation but also on the availability of the schemes to which they can submit applications.

The different linkages formed by farmers within the agri-environmental network indicate where they may influence the policy process. For the Participant farmers, this appears limited to their contact with AES POs, in some cases conservation advisers and the membership of some 'countryside' organisations but only at a primary level. The Influential farmers have more opportunities to influence the policy process through their more diverse and involved relationships with other actors in the network. It is important to recognise the role played by the farmers so as to understand that the policy process does not stop when schemes are implemented and that they are not solely recipients of policy but also contribute to the policy process, thereby emphasising its recursive nature. Chapter Six examines the structure of the regional and national actors' networks so as to understand how actors working at these levels are enrolled into the network and how they feed into the policy process.
Chapter Six

The Regional and National Networks

Introduction

Studies of policy networks and pressure groups have shown that the relationships formed between the state and lobbyists can become one of mutual dependency (Rhodes, 1981), where each benefits from the resources of the others and through their shared experiences (Majone, 1986; Rhodes, 1997). It is also argued that "the impact of the network depends on the relative power potential of interacting organisations i.e. the resources that they have and the way they are exchanged" (Smith, 1993, p.59). Consequently, the final products of the networks are influenced by the goods and services each actor can bring to the process, and it is the way these relationships are formed and sustained that becomes prominent in the continuing evolution of the policy and how in turn "governance lies both within and beyond the state, residing in complex alignments of many different actors" (Murdoch, 1995, p.188).

The development of a community within the network depends on the ability of the actors to develop a consensus around which they can work and so form a stable identity, which in turn is dependent upon their ability to negotiate and bargain their resources. Where consensus is achieved, a strong policy community will evolve. Smith notes that "policy networks demonstrate that the power of pressure groups does not depend on their resources in terms of their ability to lobby government but derives from the types of relationships they have with government" (1993, p.75). It is therefore often the ability of the pressure groups to form and maintain alliances with the state which determines their capacity to influence the direction of policy. It is important however, not to view this solely as a process which occurs at national level
involving only Whitehall and non-governmental organisation (NGO) headquarters staff, but to understand that this includes the many different actors working at the local to the national levels, and that the thoughts and reactions of individuals and organisations across the various levels are fed into the mechanisms of policy formulation and implementation.

In addition to alliances with the state, organisations involved in the policy process form partnerships with other groups so as to increase their lobbying weight. This can result in one organisation speaking on behalf of others. In Chapter Three, it was noted that the powerful are those "who are able to enrol, convince and enlist others on their terms into the network" (Murdoch, 1994, p.15). Murdoch and Marsden take this further. They note that "to explain power...we need to examine how collective action comes about, or how actors come to be associated, and how they work in unison. And...that we need to analyse how these resources are defined and linked and how actors impose definitions and linkages upon others" (1995, p.372). This study has sought to understand how organisations which assume the key roles within the network develop these relationships across the various policy levels.

The number of actors involved in the agricultural and environmental policy networks has expanded with the proliferation of institutions in this field over the last 25 years (Long, 1998). This growth has corresponded with the increased awareness of environmental issues by government and private groups alike. The move towards a revised structure of governance has allowed NGOs increased access to the policy process. This has encouraged them to refine and intensify their lobbying components (Princen, 1994). The environmental NGOs have also gained considerable strength from an expanding membership. This now equates to nearly ten percent of the total UK population (Dixon, 1998). In addition, the use of government agencies to implement policies has increased the number of actors involved at the different levels of the network. These changes to the way policy is developed and implemented have also resulted in changes to the relationships formed between the organisations. This chapter will examine the issues raised above, firstly, by considering the role of the regional actors; secondly, by examining the links between the actors working
regionally with their national counterparts; and finally, by reviewing the interaction between national lobby groups and the government.

**The Regional Network**

The regional network comprises a number of core actors from both governmental and NGOs. These include the POs of the AES, the NGOs that have county or regional offices e.g. CLA, NFU, RSPB, etc., and those organisations that work specifically at county level e.g. the Wildlife Trusts and FWAG. This network is also populated by a number of statutory agencies that have regional or county staff, e.g. EN and the Countryside Commission. Other prominent actors include the County and District councils. There are also numerous smaller groups that seek to influence the county planning and environmental agenda from a range of recreational, environmental, agricultural and social standpoints, such as parish councils and project officers of AONBs and tourism/rural development partnerships (See Clark *et al.*, 1997b; Goodwin, 1998; Goodwin and Painter, 1996).

Whilst the regional network does not exist in isolation from the farmers' and national networks of actors, it can be considered distinct for two reasons. Firstly, the actors are locally specific in that they either work within a county or region. Secondly, these actors regularly meet formally and informally to discuss, in the main, how national issues are pertinent to the locale, rather than discussing the development of national policies. This is not to say that they work in isolation or have little regard for wider policy debates, but constraints on the time and resources available to them largely limit their actions to local concerns. Links with the national actors are formed through a number of pathways which are often defined according to organisational structure. These linkages are set out below.

The manner of representation of environmental and agricultural groups at local level is dependent on the objectives of the organisation, in terms of the goods they wish to
deliver e.g. local advice or regional lobbying, and the resources available to them (Lowe and Goyder, 1983; Rhodes, 1996). With these considerations in mind, members of the regional policy network may be divided into three broad categories. Firstly, there are those who seek to influence through the provision of advice to farmers e.g. FWAG, Wildlife Trusts and the statutory advisers from ADAS. Secondly, there are those groups which seek to react to and influence local policy decisions, for example regional branches of the NFU, CLA, RSPB and the National Trust. Thirdly, there are those statutory agencies and local authorities which are primarily concerned with planning control and environmental management of county specific issues e.g. the maintenance of SSSIs or specialist county projects run by County and District councils. These differing remits have some bearing on the ways in which the organisations are linked into the network.

To understand the structure of the sub-network, it is necessary to examine the inter-organisational linkages between the actors. The respondents were asked how they build their relationships and almost inevitably the actors have gone through a process of consensus building, irrespective of their critical outlook or remit, as these two interviewees explained:

'Someone said you can never compromise conservation but I think he was wrong because if you don't compromise you totally lose it. There is always room for compromise. Conservation is a moving target. It evolves and we are learning that you can't have it as fixed management because it depends on so many different things and what we are trying to conserve is only there because of man's interference x hundred years ago [EN].

'You state your position, if you disagree you find common ground and you build on it, that's the way to make progress. Occasionally you agree to differ on things and go away. Basically, you build on what common ground there is, and this is why things have moved because there is some common ground now, whereas there was damn-all years ago' [Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT)].

That said, the development of consensus appears only to be formed on certain issues, ideas or where there is mutuality. An example of this is the guide to biodiversity planning in East Anglia endorsed by EN, the Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trusts and RSPB (EN et al., 1996). In other words the opportunity for, and development of consensus, tends to focus around broad objectives, such as the
maintenance and rehabilitation of threatened species or habitats. Detailed decisions can be more disputational but the search for agreement around broad objectives, even if poorly defined, has strengthened the relationships between organisations and allowed the development of a common voice for their demands.

Of the regional actors, the conservation NGOs are most aware of the need to develop links with other actors so as to produce a stronger, more coherent message which in turn can be put forward to the statutory agencies and the agricultural organisations, as this respondent explained:

'The conservation movement in Norfolk in the last five years has come on [in] leaps and bounds in terms of speaking with one voice. On key issues, it has come about through increased liaison. We are being taken increasingly seriously. The conservation bodies have got their act together and are much more professional than we were a decade ago' [NWT].

Such a statement emphasises how conservation bodies have attempted to increase their standing in the political arena through the development of consensus and a greater understanding of how political processes work. Through increased liaison, the environmental groups have provided themselves with an opportunity to exchange resources and focus their activities so as to be seen to have a clear set of objectives for conservation in the countryside.

It was a recurring theme that the relationships being formed between the agricultural and environmental groups are a new phenomenon and that this is important for the further development of agri-environmental policy. For example, the NFU commented that, previously, environmental concerns were often put forward by environmental NGOs with little regard to their implications for farm incomes. But now, the environmental NGOs have a better understanding of the needs of farmers and their demands are tempered according. As a NFU Policy Adviser explained:

'Everyone [conservation organisations] realises now that you need to make a profit. They realise if you don't get co-operation, especially voluntary co-operation, you won't get anywhere' [NFU].

This quote also suggests that environmental organisations have accepted, in general, the voluntary principle as a condition of effective policy implementation. Whilst this
might be regarded as a victory for agricultural organisations and farmers, it could be argued by conservation groups that as a result farmers are more willing to enter conservation schemes. In turn, through this conciliation, agricultural groups have accepted that their members must recognise environmental demands if they are to maintain their traditional property rights without the imposition of formal regulations. By agreeing to recognise each other’s problems and aims, the actors have passed through a 'passage point' and, by adopting a common understanding of the issues, a basis for further discussion and negotiation has been established.

The environmental groups are also keen to point out that, although they want to develop consensus, they are not willing to forsake other priorities, even if they know this will lead to no agreement. As these two interviewees explained,

'It depends on the case. Sometimes you have to get a middle of the road position because you will never get the ideal one that suits both sides. But if you feel very strongly about something then we will sit there and not move, if something is very wrong' [EN].

'If it is a priority for the Trust then we will be in there like a terrier, even though you might feel you won't win' [NWT].

In this case, the NWT feel that they could never condone water abstraction in Breckland no matter how important this is for vegetable growers in the area. Even though the NWT realise they will not be able to halt this practice, this will not stop them from campaigning against it. As a result, in some situations, consensus can only be built around broad objectives.

The survey showed that the regional actors' contacts with farmers vary. Similar finding have been made by Clark et al. (1997b) in their study of alternative farming enterprises (AFEs) in the Pennines. They found that, although the number of institutions (e.g. tourism organisations, district councils and rural development initiatives) promoting AFE had increased, it was "difficult to argue that the interviewees in the institutions were well informed about AFEs, or about AFEs in the study area, or about how AFEs might interact with local farming activities. The understanding of AFEs and farmers exhibited by the key officials did not generally extend much beyond basic received wisdom" (p.739).
Whilst direct comparison cannot be made with Clark et al.'s study, their findings highlight that there may be a 'gap' in some actors' knowledge of farming and farmers. To examine whether such a 'gap' is apparent, the regional actors were asked about their contact with farmers. Obviously, for some members of the sub-network, their job involves liaison with farmers, especially the ADAS POs and the FWAG advisers. However, a number of the regional interviewees have very little contact with farmers and landowners. They were asked whether they seek contact or think it necessary to have some formal links with farmers. Many of the organisations in this category feel that there is little point in them having direct contact with farmers because they can rely on those groups whose principal task it is to liaise with farmers to inform them about farmers needs and opinions. This stance was recounted by a County Council Countryside Manager when he said

"no, but a lot of our work is done with farmers and landowners and we are on the executive of FWAG. We come across one way or another a lot of farmers, but we like to think that what we suggest isn't completely pie in the sky because of our contacts" [Norfolk County Council].

and by a statutory agency

"Not internal[ly], but we have a lot of contact through various partner projects...in Countryside Stewardship and the Countryside Premium Scheme we were, but we don't tend to involve farmers in our internal policy liaison group - several farmers are on our Commission. I don't feel we lack for hearing their views. Some would argue that the farming interest is too well represented on the Commission, that's down to the Secretary of State' [Countryside Commission].

Whilst many of the interviewees feel they do not need to work with farmers directly, they did note that on occasions it is necessary to work with selected groups if they are to present a united front. For example, through the preparation of the report 'Action for Wildlife in East Anglia' (EN et al., 1996), EN, Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trusts and the RSPB have worked closely together to provide a guide for local authorities on how to protect and enhance local biodiversity. But to put policy into action, it is necessary to work with all the organisations concerned, as the NWT explained:

"There are certain fora I attend where inviting certain organisations would complicate the picture, because what you are trying to do is get a consensus on the conservation viewpoint. Where we are trying to build a consensus over
blocks of land we need to involve the land managers, not just farmers and landowners, but all those involved. We can dream up all the strategies we like sitting in this room, but in the end we have to persuade people' [NWT].

To examine the formation of sub-network relationships in more detail, the interviewees were asked firstly, if they feel it is possible to influence some groups more than others and, secondly, whether some groups attempt to dominate. The interviewees noted that the relationships between the actors change according to the composition of the meeting. Consequently, they may seek to influence in some situations but may adopt a more passive or negotiative role in others. These roles are in turn influenced by the actors' resources, that is to say, where actors hold expertise in a certain area this will allow them to adopt a more influential stance. As a result, the position of being an enroller or the enrolled is dependent on the situation, as these interviewees noted:

'[It] depends on the group and the nature of the group you deal with....There are different fora where you are influencing as much as negotiating' [EN].

'When it comes to farmland birds then the RSPB leads the way, at a Countryside Stewardship review then the Wildlife Trust will know about heathland and the Local Authority will look at landscape' [RSPB].

'Each organisation has different things to offer.... Each organisation has its own strengths... and you know who is playing which role in which particular meeting, [it is] important to have these different strands' [NWT].

The idea that each actor has something to contribute is a reflection of the resources available to them. In addition, it requires the actors to focus on where best to use their skills so as to benefit best the goals of their organisation. For example, conservation organisations such as RSPB and Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) are aware that, if they are to have a significant impact on wildlife conservation in East Anglia, it is necessary to influence farmers and to provide them with advice. However, they are constrained from doing this because they lack the necessary resources. Additionally, it will repeat the efforts of organisations such as FWAG, and to a lesser extent the County Councils, who are already working in conjunction with farmers to secure conservation objectives. Instead, organisation such as the RSPB and SWT seek to influence those groups already working with farmers, as SWT explained:
"We have to be very focused. We are not trying to duplicate FWAG's job - so we would like to influence FWAG rather than have a direct contact with farmers - other than for specific sites such as county wildlife sites or heathland. But for the typical farmer ... we don't have the time, resources or to an extent the ability to give field advice to them or to influence how they behave - we would prefer to influence others who influence them and they are more likely to listen to the NFU or FWAG than Suffolk Wildlife Trust' [SWT].

ADAS noted they adopt a different stance, partly because they have to be responsive to local requirements whilst also meeting the demands of government. Their role can be very difficult as an ADAS Team Manager explained:

"Everybody feels they are caught in the middle, and we are sensitive to MAFF's policy shifts. We can talk to local colleagues, for example statutory agencies and NGOs, and you are influencing to a degree but you don't want to stifle their own ideas and stop them coming forward...MAFF have been influenced by our proposals and we in turn have had to be won over by the Broads' Authority, RSPB, EN' [ADAS].

This response indicates that the position of the enroller and the enrolled changes according to the issues under debate. When new issues are raised, the members of the network will look to those who have expertise in this area. When this expertise is conveyed, it may well result in enrolment if other actors agree with what is being put forward. In this case, not only are ADAS attempting to enrol, but they also claim to be open to influence from others. This is not perhaps surprising given that ADAS's role as a negotiator has been strengthened by the shift towards more open styles of policy making and the empowerment of regional agencies. Furthermore, because ADAS has to work the middle ground liaising between farmers, environmental and agricultural lobby groups and MAFF, they have become an important 'nodal point' within the network (Rhodes, 1997). As such, their key operational position should not be underestimated.

It should also be expected that as new issues come to the fore, the relationships between the actors will change. For example, if sea-level rise becomes a threat to nature reserves on the north Norfolk Coast (e.g. at Cley Marshes), it is anticipated that actors who hold important resources for overcoming (or at least ameliorating) these problems will become key actors (see O'Riordan and Ward, 1997). Therefore,
the positions of enroller and enrolled will also change as new actors are brought into the network and the importance of the resources held by each organisation changes in relation to the issue at hand.

The development and the formalisation of the regional network through meetings such as ESA review panels or regional Agri-environmental Fora have enabled the regional actors to play an important role in the development and implementation of AESs. The network that has formed appears to be based on trust, arising from the accommodation and bargaining of ideas and resources between the actors. It was frequently argued that without the development of a consensus and the definition of workable solutions through such meetings, it would be very difficult to put AESs into effect. The members of the regional network see this as their primary role in the policy process. (How they see their role in the monitoring and evaluation of schemes is explored in Chapter Eight).

It is clear from the interviews that, although the actors are keen to develop better relationships with all the members of the network and to trade resources where this is expedient, they are also cautious, partly because they do not want to break the trust that has been slowly built up between them and the other (opposing) actors. This might explain why the actors seemed so content with the network that has been formed and the mechanism it represents for passing on their ideas and influencing others. In this respect the network does not represent a threat to their organisations' demands because the actors are prepared to work within well established 'rules of the game'. They all appear to have been enrolled into an incremental approach to policy making, viewing the relationships formed to be the best possible given the traditional conflict between agricultural and environmental groups. At an organisational level, however, environmental actors think policy is not 'moving fast enough'. Many speak of a need to 'stand back and look at the whole picture' rather than confining conservation to designated areas or piecemeal schemes and regulations. The agricultural organisations are also cautious of the way policy seemed to be moving. Whilst they are aware that their members need to be seen as the 'guardians of the countryside', they do not want this imposed on them. Moreover, agricultural interests
feel that farmers' freedom to farm and, more specifically, their ability to maintain their incomes are put at risk by environmental demands.

The next section examines the links between that national and regional actors, before moving on to discuss the role of the national actors in shaping and setting policy objectives and whether the originally 'closed' agricultural policy has changed through a more open style of governance.

Links between the Regional and National Networks

The survey sought to understand the links formed between the regional and national networks, so as to conceptualise how those working to put policy into action feed their experiences to those who work within the broader remit of the national policy. Very simply, the survey shows that the way relationships are formed depends primarily on the structure of the organisations. For example, the Wildlife Trusts and the RSPB have very different forms of contact between national and regional staff. The former are primarily concerned with county issues, and this in turn structures their relationships with the national umbrella organisation. The survey included seven interviews with employees from the Wildlife Trusts and they frequently noted that the relationship between the national organisation and the counties had recently changed. There was a deliberate restructuring after a *period of decline* in the late 1980s and early 1990s which culminated in the renaming of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC) as The Wildlife Trusts (WT) and the appointment of Simon Lyster as the WT Director General. This has resulted in a major shift in the structure of the organisation, as this interviewee explains:

*The whole system has changed so that now the powerful are the county trusts and they tell the national office what they want, that's the change.... The*

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1 The concerns by the two groups shows that although, great steps have been made to integrate agriculture and conservation, there are still considerable problems to be overcome. In addition, because the study focused on the key actors at the regional level rather than speaking to all groups with countryside interests, it is possible that some organisations may be very dissatisfied with the working and the structure of the network.

2 The Wildlife Trusts comprise 47 County Trusts and a National Head Office based in Lincoln.
ownership of the organisation is nested with the counties, that is where we are strong' [NWT].

The restructuring of the WT has led to the County Trusts becoming more active in advising the national office, utilising the resources of the counties rather than attempting to steer from the centre. The WT were also aware that, although they have strong membership (260,000 members), their profile at the national level and especially through the media was very low. As this employee explained:

'The Wildlife Trust became aware that whenever Radio 4 talked about the environment they didn't invite the Wildlife Trusts to comment, but now that has changed through Simon Lyster and Nick Milton [campaigns officer]' [NWT].

The appointments of Simon Lyster from Friends of the Earth and a campaigns officer at the national level had allowed the WT to develop a media profile. Additionally, it was felt that Simon Lyster's contacts with 'decision makers' had enabled the WT greater access to the national actors. The new balance between the national office and the county trusts was reiterated by a national office employee when asked how he saw his role of passing information from the national to the regional:

'I work in partnership with the [individual] Wildlife Trusts and they take the ideas to the counties. [It works] through peer group pressure, there are no lines of management as in the RSPB [Wildlife Trusts].

By comparison, the RSPB\(^3\) has a more formalised structure of steering groups feeding information to and from the national and regional offices. This includes a national agricultural team, which consists of senior staff from all departments at the Society's headquarters and some regional staff, and two support teams who work on upland livestock and lowland arable farming. The support teams are seen as the practitioners and the main agricultural team is there to address wider policy issues, both internal and external to the organisation. There is some common representation between the support teams and the main agricultural team. The RSPB uses these teams to pass the strengths of the regional colleagues to those working at a national level and to inform

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\(^3\)The RSPB has four country headquarters (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) with six regional offices in England and three in Scotland. The regional offices are in turn responsible for the reserves which are managed by wardens. In total, the RSPB has approximately 1,000 staff. The RSPB has one million members.
the regional offices of future changes to agricultural policy. Consequently, the links
the organisation has with farmers, either through specific species management (e.g.
Stone Curlew or Cirl Bunting Project Officers who liaise with farmers) or contact
with groups such as FWAG at a regional level, play an important role in the
dissemination of information between those with hands on experience and those who
are lobbying government. Other organisations, such as the National Trust\(^4\), have a
similar organisational structure with regional team managers feeding information from
property managers up to the national officers and vice versa.

Organisations such as the CLA\(^5\) and NFU\(^6\) employ very different mechanisms. The
NFU rely partially on their members to relay information though specialist committees
and in part through regional policy advisers who have contact with individual farmers
and land owners as well as links with county and national groups. The NFU are
currently seeking to develop their communication channels with the membership.
Furthermore, the widening agenda for the countryside (including environmental and
consumer demands) is leading to an increasing need to inform the membership of
changes and to feed information back from the ground level so as to notify the
regional and national policy officers of the effects these new issues are having on
farmers. However, given the large and diverse membership of the NFU, its ability to
develop a stance which goes beyond simple statements is very difficult, as illustrated
in the last chapter.

The CLA has a very formalised mechanism for passing the views of its members to
the national body. Within each county branch there are four committees. These

\(^4\)The National Trust has a head office in London and 15 regional offices. The Trust has a total of
6,000 staff, this includes full-time, part-time and seasonal staff but not volunteers. The National
Trust is the second largest landowner in the UK and has approximately two million members.
\(^5\)The CLA has 50,000 members, with 46 county branches across England and Wales. County
secretaries usually cover several counties. The head office is based on London and there are also
offices in Brussels and Strasbourg.
\(^6\)The NFU had 120,000 members in 1996. There are 180 headquarters staff based in London. There
is a Brussels office and nine regional offices with 185 staff across the country. Affiliated to the
regional offices are 350 local offices which employ 500 Group Secretaries. The Group Secretaries
are responsible for one or two local branches. From the local branches, members are elected to the
county and regional committees. These committees in turn elect members to the 20 headquarters
committees. These deal with different commodity sector interests. In addition, each county elects
members to the NFU council.
discuss the environment and water, the agricultural and rural economy, legal and parliamentary issues, and there is a committee on tax. These in turn are answerable to the county executive ‘where the real work is done’ at a county level. A copy of the minutes from the executive meeting then goes automatically to headquarters. In addition to this, the CLA has a council elected from the county executives. The number elected is related to the size of the county group. This is based on one council member per 1000 members of the county group. There are approximately 50 farmers who serve on the council from a total of 170. Given the size of the council, it was important to ascertain if this mechanism is capable of producing any clear outcomes or objectives. This was put to a county CLA Secretary and he explained:

'like any democratic system if you have a particular interest or concern, you have to get other people also picking it up and running with it. Until you do that, you are not going to be listened to. For example, at a branch committee if someone has a real bee in his bonnet, the first thing he has to do is get the branch committee to agree on it. If they do, then you can put it up to London and see what they think. And then the committee working on it in London have to agree on it. It's a snowball and if it doesn't pick up any snow it won't get anywhere' [CLA].

The national CLA office also stressed that it is not always possible to consult the membership on issues when they have, for example, a short reply window to a consultation document. However, their primary aim is to use the opinions of the membership and especially the county committees. This in turn can result in massive consultation processes. The difficulty then comes in the second phase after consultation, as a National CLA Adviser commented:

'it's not difficult to get peoples' ideas, it's trying to hammer out a consensus. That is what my job is about, tackling myths and false conceptions. We, the CLA, want to be positive and statesman like. We however have a remit for the welfare of the nation and therefore we can't be radical. The NFU can take an indefensible line because that is what their members want. [In turn] you are more responsible on issues that really matter' [CLA].

Consequently, although the agricultural organisations have exemplary mechanisms for attaining the views of their membership and are keen to be led by their opinions, this process is dependent on a number of conditions being met. Firstly, it is reliant on members having the time to pass on their views. This is constrained by the continuing reduction of the agricultural labour force and the increasing bureaucracy placed on
farmers (see Chapter Seven). Secondly, gathering the opinions of the members is dependent on there being sufficient time for the organisation to conduct consultation. Thirdly, the organisations are restricted in what they can put forward from consultation with members as they need to keep within the remit of the organisation and to be politically expedient. These requirements may work against the current wishes of the membership. Despite these problems, the CLA and NFU still think they have good links with their membership.

It was noted earlier that FWAG have an important role to play in passing ideas between farmers and the conservation bodies. It has been suggested that the organisation lacks the resources to work beyond the farmers' and regional networks (Cox et al., 1990), and the linkages between the county offices and the national headquarters vary across the country (Cox et al., 1985a). FWAG's main strengths lie in their ability to interpret the rules of schemes and to translate these into workable plans for farmers. The FWAG officers interviewed noted that the major problems for the organisation hinge around two issues. Firstly, there is a frequent turnover of county advisers. When new advisers are appointed they have to be brought 'up to speed' on conservation and county issues which leads to the county offices being viewed as 'constantly young'. This in turn affects the continuity and the quality of advice available to farmers. Secondly, FWAG has previously had poor links between the county and national offices; this has often led to the duplication of work, for example, the production of leaflets on conservation practices. FWAG has attempted to overcome this by developing a national framework which will give the county officers more support, including the recent appointment of regional managers. But up to now FWAG's activities have remained firmly centred on the regional and farmers' networks. The county advisers are not unduly worried by the lack of national standing because they feel their links with other organisations at the regional level is sufficient to have their views and opinions put forward to the national network.

The statutory agencies have well structured feedback mechanisms between the regional and national staff. The movement of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme from the Countryside Commission to MAFF resulted in the transfer of the
Countryside Stewardship Scheme POs between the Countryside Commission and ADAS\(^7\). The POs noted that when the scheme had been administered by the Countryside Commission they had had direct contact with the national managers at headquarters in Cheltenham. However, the POs now feel that under ADAS their ability to liaise with the 'policy writers' is reduced. The POs were questioned about this change, and this is a typical response:

'Yes, indirectly in this organisation [ADAS]... I think we all have less involvement, we all have to go through John. At the Countryside Commission we had direct access. That doesn't necessarily matter, that we as individuals don't have contact with the policy makers, as long as somebody does, and your views are represented. Whether that is actually happening is too early to say....They have a very tight system [at ADAS], only John is allowed to raise policy issues with MAFF. If I ring up, I get told off for not going through the right channels...I don't feel it is working because I'm not getting answers back very quickly' [Countryside Stewardship Scheme].

His team manager went on to say that

'if you want an answer, it has to go up too many rungs of the ladder to get a sensible response in time. It is very bureaucratic which is damaging to the scheme, it's no good if you can't give someone an answer quickly' [Countryside Stewardship Scheme].

However the POs were hopeful that as ADAS is restructured and becomes FRCA, and the POs from the Countryside Commission began to settle into the work patterns of ADAS, such problems will lessen. The POs for the ESA and FS-a schemes have a similar system with a Team Manager reporting the POs' views to Regional teams and Whitehall and vice versa. These POs are more content with the way the system works. As one commented: 'I wouldn't expect MAFF to work on all the recommendations, they have constraints. Generally the system works well.' In addition to steering groups within ADAS, there is close liaison between MAFF and ADAS through the Memorandum of Understanding\(^8\) which forms the contracts

\(^7\)At the time of the interview, ADAS's statutory section consisted of five regional offices. Under these worked eight Team managers which dealt with AESs. AES POs in turn liaised with the team managers.

\(^8\)ADAS (now FRCA) are contracted by MAFF to implement regulations and schemes. These contracts or memoranda of understanding are negotiated between a contract manager at ADAS and the relevant department at the Ministry. ADAS is required to report back to MAFF, who is regarded as the 'customer', on a quarterly basis.
between the two organisations for the implementation of the AESs. There are also strong links between MAFF and the five regional managers, as MAFF commented:

'if they have a problem - if I can help, they ring up and discuss it. I keep them informed about policy development and ask them for comments on a routine basis, - very close relationship.... They might talk to organisations at a local level, whereas we might talk to the groups at a national level about policy' [MAFF].

This final comment stresses the links between the regional and national networks with information flowing between the two, albeit along different pathways, but resulting in a wide range of opinion reaching the policy makers and the POs alike. These interviewees are generally satisfied with the relationship between ADAS (especially those working on AESs such as ESAs and FS-a Scheme) and MAFF who think that 'it seems to work well' with good communication between the regional and the national levels. The development of FRCA, which has a dedicated policy unit in Whitehall, will also further facilitate the exchange of views between the two levels and this may encourage FRCA to become more closely involved in policy decisions.

EN and the Countryside Commission, both of which have undergone restructuring in the last few years, work with specialist teams looking at particular areas of policy such as the uplands or arable agriculture. The EN teams have an additional remit which requires them to prioritise research project bids so as to decide quickly which projects will be funded after the organisation's funding limit has been announced for the year. By doing so, the national actors are fully aware of the work to be conducted by the regional teams and the problems they hope to solve through their research. The Countryside Commission is similarly concerned to prioritise their work so as to provide the highest impact for the funding they receive. To attain this, it is necessary for the regional and national teams to develop a dialogue, as this member of the Countryside Commission's headquarters staff commented:

'At this level [national] a lot of policy ideas go on at an informal level so a lot depends on the individuals involved. I've always been a group type person. I try to make regional and national perspectives fit together. Those working at the regional level are not experts and work on many different issues at a time. The Specialist Subject Teams are very useful for getting input to and from the regions [but] two way [communication] doesn't happen when there is a lack of staff or there are more pressing priorities' [Countryside Commission].
The staff at the Countryside Commission and EN are concerned that continuing reductions in their funding levels will not only hamper their impact on all forms of environmental policy, but will make communication between regional and national staff more difficult as demand on their time continues to grow and time for discussion on wider issues is diminished.

In summary, the linkages between the regional and national networks are connected to the organisations' structures and remits. It is not surprising to find that the linkages are diverse and structured according to the organisations' resources. Indeed, one would expect that large organisations such as the RSPB, CLA and NFU would have well developed mechanisms for the transfer of experience and advice between their headquarters and regional staff. In contrast, those organisations that work primarily at a county level, such as FWAG, have much weaker links with their national office but far greater links with the farmers' network. The Wildlife Trusts adopt a different strategy, working from the bottom up, with the County Trusts setting the agenda for the national group.

The linkages explained in this section are also useful for identifying any 'gaps' in communication between the national and regional actors. It would seem that most of the interviewees are generally satisfied with the links between the national and regional staff. Indeed, many of the interviewees note that the specific establishment of mechanisms to aid the flow of opinions and views between the actors is important to the development of the organisations' position on agri-environmental issues. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether the interviewees are being frank in their assessments or whether they are 'putting their best side forward' not wanting to reveal disharmony. Discordance is illustrated by the differing views of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme POs and those of the other AES POs and their relationship with MAFF. At the time of the interviews, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme POs had only been working under MAFF for four months and had not had time to build a strong relationship with their parent body. Furthermore, they had moved from an organisation which they felt stood for conservation (the Countryside Commission) to one (ADAS) which has historically facilitated many of the negative changes in the
countryside they are seeking to 'repair'. It is also important to note statutory agency staff are generally concerned that their links between national and regional actors might be weakened, as staff numbers are lowered as a result of continually diminishing budgets. If this is the case, then 'gaps' between intent and delivery may become a problem.

The National Network

The national network can be conceptualised as consisting of those who attempt to influence the policy process, either through the lobbying of senior civil servants in Whitehall or those directly involved in policy setting. There are numerous organisations who seek to sway policy development (see for example Grant, 1989; Lowe and Goyder 1983; Maloney et al., 1994), but this study focuses on those who have prominent positions in the agri-environmental policy debates and who might be considered part of the 'inner policy community' (Smith, 1990).

These actors use both formal and informal meetings to attempt to influence policy development. The two most prominent formal meetings involving the government are the Agri-environmental Steering Group and the National Agri-environmental Forum (see Chapter Two). The Agri-environmental Steering Group comprises representatives of MAFF, DoE and the countryside agencies EN, English Heritage and the Countryside Commission. It meets three or four times a year, whereas previously meetings had been on an ad hoc basis. The aim of the Steering Group is to assess agri-environmental policy and to set the agenda for the Agri-environmental Forum. Those involved are aware of the importance of these meetings for the future direction of agri-environmental policy and are keen for the Steering Group to work. Many of those interviewed feel the establishment of the group reflects a change in attitude on the part of MAFF and a willingness to be more open and flexible, as this interviewee reflected:

"The setting up of the Agri-environmental Steering Group and Fora is an indication of MAFF saying in a way, they are a service provider and we are"
the people who should be setting the agenda. That is a very positive way of
looking at it, and you could say that MAFF are bound to have their own
agendas, and all they are doing is window dressing, but I don't think that
would be a fair assessment. They are looking for advice from others as to
what they should do' [Countryside Commission].

The EN representative reiterated this view, but did point out some unease within the
Steering Group:

'At a national level we want to work openly with statutory agencies and it is a
very genuine attempt to work. There are tensions, a) between the culture of a
department [MAFF] which has been used to working in its own monolithic
way, and b) seeing DoE coming into the agricultural arena, [they] were a
little unsure of themselves and frightened of treading on toes' [EN].

In the past, there has been criticism of MAFF for being secretive and inward looking.
A member of DoE commented that this might be a result of the majority of their
policies being produced in the EU for UK implementation:

'MAFF are totally EU driven, that is what makes them different...[they are]
great at grappling with programmes and trying to squeeze more advantage
for UK agriculture. The environmental component is new...[there is] tension
between green MAFF and others who are there to maximise agricultural
competitive advantage' [DoE].

In addition to the Agri-environmental Steering Group, there is the National Forum
which is a meeting of the NGOs and those government departments and agencies
dealing with agri-environmental issues. The forum has a high profile. At the time of
the interviews (1996) it was chaired by Tim Boswell, a Junior Minister of Agriculture.
The Agri-environmental Forum is widely welcomed by the organisations involved.
Firstly, it is thought that it will allow the development of better adjusted policies and
so help MAFF answer policy problems. Secondly, it will provide another opportunity
for NGOs and statutory agencies to lobby MAFF. Seats on the Forum were given to
the CLA and NFU, and conservation organisations were offered seven places. The
decision as to who would fill these seven appointments was left to Wildlife and
Countryside Link. MAFF commented that it was difficult to decide who sits 'because
a lot of people wanted to - it is larger than what is ideal, but although everyone
would like a small one, we don't know how we can cut down on people'. The aim of
the Forum is to identify issues within the working and future development of the

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AESs. The NGOs view the Forum as an important way to influence opinion in MAFF and they are keen to show a united front at these meetings:

'We put a lot of effort into the meeting, going as an organisation, and as [Wildlife and Countryside] Link. So when someone stands up they have a lot of backing, and it appears to MAFF that there is a lot of consensus' [RSPB].

The development of Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) has been important in bringing conservation organisations into the political arena (see Chapter One). Although Link has an important role to play in the lobbying of government by conservation groups it is interesting to note that organisations such as the RSPB see it as only one way to influence, and that they also go to the Forum to put forward their own opinions. At the time of the interviews (1996), MAFF saw the development of the Forum as a benefit to all parties, with themselves gaining the information they need to devise and develop policy and the NGOs having a chance to put forward their views through a group which has high profile because of the involvement of a minister. The development might also be viewed as a way for MAFF to use resources (in terms of expertise on rural and conservation issues) provided by other government bodies and the NGOs so as to benefit their needs, and allow it to reduce its investment in costly research and consultation in these areas which would otherwise be necessary.

Other Inter-organisational Links in the National Network

The national actors were asked about their connections with other organisations working at the same level. Organisations subscribing to Link see Link as a 'forum and a place for common priorities' where they 'try to focus on issues where there is a focus, and to get groups to come together were we have consensus on issues, and by doing so, to make a stronger representation.' Link does not try to get all its members to agree on a certain issue but tries to build alliance between organisations where there is common ground so that a joint statement can be produced. In this way, groups which do not agree with what is being put forward simply do not undersign
the statement. By doing this, the members of Link are given the freedom to develop alliances where it suits their organisations' own stance on a particular issue. This is seen as an important element of Link, as these two interviewees explained:

'If you don't agree with the statement they are putting out, your name doesn't go on, but you are still just as much a part of the organisation. Clearly you don't agree with everything, such as the CPRE, who are really a single campaigning organisation, and we have a wide range of interests and we disagree and agree with them on occasions' [National Trust].

'That isn't to say we agree on everything. Set-aside is a classic, we are not favourable and RSPB are, we try to work as a united front. We did with the Ramblers' Association and we sometimes work under Wildlife Link, and sometimes just with one organisation, such as WWF and the publication of Growing Greener [Ballock et al., 1996]' [CPRE].

The relationships between the organisations have become well-established through Link and serve not only to act as a way of 'pooling resources' but also as an 'information grapevine' (Lowe and Goyder, 1983). The organisations involved can work together to increase their political weight, but as with the regional networks the organisations are keen to pursue issues specific to them and are prepared to work alone where this will aid their own purposes.

The need to develop a consensus in the field of agri-environmental policy is not restricted to conservation groups. Indeed, agricultural organisations are keen to develop links not only amongst traditional allies but also with environmentalists as another important way to lobby government. As this interviewee explained:

'I think it is really important we can find common cause with other groups. Government like it if there are separate voices coming to them saying different things and they can say we are getting it about right because we are in the middle of the criticism. There are quite often times when the NFU policy is exactly the same as other environmental groups, and we will happily work in alliance for policy change. That will be a continuing feature. It is really important because it is good for us, and them, and for our members to realise there are other legitimate interests and farming isn't the only thing. It helps change government and the EU in a way that couldn't have been done if we worked alone' [NFU].

In addition, the NFU can use this evidence to influence its own members by showing that what they suggest is backed by conservation groups. This reveals another side of
the NFU. Not only do they represent their members, but they also seek to influence them.

As with the regional network, consensus often amounts to no more than general statements of intent rather than specific objectives. Nonetheless, these are used as points from which to extend the dialogue. The development of a consensus requires finding common ground. As this interviewee remarked:

'It is always a bit of a bargain having a good relationship. The point is that you should always know where you are likely to agree and be open where you disagree, and to be pragmatic, so as to make common causes in a win-win situation. If we argue against each other we both lose in public' [NFU].

The statutory agencies are also keen to work with other groups as EN explained:

'In the English Nature statement it talks about empowering others, and giving them a lead. And as our grant is decreased, so we increasingly work with other organisations, and we have joint accords to work with other organisations. For example, we have one with National Parks and the Countryside Commission. We also have them with MoD and Environment Agency. These are very formalised. Whereas, we also work with NFU and CLA which is not so formalised and we make sure we have a relationship which keeps flowing' [EN].

The emphasis on the empowering of others is interesting as it shows that EN realises that it can gain more influence from their limited funds by working in partnership with other organisations.

Such partnerships with NGOs may help the government agencies put forward issues which would have otherwise been politically impossible, as this interviewee explains:

'A government agency wanted to promote a particular paper on an issue in the Agri-environmental Forum that had been totally rejected by the secretariat [of the Forum], who said we are not having that. Well...we nipped back to these people the next day and said we agree with you on this issue. Why don't we write the paper and put it to the group. Because it is easier for us to say things that statutory agencies can't. It is far more easy for me to go along and write a paper saying the Ministry of Agriculture must give more resources to a, b, c and d. Its performance is appalling in x, y and z and this needs to be done, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Now a statutory agency may agree entirely with us, but could not possibly say that because they will get sat on by the Department of the Environment or whatever and won't be able to do it. So we can raise radical ideas on behalf of statutory bodies. At the end of the day the outcome may be what everybody wants and nobody will be offended. It is
not just a question of us getting our own way, we can help other bodies get theirs. I've recently done a paper with the NFU for the next Agri-environmental Forum meeting. By the two of us coming together and agreeing on this paper, we hope to make a lot more progress than if either one of us had done it' [CLA].

These partnerships result in win-win situations and represent good examples of resource exchange between the organisations involved. Given the rise in partnerships between statutory agencies and NGOs (for example, through Biodiversity Action Plans) it is likely that this type of relationship will increase, especially as the budgets of statutory agencies are decreased and they look to other ways of maintaining their influence. This type of relationship is built on trust and requires careful management to ensure alliances are maintained. The statutory agencies are also aware that if they are not seen to be pushing forward ideas, then the government may use this as a reason for reducing their budgets still further and limiting their functions to the implementation of schemes.

The use of informal meetings also plays an important role in the development of relationships as this interviewee explains:

'Informally [you have] a network of people you know who you see at the same events like the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, CLA, Association of County Councils, CPRE, National Trust, whole network and the relationship is such, that if I want to know what the RSPB are doing I ask Emma and she would do the same with me. For example, I was able to feed information out to Emma, it wasn't confidential it was all in discussion. It works quite effectively because it was informal. If it was formal you wouldn't be able to say half as much and you might not be able to learn half as much from them' [Countryside Commission].

The informal mechanism works as a way of passing information between organisations and testing whether new ideas are acceptable. The organisations concerned can develop a common position or at least some consensus before going to talk formally. This is a process of enrolment, but one which may be two-way if the organisations exchange ideas to so as to build a common approach.

As within the regional network, some organisations are regarded as being more influential on some topics than others and this was repeated here:
'I think there are some bodies that are listened to more than others and each group has its focus about which it can talk effectively. We all know each other so well and we know what our skills are and what our bodies stand for. Sometimes, the discussion has taken place so often you don't need to, like old aged couples in tea shops, because you know each other so well, you don't need to articulate' [NFU].

The expertise of each organisation is related to its focus. For example, the RSPB has the greatest knowledge of birds and their habitat requirements; CPRE have a detailed understanding of rural development implications; the NFU's forte is farmers and farming; the CLA are concerned with property rights; and the Countryside Commission are skilled in landscape and access issues. This does not mean that any one group has a right to dictate how these issues are dealt with, but within the policy process their resources are related to their expertise. This means that when particular issues are raised they may be consulted as the initial source of information and it is through this process that each organisation's niche is developed within the network. It also means that as new issues are brought to light other actors with the necessary skills are brought into the network. This may explain why some actors are currently seen as dominant. For instance, the rapid decline in common farmland birds and their use as indicators of the 'health' of the countryside, coupled with campaigning to raise public awareness of this decline (e.g. the Skylark Action Plan), may explain why the RSPB currently seems to hold a strong position within the network. But no one actor holds all the resources necessary to inform decisions relating to the development and implementation of AES policies, so no single actor has been able to develop a dominating position.

Nonetheless, the scale of resources that can be brought to bear allows some members to develop a stronger position within the network. As the RSPB noted:

'A lot is down to resources and time; we can afford it, smaller organisations struggle. However, the Council for Archaeology are very vocal and have only a very small staff but a lot of influence, so it is very variable and of course it depends on personalities' [RSPB].

The size of an organisation's membership frequently dictates the number of staff they can employ. The growth in the membership of environmental NGOs over the last
decade (to nearly 5 million people in the UK) has contributed considerably to the NGOs ability to exert pressure on the government (Dixon, 1998).

Although having dedicated lobbying staff is without doubt an important way to gain access to the network or to influence others, some actors may be drawn into the network because of their considerable public support. This was pointed out by a National Trust interviewee when asked why they had become involved in the Agri-environmental Forum:

That's an interesting one, I don't know, we are very strong because we are very big and have more members than others, and clearly we carry a lot of clout if clout is needed. But, on the other hand we make far less noise than CPRE or RSPB because we have far less people working on policy than them. It could be that government see them as more influential, but perhaps when we do speak up, people take notice because of our size' [National Trust].

The ability to remain within the network requires the linkages to be sustained, especially if policy is to be taken further so as to achieve the organisation's aims. Callon (1986) notes that once individuals or organisations have been enrolled this is not the end of the process; the enroller has to continue to develop the links and to maintain the relationship. The process has to be continually worked upon. This has been a problem for conservation organisations in the past, especially if they have been viewed as ideological or promotional (Grant, 1989: Lowe and Goyder, 1983) and apparently unwilling to develop some cohesion between themselves and government. The continuing development of the network through alliances, built on trust, bargaining and negotiation between the actors, has altered its structure. For the conservation organisations to utilise this change to their advantage, this has required them to become 'respectable' members of the community and this, in turn, has facilitated their entry into the 'inner policy core'. This change was noted by a member of the farming lobby, as he explained:

They are getting better at understanding how government works....I think Robin Grove-White was saying how environmental lobby groups have had to change a lot in terms of character and how they work. There is a very big

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9Lowe and Goyder (1983) found that the National Trust was keen to only work with the government on an informal basis so as to be seen as independent by the public and so preserve its non-political image.
difference between the skills required to put an issue on the agenda and skills to keep it on the agenda and moving up. Environmental groups have been good at the former. We can't afford that; you can be more effective by being quiet but always there, saying the right thing at the right time and to the right people.... Some environmental groups don't set themselves a realistic target, and when they don't achieve it they think they have failed and move on to another issue. Incrementalism rather than the big leap. Those NGOs who are most effective are by being patient. In a sense you have to get everything into its place and then introduce the idea and it will go through. They will always find a reason why something won't happen i.e. something in the way, so move the pieces round to start with; you set it up and it goes straight through' [NFU].

Previously, there has been criticism of a lack of consultation between MAFF and environmental organisations. In addition, the agricultural lobby groups, such as the NFU and CLA, have been seen as part of a 'closed policy community' which has excluded other organisations which might challenge new policy developments (see Chapters One and Two). This position has begun to erode as the demands on the countryside have changed over the last decade or so. The agricultural organisations also feel that their relationships with MAFF, although very good, are no longer realised at the expense of other lobbyists as this interviewee explained:

'I also had the feeling that the Union has a special relationship with MAFF, and in some respects it probably does have a special relationship with MAFF or government generally. But, I don't reckon... that there isn't the same opportunity for other lobby groups to have exactly the same relationship that we do. Clearly there is obviously some common interest between MAFF and the NFU. But I...have been quite amazed how the NFU's agenda is actually quite different to MAFF's and it is not always the same agenda, they do differ and it leads to us having different opinions about things. The original point you are making as to whether we have a special relationship. There is always a suspicion from environmental groups that we sneak down the corridor and say "you can't believe a thing the RSPB are saying." I don't honestly think that happens, it hasn't happened in my experience...it is more a conspiracy theory. I think the biggest problem is that there are a lot of civil servants, there are a lot more cock-ups than conspiracy that's how government works.... The other thing I think is that RSPB, CPRE, BTO and everybody, the same civil servants are quite willing to listen to these people. It's my job to go and talk to them and be their friend and you know that is the job of being a lobbyist, there is no point in the environmental groups complaining they haven't got a special relationship if they don't go and put in the work, the ground work to go and get that, that's my view. I think corporatism is a load of rubbish!' [NFU]
This response raises some important issues. Whilst the NFU might have a special relationship with MAFF, this is built on the resources the NFU can share with the government. For example, the NFU's relationship with farmers places them ideally to say whether a policy will succeed or whether farmers will resist it. However, as agricultural policies have become more complex, reflecting environmental and consumer demands, MAFF have been required to seek advice from elsewhere so as to develop 'acceptable' policies. The symbiotic relationship that existed between agricultural organisations and senior civil servants in MAFF (Grant, 1995; Smith, 1990; Self and Storing, 1962) has slowly been eroded by external influences, such as the CAP, and by internal influences from environmental groups. Secondly, environmental groups have seized upon opportunities to develop similarly close relationships with civil servants. This has been enabled by their growth in size, their increased understanding of the policy process, their enrolment into an incremental policy approach and the opening up of government, or more specifically MAFF, as they now realise they can no longer develop policies without the expertise of other groups.

Turning to issue of consultation, the survey sought to analyse the respondents' opinions of the formal consultation processes which result from new policy initiatives. It soon became clear from the interviews that organisations did not view the consultation document 'Agricultural and England's Environment' (MAFF, 1993) which set out the possible options for the AESs as important, but their role in its conception, writing and content. As this interviewee explained: 'we like to think the consultation document is only part way along and we have been in beforehand'. Another interviewee took this further:

'The formal consultation is always a bit of window dressing in a way because once you get to that stage MAFF have mainly made their minds up about what they want to do, but it is the fact that they have involved us prior to that, that has been useful' [Countryside Commission].

These views were shared by the government departments. As the interviewee from the DoE explained:

'On most Regulations there is a fairly sophisticated process [that] goes on, depending how sensitive the topic is. You might find that at the beginning there will be meetings with the relevant interest groups, because if it is
environment you will have obviously the NGOs that are interested, you will have the groups representing the interests of those who are about to be regulated, and other groups. So as policy makers we are always looking for a quiet life so, we are always looking for ways of squaring the circle. First of all working out how best can we implement policy that ministers appear to want, and then sounding others out and saying if we did this, what do you think of that, and quite often you find our ideas are shaky and outside groups have quite good ideas as to how to stitch things together. Particularly if it is non-controversial you will go through that process and you will end up with some proposals which are quite different from where you started off. As an administrator I wouldn't be depressed by that, it is simply the process of getting something that works down on paper. Where it is very politically sensitive, in a way consultation or sounding out with outside groups is even more important because you want advanced warning of where the pitfalls are going to be. So informal contacts followed by a draft proposal is a customary way to proceed [DoE].

This was reiterated by the civil servants at MAFF:

'it's normally the case that what you do before you go out to formal consultation is more important than what you do after, because consultation proposals set up a detailed plan of action which is hopefully carefully balanced rather than setting out options.... Often [we] have meetings or, people interested will come and ask to talk to you, that's the stage that ideas get fed in. By the time you get to consultation your ideas are fairly sharply formed. Yes we do make changes after the consultation, a lot of the biggest changes have been thought through and represent a fairly delicate compromise. You can guarantee that organisations x, y and z will say you've done too much in one direction and a, b and c will say the opposite' [MAFF].

To be in a strong influencing position, lobbying organisations have to become part of the 'inner policy community' and civil servants have recognised that the NGOs have competence and expertise to give to help strengthen policy initiatives.

More generally, the role of MAFF is not only to meet the demands of the lobbyists but also to take into account other factors which impinge on agri-environmental policy, such as further reform to the CAP, the WTO talks and the level of expenditure available to them as dictated by the Treasury. MAFF were asked if they saw themselves in the middle, attempting to develop a consensus between the various organisations who lobby them, or whether it worked its own way forward with the AESs, to which they replied:

'We are interested in several things which aren't always about averaging out views. We are interested in value for money, a government pre-occupation
and it's quite easy to get a conspiracy amongst interest groups which amounts to them agreeing to put their hand into the public pocket...we have to present something that farmers can see the point in and which they are prepared to do. You can pay people to do things, if you are prepared to pay enough, but it's back to the point of value for money - if you're going to achieve something at an acceptable cost you have to look at it very carefully in light of what is practicable, these are the overall policy objectives' [MAFF].

Thus, although MAFF acknowledge that they do have to look for ways of producing policies which meet the demands of the lobbyists, this has to be balanced against priorities which are beyond their control. These requirements may be dictated by more powerful elements of the government or by wider international commitments. The gap between the demands of lobby groups and the ability of MAFF to meet them is frequently beyond the Ministry's control. The importance of the Treasury and EU Regulations show that, although MAFF have a critical role to play in the setting and shaping of agri-environmental policy in the UK, the power to allow these policies to develop is held by other actors. Actors in the Treasury will decide what level of expenditure can be devoted to agri-environmental policy and this will be 'weighed' against numerous other non-agricultural issues. The significance of the EU in developing agri-environmental schemes is also important and leads to questions relating to the network developed at the international level which are beyond the scope of this study (see for example, Lowe and Ward, 1998; Mazey and Richardson, 1993; Clark et al., 1997a, for full descriptions of the networks and lobbying at this level).

Conclusions

The agri-environmental policy network has become more complex as the demands placed on the countryside have increased. Complexity has been encouraged by a move towards a more open and consultative approach to policy-making by the government. The enrolment of various interests has depended on the organisations' resources and the importance these have for facilitating the policy process. In this
way the networks have become self-regulating as membership is dependent on the actors' resources, as well as their ability to accommodate and bargain with others so as to facilitate the network's aims.

The regional and national networks are not only separated by geography but also by function. In the case of the regional network, the actors are primarily concerned with implementation. They strive to refine schemes to meet local needs. As such, enrolment to them is based on local expertise. At the national level, the actors work to set and shape the policies and subsequent schemes. This does not necessarily make either one of these networks more important than the other. Both have an important role to play in the success of agri-environmental policy.

In both networks, the policy process is facilitated by the search for consensus. This requires actors to seek actively areas of common agreements and to build alliances. The development of consensus depends on finding a ('passage') point at which the groups can agree, so that what is proposed will result in gains for each party involved, and a base from which future 'passage points' can be identified. In some cases, this may lead to the enrolment of one actor by another. For example, environmental organisations have accepted that farmers can only implement policy if it does not constrain their ability to farm profitably. Likewise, agricultural groups have realised that through adopting environmental objectives, their members will be seen to be actively fulfilling their role as guardians of the countryside. Enrolment does not, however, lead to a loss of independence. The organisations seek to retain their own objectives but, through their acknowledgement of others' aims, they accept that certain conditions need to be agreed so as to further policy. It would appear that through these relationships actors have been enrolled into an incremental approach to policy development based upon trust. In the case of the environmental NGOs, this is most evident through their acceptance of entry to the 'inner policy core'. There has to be careful negotiation so that the consensus does not merely result in agreement on the lowest common denominator. If consensus does not lead to development, its legitimacy as a way of furthering the policy process will be lost and the government (or at least MAFF) may be compelled to decide the direction of policy.
The role of MAFF has also changed as a result of these developments. The use of an increasing number of interest groups to set, shape and implement policy has led it to becoming a 'service provider' rather than a dictator of the way policy should proceed. In some respects this has led to a degree of agency capture; the interest groups have shown that they can structure policies through their negotiations so as to improve or maintain wildlife and the countryside. As a result, there is less of a need for government to regulate. Whilst environmental groups might prefer a regulatory approach, they also recognise that this could alienate other actors, undermining the trust that has been laboriously constructed between previously competing interests. However, MAFF is able to maintain its dominant position. The final decisions as to what a policy will contain still rests with them. Additionally, although the interests groups have considerable influence on these decisions, MAFF (or more precisely those civil servants dealing with agri-environmental policy) are themselves influenced by other government departments, most notably the Treasury. MAFF have become gatekeepers, deciding how best to link the demands of interest groups with those of other areas of government and the European Commission.

Examination of the intra-organisational links between the national and regional highlights the importance of understanding organisational structure. Organisations cannot be treated as single entities, but are made up of a diverse range of actors who hold different resources relating to their expertise and the level at which they operate. Consequently, when attempting to define the structure of the network, the way organisations work between the national, regional and local levels needs to be taken into account.

In this account of the regional and national networks the actors interviewed do not perceive 'gaps' in the communication between those who implement and those who 'write' policy. For the regional and national actors, the structure of their organisations allows their views and opinions to be conveyed (at least within the organisation) to those who they feel are in a position to influence change. The one exception rests with the POs who have recently moved from the Countryside Commission to ADAS.
Their incorporation into a much larger and significantly more bureaucratic organisation has hindered their ability to communicate with whom they regard as the policy makers. The long-term outcome of this organisational change is still unclear.

'Gaps' still lie between the ideology of the different interest groups and this is not unexpected. It would appear, however, that through the development of the network the 'gaps' have become less distinct. The organisations have worked to develop a consensus to overcome these, fostered through the development of broadly-shared aims. The incorporation of the environmental NGOs into what was originally conceived as a closed policy community has considerably reduced their perception of a 'gap' in the development of policy. The next chapter attempts to understand how the policy process functions in practice through an examination of the implementation of the AESs. To do this, Chapter Seven builds on the description of the network and the relationship between the actors presented in the first two chapters of the empirical section, and uses these as a base from which to reveal how the actors attempt to influence the direction of policy.
Chapter seven

Conservation in Action

Introduction

The first two chapters of the empirical section have studied the structure of the agri-environmental network by examining how the actors are enrolled and how they sustain their membership through the exchange of resources and the building of consensus. The examination of the linkages between the actors has provided insights into the way they seek to influence the policy process through the development of alliances with other actors from across the network. This chapter seeks to establish how the policy process functions through an examination of the implementation of the AESs.

The first section of the chapter investigates farmers' attitudes towards conservation so as to examine how their views influence the implementation of AESs. Building on this discussion, the analysis seeks to compare farmers' and conservation advisers' conservation objectives so as to ascertain whether there are 'gaps' between their aims. The last part of this section reviews if farmers have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the schemes and how this may influence the environmental benefits the schemes deliver.

The problems associated with the implementation of AESs are not only confined to farmers' environmental objectives and ability to put these into practice, but also how the farmers' participation (or non-participation) is affected by the structure of AESs, such as the length of agreements, levels of payments, the constraints imposed on the farm system and the availability and quality of advice. The second section examines how the schemes' attributes affect farmers' enrolment and what changes to schemes would be necessary to encourage farmers to adopt them.
The final section examines the discretionary freedom available to POs. In Chapter Three it was noted that successful implementation requires policies or schemes to be translated to meet the needs of the problems at hand. In the case of AESs, discretionary freedom is an important element in their delivery. This section examines whether the schemes' POs and farmers feel there is sufficient leeway to match the scheme to the farmers' and conservationists' objectives and the environmental attributes of the farm. The analysis then turns to discuss how those working at the national level view the importance of discretionary freedom and how this fits into the delivery of coherent and consistent schemes across the country.

Attitudes Towards Conservation

The farm survey has not sought to develop an understanding of farmers' attitudes in general, but to discuss the attitudes of those who have links with the agri-environmental network formed either through enrolment into AESs, such as FS-a, or those who have other connections with the agri-environmental network such as the 'Influential' farmers. These farmers can be described, using Westmacott and Worthington's (1984) term, as the 'converted', as they have accepted conservation (to a greater or lesser degree) to be an integral part of the farm business. By understanding farmers' attitudes to conservation, it is possible to start to understand what problems they may encounter during the implementation of the AESs.

Previous studies into farmers' enrolment to conservation schemes have shown that farmers' attitudes are diverse and that participation in AESs does not necessarily indicate that farmers are committed to conservation. For example, Morris and Potter (1995) have suggested "that high[er] rates of farmer participation in AEP [Agri-environmental Policy] schemes may conceal wide variations in the level of commitment of those actually enrolled" (p.60). Consequently, whilst some participants are fully committed to conservation, some enrol because the schemes are financially attractive and the schemes pay farmers for continuing with current farm
management practices (see also, Colman, 1994). Other studies of farmers have shown that their agendas are complex and conservation attitudes are driven by a wide variety of social and economic constraints, including age, education, succession factors, level of farm income, size of farm and tenure (Battershill and Gilg, 1997; Lemon and Park, 1993; Shucksmith, 1993; Wilson, 1997a). Additionally, factors relating to the structure of AESs, for example, level of payments, duration of scheme, voluntary agreements and scheme prescriptions are also important in influencing farmers to participate (Brotherton, 1989, 1991; Cary and Wilkinson, 1995; Morris and Potter, 1995; Potter and Gasson, 1988; Wilson, 1997a). These factors also affect the conservation works they undertake. The findings of this survey reiterate those of previous researchers, but the focus here is to ask how conservation advisers deal with this diversity of attitudes and how this affects the provision of advice and the implementation of the AESs.

The farmers interviewed were asked what nature conservation means to them. As expected, the range of opinion is diverse, a view confirmed by one farmer:

'I think we all have different ideas as to what nature conservation is don't we? For some people it's pheasants and partridges, other people its foxes, other people just think it's a pain! You know, and I probably consider it to be the wide diversity of landscape and little birds and gamebirds and barn owls and thrushes, and you know, natterjack toads or dormice, and it is the biggest variety of birds and mammal and insects you can find and plants and insects' [Influential farmer no.1].

The most commonly expressed definition includes maximising plant and animal diversity or attempting to reinstate the wildlife farmers remembered on the farm as a child. In addition to benefits to wildlife, most farmers think that nature conservation is about creating a balance between commercial agriculture and having a place for wildlife (see also McEachern, 1992). As one farmer explained:

'we try to enhance and maintain, you need to keep everything in proportion, you have to balance numbers, it goes with the management' [Participating farmer no.8].

However, this urge to balance these different objectives masks a variety of opinions. For example, one farmer thought that there is an 'inherent conflict between arable farming and conservation objectives'. Whilst other farmers did not express this
problem as a conflict, they too find it difficult to strike a balance between contemporary farm practices (such as the use of chemical inputs, the removal of hedgerows and a move towards autumn sowing) which have raised profitability, and conservation practices (e.g. conservation headlands, low fertilizer applications and stocking densities and hedgerow management) which decrease profitability but which are necessary to secure their environmental aims. Lowe et al. (1997) also observe that many farmers find it difficult to balance these conflicting objectives. They note that "modern technology drove a wedge between the farmer's interest in production and traditional agrarian stewardship" (p.202). In addition, many farmers cite field sports as an important reason why they are committed to conservation (see also Carr and Tait, 1990; Winter, 1997); this is often why they have become interested in conservation in the first place. Conservation and field sports are seen as 'inextricably linked'. For example, the manager of a 3,800 acre estate which includes 600 acres of woodland, 400 acres of grazing marsh, 60 acres of unimproved grassland and 38 miles of hedgerows was asked if he found it strange to manage an estate which incorporates so much conservation into its business:

'No because I am fanatically keen on it [conservation]. I'm fanatically keen on field sports, I hunt like a trooper...you can't [separate it], it's absolutely - I mean, why is everything here? why is the woodland here? the strips of woodland, why are they here? because of the shooting, how do I keep my present bosses happy? If they have got good shooting they will put up with all the other conservation ideas and providing the farm is making money as well [Influential farmer no.6].

He argued that the planting of woodland and the management of hedgerows are not only of benefit to game, but also other wildlife, and conversely, high levels of other wildlife provide an indicator that the management is also good for game. Controls on field sports will reduce farmers' desire to carry out conservation tasks (see also Carr and Tait, 1991). Being able to participate in field sports provides them with some return for their expenditure or loss of yield. If these rights are denied, they will not feel such a commitment to active conservation even if they will not abandon such practices.
Respondents were asked where they thought the pressure to incorporate environmental issues into farming were coming from. Those farmers growing fruit or vegetables under contract to retailers were certain:

'\textit{the only direction we are getting is from the supermarkets, and that is a very clear direction from them down to the finest questions, such as, where do we get our engine oil recycled}' [Influential farmer no.15].

The majority of interviewees were unable to pin-point exactly from where the pressure to change was coming:

'I think it is coming from general awareness. I don't think there is particular pressure coming from anywhere really...if people put the wind up you enough you think more about what you are doing don't you? You can't miss it can you?' [Influential farmer no.8].

'\textit{public pressure, the whole nation is more conservation minded, it is the new generation. My generation was far more concerned about survival}' [Participating farmer no. 9].

In no case did a respondent suggest strong direction from agricultural policy. Pressure appears to be emerging from a combination of public and market pressures and the changing attitudes of a younger generation of farmers. The latter point was taken up by an Agricultural Adviser to the National Trust:

'I think attitudes are changing. If you had asked me five years ago I would say that most farmers wouldn't be interested unless there is a financial incentive....I think farmers are looking at it differently now....We have no problem in getting young farmers to take on tenancies with heavy [environmental] restrictions...they see it as a challenge and why we are doing it' [National Trust].

These pressures for change show how farming is being increasingly influenced by factors working outside of the traditionally 'closed' boundaries of farming policy. In the past, agricultural policy positioned itself so that its aim of increasing production was seen as morally commendable and providing an important service to the nation as a whole (Lowe \textit{et al.}, 1997), but as this primary aim eroded agricultural policy became repositioned within the food system, the rural economy and the social construction of the environment (see Lowe \textit{et al.}, 1997; Ward and Munton, 1992). Because of these multiple aims for farming, enrolment to conservation does not occur because of a single event or objective.
To further understand farmers’ conservation objectives, they were asked about the environmental benefits they are seeking to achieve. Some have very clear objectives and a detailed understanding of what they are attempting to effectuate. For example, one spoke of the importance of thistles for Vanessid butterflies. Generally, however, farmers’ conservation objectives are less clear and focus around a general desire to increase wildlife or to preserve the landscape:

‘My objectives have been to increase wildbirds and what we are after is insects and wildseeds...and so to increase the biodiversity and the structural diversity [of the flora]’ [Influential farmer no.5].

‘from my point of view to keep the landscape looking a magnificent landscape’ [Influential farmer no. 15].

Even those farmers who had not stipulated conservation as an objective initially claimed that they have a clear idea of what they are attempting to achieve. However, further probing of what this actually means in terms of management practices is difficult for farmers to articulate. Taking a conservation scientist’s viewpoint, it might appear that farmers do not really know what they are trying to achieve because they do not fully understand the biological processes which lead to an increase in wildlife; but in the same vein, it would not be expected that all farmers understand the chemical processes which lead to the effective functioning of a particular pesticide. It is important to understand that farmers’ enrolment into conservation objectives is not only based on ‘scientific’ principles of environmental management, but is a subtle mix of practical experience of land management with the conservation advice they receive from AES POs and FWAG advisers for example. Especially given the imprecise nature of ecological science, it should not be expected that farmers will understand the exact effects their management will have on biodiversity.

To establish how conservation advisers deal with wide differences in environmental knowledge, they too were asked if, in their view, farmers have clear conservation objectives. Most of the advisers noted a wide diversity of expressed objectives, ranging from those farmers with ‘very clear ideas’, who are ‘good naturalists’ and ‘have it all planned out’ to those who ‘hardly know what coppicing is’ and have
almost no conception of what they are trying to do. The advisers were asked how
they attempt to influence farmers who fall into the latter category:

'We...try to get the farmers' objectives, sometimes they are woolly, such as, 'I
want to be farming here, and I want to put something back'. So we give them
long term objectives. Firstly, to be a profitable farm, secondly to increase
decaying farm birds and thirdly, to increase grey partridges. Then we give
them short term objectives for example, to buffer field margins, to change
hedge management, because in most cases they really don't know' [FWAG].

In these situations the advisers attempt to develop farmers' environmental awareness.
This requires a careful approach:

'Certainly our objective is wider than theirs....its just getting them confident.
The secret is not to push them too much' [Countryside Stewardship Scheme].

'Every single visit you temper your tone. When you go and see a farmer who
says he's pulled out everything, you don't start with detailed habitat
management, you start very simply. You have to be very tactful to win them
over first' [FWAG].

Previous research supports these findings (Cox et al., 1990). The development of
conservation advice for farmers is an important way to change farmers' attitudes
(Morris and Potter, 1995). Incremental approaches are important for developing
partnerships while allowing farmers to remain in control of their actions. They
correspond well to ideas of 'permissive corporatism' (see Baldock et al., 1990), and
this has been one of the main attractions of schemes such as the ESAs. It allows
enrolment to be based on the farmer's own terms.

The advisers are also aware that not only do they need to develop trust through an
incremental building of farmers' conservation knowledge, but also that this needs to
be coupled with farmers' own knowledge of environmental issues. Additionally, the
advisers noted 'who is to say I'm right 100% of the time?' recognising that there is
often more than one approach or more than one outcome that is acceptable for
conservation. The advisers acknowledge that farmers' own understanding of the
physical features of the farm (e.g. of soils or level of the water table) can play an
important role in deciding what kinds of conservation works would best suit an area;
conservation cannot be reduced to a single approach. Moreover, the action of
enrolment is a two-way process with farmers and advisers influencing each other. Additionally, the effective implementation of the schemes requires that conservation schemes are sufficiently flexible to meet the various interpretations of environmental objectives held by farmers (this is examined below).

Of more concern to advisers is the lack of knowledge among some farming groups, especially arable farmers who have very little knowledge of grassland or woodland management. The previous need to raise productivity has required farmers increasingly to understand 'vertical' knowledge up and down the food chain at the expense of understanding how 'lateral' activities might affect their farm business (see Ward, 1993). As a RSPB Conservation Officer explained:

'Farmers have got detached from some of the finer wildlife aspects. Plants not crops are weeds, you spray insects, and birds are for sporting purposes. In some areas farmers know nothing, and if you don't know what is, for example, a corn bunting, then it's hard to value' [RSPB].

Whilst this is somewhat extreme, it is not too far removed from what many of the conservationists feel is the problem. The regional environmental actors note that, whilst there is high participation in the Broads ESA in Norfolk and the AES POs and FWAG advisers are increasingly influencing farmers, those farmers who really understand what they are trying to achieve are limited. Within the national network, farmers' lack of environmental awareness is of great concern. The national NGOs noted that the lack of clear environmental objectives held by farmers enrolled into conservation schemes may limit the environmental benefits produced, and this also indicates why environmental and agricultural NGOs are keen to develop conservation advisory services to farmers (NFU, 1993; RSPB, 1993; see also Chapter Eight).

These concerns also raise questions as to whether farmers have the necessary skills to put the conservation schemes in to action. The majority of the farmers interviewed feel that they do have the necessary skills and commonly expressed views included: 'good farming is good stewardship', 'it's just normal farming practice' or, 'some of it is common knowledge'.
There are a number of reasons why the sample of farmers feel so confident. Firstly, the AESs entered by the farmers, and especially FS-a, lay out very basic prescriptions. Indeed, the FS-a scheme requirements were, at their conception, intentionally set well within common farming practice so as to encourage farmers to enter. This is acknowledged as one of the reasons why the ESAs have achieved high levels of uptake (Baldock et al., 1990; Whitby and Lowe, 1994; Wilson, 1997b). Secondly, these farmers have received considerable conservation advice either from AES POs or FWAG and so will have acquired a range of skills to implement conservation tasks. Thirdly, it is unlikely that they would admit not knowing what they are doing to a researcher who has come to talk to them about environmental practice on their farms.

The conservation advisers were asked if they felt that farmers have the skills to put the schemes into action. Again there was broad agreement that it is impossible to place farmers in any single category, but they agreed that most farmers are in need of conservation advice. This does not necessarily imply that the advisers are looking for ways of preserving their own livelihoods but that there is a genuine need to increase the advice available (this is examined in more detail in the next section). A common view was:

'I would like to say 'yes' [farmers do have the skills], but I think there is this sort of fantasy that conservation is another sort of land practice similar to what farmers are doing. If you drive through the countryside the agricultural practice is so different to the conservation techniques. Maybe 30 years ago they would have understood, but the end product is so different and there is a big gulf in understanding' [NWT].

The 'fantasy' between conservation and production related practices is important. It highlights the 'gap' between what the environmental NGOs regard as 'conservation' and what farmers and their advisers regard as 'conservation'. This is in part related to different attitudes among conservationists. For example, some environmental interests would like to see a return to hedge laying, whereas farmers may feel that careful mechanical hedge maintenance is equally beneficial to wildlife. This 'gap' can also be explained in terms of the incremental approach to conservation, because the schemes are built on the voluntary principle and the schemes' prescriptions are purposefully written to enable farmers easily to understand what is expected of them. In addition,
the POs have been so keen to encourage farmers to participate in AESs that they have not always required farmers to develop their knowledge of conservation management or go beyond current farm practice. It is also important to understand that, whilst many conservation NGOs may have contact with farmers who are environmentally aware, they also have dealings with farmers who are in the process of destroying habitats on their farm (see Carr and Tait, 1990). As such, they are dealing with farmers at the opposite ends of the 'environmental' spectrum and this will in turn influence their attitudes towards the type and level of conservation management that needs to be enacted on farms.

It was also stressed by some conservation advisers that in some cases the lack of skills lay not with the farm managers but with their staff. When farmers were asked if their staff understood what they were attempting to do for conservation, opinion varied. On some farms it was noted that tractor drivers see hedgerows as obstacles which hinder their work, as these two farmers\(^1\) explained, when talking about their staff's understanding of hedgerow management:

Dairy tenant: 'You have been beating them [the staff] with a stick for the last 20 years saying to them, "look you've missed a bit here!" and all of a sudden you're saying "look you're getting too close!"

Arable Contractor 'It takes some drumming in, no doubt about it. Five miles away people are trying to crop the last acre and we come here and we are trying to tell them not to' [Influential farmer no.15].

However, farm managers working under organic or ICM systems noted that their staff are very aware of environmental benefits. In addition to the loss of conservation skills and the attitudinal differences of staff, the restructuring of the agricultural workforce has also contributed to difficulties in implementing conservation works, as this FWAG adviser explained:

'What is more significant is they don't have the labour especially on family farms. Whereas he [the farmer] would base his time on management and run around in the Land Rover and have time to coppice woods or hedges, he is now driving the tractor and he has lost one or two men. The time to do tasks

\(^1\)One is a tenant of a dairy farm on a traditional estate and the other is the arable contractor on the same estate but who also has a 1000 acre farm five miles away. The conservation and productivity objectives on each holding are very different but the same staff are used on both.
has dropped. They have got the skills but not the time. So then you can have contractors or volunteers to assist but that puts the cost up' [FWAG].

If scheme payments are increased to pay for the use of contractors on conservation projects, this will not only have positive environmental benefits but will also increase rural employment and maintain traditional crafts and skills. One farmer interviewed, who had set up a share farming agreement, noted that through this contract he could demand certain conservation techniques to be carried out such as conservation headlands. This farmer hopes to change his partner's attitude by showing him that the farm can still maintain good profits whilst incorporating conservation objectives. This point was also taken up by a FWAG adviser, who feels that not only should he be attempting to influence land owners but that advice also needs to be targeted at contractors so as to ensure that they are also aware of their effect on the environment (see FWAG, 1997).

The Structure of the Agri-environmental Schemes

This section investigates what factors inhibit or contribute to farmers' participation in AESs through an examination of the schemes' structure. The long production cycles associated with agriculture, and the uncertainty that has arisen in farm policy in the last 15 years, have led some farmers to take a cautionary approach to conservation schemes. Environmental concerns are best addressed through long-term schemes which, in turn, can place some certainty into the farming agenda but can environmental schemes provide this stability? (Lemon and Park, 1993; Morris and Potter, 1995). Farmers remain circumspect for two reasons. First, cereal prices have been higher than expected since the 1992 CAP reforms due to a buoyant world market and the effects of withdrawal from the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992 have led to over compensation to arable farmers under the AAP Scheme (Grant,

Share farming involves a contract between for example two farmers, one of whom supplies the land whilst the other supplies the management, labour, machinery, etc. It is expected that this type of contract will become increasingly popular as small and medium sized farms seek to find alternative ways of maintaining a profitable income from what would otherwise be an unprofitable enterprise.
In these circumstances arable farmers have been reluctant to take land out of production and place it in 10 year or even longer conservation schemes as this goes against their business strategies. The long production cycles often associated with farming systems have been adjusted by some farmers to keep pace with fluctuating support prices and as a consequence many farmers now farm on a year-to-year basis relying heavily on the changes to the AAP Scheme to direct their next year's cropping (see Whitbread, 1997). Second, the interviewees argued that the differences between payments under conservation and conventional payments, such as those under AAPS, are a determining factor in the uptake of AESs. One farmer participating in FS-a noted that had he kept his land under arable crops for the first five years of the scheme he would have received an additional £16,775 over the five year period from the AAP Scheme. The relative lack of financial attractiveness of the schemes is seen as an important barrier to uptake by a wide range of interviewees. As the NFU representative explained:

'Farmers tend to regard conservation as a marginal thing in terms of their business management and in term of spatial extent to which they can provide [i.e. the amount of land they are willing to put over to conservation]. That is a product of the amount of money they can get from conservation. If conservation was a more profitable commodity and you could treat it as a crop they would devote more time to it and more space' [NFU].

It was also suggested that some farmers are grant led and use them as a way to increase their returns. As a National Trust Regional Manager pointed out:

'I have a farm tenant who is so grant-led that if they offered a grant to build a spaceship, he'd build a spaceship. He looks at what grants are available and his farm is a combination of grants, and he just plucks out what he wants to do. He is after maintaining his income and you can sympathise with that' [National Trust].

For the past 50 years the structure of agricultural policy in the UK has encouraged farmers to alter their practices through the provision of grants and subsidies. It is not surprising that farmers have accepted this system as an integral part of the way they manage their farms. However, although some farmers may be willing to adopt AESs, it has been estimated that under some ESA schemes where farmers are being encouraged to revert arable land to grassland, the income forgone before payments can be up to £400 per hectare per year. In these areas, the Ministry has considered that payments should not try to equal income foregone because they would be too high to be politically justifiable (NAO, 1997).
this does not necessarily mean they are commitment to conservation but that they have been attracted by the financial payments on offer (see Potter and Lobley, 1992a; Morris and Potter, 1995). More recently, farmers' magnetism to grants has been highlighted by farmers withdrawing from ESA agreements or ploughing SSSI grasslands to plant flax which has been supported by a subsidy under the Flax Scheme of £591/ha (Whitbread, 1997). Whitbread argues that, because of the structure of grants currently in place, farmers

"are encouraged to treat farmed land as a form of transient factory floor where, in order to make a living, they are persuaded to look around for this year's 'special offer' in terms of the grants or incentives they can obtain" (1997, p.332).

This conclusion argues for a holistic approach to the grants and schemes on offer so that farmers are not faced by contradictory signals. In addition to monetary limitations, the farmers frequently suggested that the schemes constrain their freedom to manage their land:

'We don't always enter schemes we are eligible for because if it looks more trouble than it is worth, then we may say let's get on with it in our own way in our own time' [Influential farmer no.15].

'It is all tied up with the farmer being his own independent individual and wanting to rule his own roost and not have people telling him how he's going to manage it, which is an insular view' [Influential farmer no. 11].

'They want to get you under their thumb. They can't understand why we don't put in our County Wildlife Site into Countryside Stewardship, but what my husband said is that he doesn't want to phone them up if he wants to spray thistles or something' [Influential farmer no. 34].

Similar findings were recorded during a survey of farmers' attitudes towards wildlife on farmland by the Royal Agricultural Society of England (RASE) and the RSPB (Bartram and Brook, 1996). The RASE/RSPB survey found that nearly a third of the farmers interviewed noted that they "need more flexibility than the grant system allows" (p.23). It demonstrates the importance 'permissive corporatism' has played in tempting farmers into schemes. This is of increasing importance given the continuing

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*On this farm, decisions as to whether to enter schemes were made by the family working together.*

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Restructuring of agricultural policy and the need to maintain flexibility (Ward and Munton, 1992).

Whilst the issues of financial cost and lack of freedom are seen as important hindrances to scheme participation, the length of the schemes also played a role in farmers' enrolment. On the one hand, farmers feel that enrolment into a ten year scheme with set objectives for each year will place considerable strain on the business:

'It's [land in conservation schemes] not producing the same income as arable. A lot of people are regretting having locked themselves into a 10 year scheme where payments aren't reviewed properly and it puts a lot of farmers off. CAP is so up and down, they don't want to commit themselves...no amount of good advice is going to encourage them' [Farming Consultant/ex-FWAG].

And on the other hand, some farmers participating in the FS-a view the long-term nature of the scheme positively as it gives them a secure income for a considerable period (see Chapter Five). The conservation advisers note that it is not only the length of the schemes, but the need also to set out works for each year that act as a limiting factor. Linked to this, the demise of the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme in 1996 and the continuing decline in grants available from county councils for similar projects, has restricted farmers from attempting conservation works on a small scale before signing up to longer, more demanding schemes:

'Many farmers don't have the confidence to get involved in a 10 year scheme. With the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme and the hedge and pond grants from the county councils all coming to an end, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme will be the only grant available' [FWAG].

The County Councils and ADAS are also aware of the problems the loss of these small schemes will bring:

'...it is quite a commitment for landowners to sign up to an agreement. We need a toe in the water type scheme, such as Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme which has now gone, although we are still running it ourselves on a small scale. For the guy who wants to just do 100 metres of hedge planting or gapping up, it is a matter of gaining their confidence. You can't just walk straight on to a farm for the first time and say what you need is a complete farm conservation plan- although that would deliver the best for conservation - and that would mean changing your farm system. That is a major gap, and we are knocking on the Countryside Commission's and Agri-
environmental Forum's door on that, and we think there is a need for a small flexible scheme to get people started' [Suffolk County Council].

'... the loss of the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme I feel, and the feedback we get, is that it is a sad loss especially for hedges...the Countryside Stewardship is excellent but because it is discretionary, targeted and for 10 years, a lot of farmers don't feel in a position to commit themselves...especially on small farms, when they have spare cash or labour and can lay some hedge, but are not in a position to say they can do it year on year' [ADAS].

The constraints of a ten year working programme are daunting to those farmers who are self-reliant and heavily constrained financially and, therefore, the reintroduction of short term or small payments schemes should perhaps be considered. However, this would raise questions as to the ability of the schemes to realise environmental benefits. Morris and Potter have noted that it is essential to have long term schemes if environmental goods are to be delivered and if they are to be seen as more than just "temporary bribes, shallow in operation and transitory in effect" (1995, p.52, see also Moore, 1987; Whitbread, 1997). In Germany, schemes are not time limited and this in turn appears to provide participatory farmers with "a stable and guaranteed additional income at a time of ever-changing economic climate" (Wilson, 1994, p.38). Whether time unlimited schemes would be acceptable to UK farmers is not clear, but in terms of providing a long term vision for the provision of environmental goods this would no doubt be the most satisfactory way to proceed.

Farmers are not only constrained by limited quantities of time to implement conservation practices, but also by the time they have to devote to contacting advisers and filling in application forms. The interviews sought to assess whether farmers feel conservation advice is adequate and what effect this had on the conservation works they carried out. It became clear from the responses that it is not so much the provision of advice that is lacking, but the time available to farmers to go and seek it out. Small obstacles can become major difficulties when farmers are hard pressed:

'When you have been out all day on your tractor or moving your cows twice a day and you come in at 6 or 7 o'clock, then all you want to do is fall asleep in front of the television and you don't want a bunch of forms to fill out' [Influential farmer no. 11].
Similarly, a few farmers noted that they have difficulty getting hold of the FWAG advisers:

'You can get put off very easily. It is the classic thing, it's not only that one day you want to make that phone call, but it is also that one day that you want to plant the trees. And this is how people begin, and there isn't a plan' [Influential farmer no. 5].

Such problems are recognised by the advisers, and it is easy to understand that farmers restricted in this way may remain outside of the network. Farmers' enrolment to AESs also depends on the competence of the advisers and their ability to get their ideas across. This matter is not restricted to conservation advisers. Environmental NGOs have found their tenants are sometimes unaware of the importance of environmental sites on the farms they rent. As the National Trust explained:

'At a training day in north Wales, we all walked round the farm saying what was special, and on the farm was a boggy bit, which was an embarrassment to the farmer and he constantly wanted to drain it and make something of it, and the Trust kept saying no. At the end of the day we had a feedback session, and one of my colleagues waxed lyrical about this bog and all the plants etc. and the farmer's face lit up because he suddenly realised why it was special, and even though he had been visited before no one had explained to him, so we are not always good at it' [National Trust].

Additionally, because advisers primarily respond to farmers\(^5\) rather than actively seeking to enrol them, the onus rests with farmers to seek advice or enter schemes. It is argued that farmers are frequently unaware of which organisation to approach given the plethora of schemes available (see Curry, 1997; Swales, 1994). To overcome this, it has been suggested that the provision of a 'first or one-stop-shop' would help farmers through the maze of schemes on offer (see also MAFF, 1995), which was described as 'a nightmare, and I'm doing it professionally!'

The one-stop-shop would lead to the schemes being administered by one organisation. By developing a single point of contact and ensuring that somebody is always available for farmers to speak to about conservation, the 'shop' may overcome some of the problems of enrolment cited above. The government agencies suggested that a 'first-stop-shop' would be more realistic because the one-stop option 'implies

\(^5\)In some exceptional circumstances advisers occasionally seek to enrol farmers actively.
that some body would have to have the expertise to do everything’ and this was an unrealistic proposition. Instead, a 'first-stop-shop' would act as a point of contact directing farmers to organisations which would be best able to deal with their particular needs. There is also disagreement as to who should manage the shop. According to ADAS, 'It would have to be an agency within MAFF because they are the people who have the best communication with farmers'. This choice of manager was not shared by all. Indeed, the county councils thought that such a role would be best fulfilled by themselves as they would not bring to it any bias unlike the other conservation organisations. Although not stated explicitly, it is apparent that whoever is given the opportunity to develop the shop will not only be in a position to influence farmers, but will also provide a legitimate case for the organisation to demand an increase in funding. By running the 'shop', the organisation would create and control more resources relating to agri-environmental policy and this would further secure their position in the policy network. In general, most interviewees, including farmers, advisers and NGOs, viewed the development of such a first-stop-shop positively.

The kind and availability of conservation advice are a constant topic for discussion among both regional and national actors as it is unclear if it reaches the right audience (i.e. the 'unconverted' farmers), and whether the amount of advice on offer is sufficient. A number of the farmers and advisers interviewed feel that conservation advice has fallen into a rut; farmers are growing tired of hearing the same issues and advice when visited by conservation advisers or when on FWAG walks. This problem can be explained by reference to farmers' relations with other farm advisers. In the past, advice has focused on the use of more technologically advanced machinery or chemical inputs, which in turn has led to higher profits and so fulfilled farmers' desires to increase productivity and profitability (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992). If environmentally friendly farming techniques are to gain ground over past technologies, these may need to be fostered by seeking continually to advance

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6The topic was taken further by some interviewees, who called for the establishment of an Environmental Ministry to tackle such problems, a view shared by farmers and the CLA.
7The first-stop-shop idea is currently being tested by some ESA POs and this is getting positive feedback (ADAS Interviewee).
farmers' understanding of conservation. This could either be achieved through research into systems such as ICM or by encouraging farmers to tackle environmentally more difficult tasks, such as heathland or reedbed restoration or recreation. If farmers are not encouraged to develop their conservation skills, the environmental benefits they could deliver may not be realised. Whilst some farmers are making considerable efforts to increase wildlife on their farms (through their enrolment into AESs), in many cases there is still considerable scope for further development of farmers' environmental objectives, for example, by encouraging them to carry out environmentally more demanding tasks. To advance this change in farmers' attitudes will require a commitment by the government to fund research in these areas on sufficiently long time scales so that environmental benefits have time to accrue. In light of past experiences with the uptake of technology (Clunies-Ross and Hildyard, 1992; Grigg, 1995; Healey and Ilbery, 1990; Jones, 1963), progressive farmers are keen to develop their skills and this in turn acts as an impetus for other farmers, but to encourage environmental awareness amongst farmers in general may, as some advisers noted, require as much input from the government as was seen after the Second World War. As this RSPB policy officer explained:

'I always think there is an analogy. If you think back to after the war and they had a very clear objective to increase food production. They threw loads of money at it, with free advice and research and development, and it worked. In a sense, what you are trying to do with the environment is the same, and you need the research and development, and the training and advice behind it. If you do all that chances are you will be successful' [RSPB].

Winter has also taken up this point arguing that "in reality farmers need[ed] as much, probably more, advice and information to reverse productivism than they did going into it" (1997, p.11). Whilst some free conservation advice is still available from ADAS and AES POs, this is still significantly less than what was available to farmers to increase productivity. Hodge et al. (1994) take this argument further and note that complex, and in many cases unclear, demands now being placed on the countryside cannot be met through the simple policy mechanisms that brought about the changes to agriculture during the immediate post-war period. Advice and incentives will have to become more focused and yet still capable of addressing the increasingly complex demands placed on the countryside. If change is really to be encouraged, a new
blueprint needs to be written for farmers to follow backed-up by political will to commit resources to this new focus. The development of a blueprint would be welcomed by the farming community as this farmer explained:

'We desperately need leadership, we are sheep led by a fiscal weapon. If we knew MAFF was leading us in the environmental direction leaving our pockets comparatively untouched we would follow like sheep. If that is what the country wants. We don't know what direction [to go], so it is being left to individuals to do what they think' [Influential farmer no.9].

The consequences of the lack of a blueprint was discussed with national actors. They agree that this lack of direction is a hindrance to the farming community and that some clear guidelines would be of benefit to all (see also Buckwell, 1989). However, the agricultural interests interviewed suggested that the government is unable to provide clear messages to farmers because the MAFF is driven by the CAP which in turns 'hems them in'. In addition, the EU provides them with 'a very clear framework in which it has got to work'. This perspective was reiterated by senior civil servants at MAFF, one said:

'Certainly, on the market policies, MAFF is not seeing what it would like to implement in an ideal world. It is implementing EC law...well we are quite tied by that, and we are quite tied by that on agri-environmental schemes, but nothing like as tied as we are on the support schemes' [MAFF].

MAFF's argument that the CAP is limiting their ability to implement AESs may be a pretext for increasing funding in this area, especially as EU subsidiarity rules allow them to develop schemes to meet national priorities. It is more likely that this stance is linked to the government's wish to decrease support to farmers so as to reduce the burden on taxpayers, consumers and the Treasury.

Discretionary freedom

The effective implementation of complex schemes often requires considerable discretionary freedom to be available to POs. Indeed, it has been noted that

"Environmental management occurs in practice in particular places and, although a policy may be developed nationally, its effect is measured by the aggregated impact at specific spatial locations. Thus, implementation is a
matter of adaptation to local circumstances" (Trudgill and Richards, 1997, p.6).

The level of discretionary freedom accessible to those who seek to put these schemes into effect is therefore important to the wide range of actors involved in the process including AES POs, FWAG advisers and farmers themselves. The policies' prescriptions have to be flexible enough to meet the constraints and opportunities at hand on individual farms.

Typically, advisers and other actors agreed that the amount of discretionary freedom available to the POs is linked to the scheme they implement, with the Countryside Stewardship Scheme POs having more discretionary freedom than the ESA POs. This arises because Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreements are based on a conservation plan which allows the farmer to develop the scheme to meet specific objectives for conservation that have been identified on the holding. Although the scheme has a set of management guidelines, farmers can identify any variations or alternatives to these which better suit their circumstances or objectives (MAFF, 1997a). As such, the Countryside Stewardship Scheme builds on farmers' own aims rather than dictating what management practices should be carried out. By comparison, farmers entering into the ESA scheme agree to abide by a set of prescriptions which set out the specific management practices allowed. The ESA scheme is based on a tiered system. Lower tiers require simple management practices (often requiring no or little change to current practice) and hence command lower payments. Higher tiers set out more demanding prescriptions and lead to greater premiums (MAFF, 1996b). Although farmers are given some leeway in developing ESA management agreements, the more formal structure of these schemes results in less discretionary freedom. The majority of farmers participating in the FS-a Scheme feel that the POs have sufficient discretionary freedom. Where it has been necessary to negotiate parts of the agreement, for example wanting to leave additional areas uncut or to spot spray thistles, they have found the POs 'very co-operative' and not heavily constrained by the scheme's rules. Whilst this can be viewed as an important use of discretionary freedom, it is also worth noting that the prescriptions are simple
to implement and the Participating farmers feel there is no need to make 'great demands' on the POs.

Those farmers participating in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme or ESA schemes have mixed views over the discretionary freedom available to the POs. Approximately half the Influential farmers participating in these schemes feel that the POs have sufficient freedom as this farmer explained:

'He must be constrained up to a point, but he must have a certain amount of freedom. Because when you read the document it doesn't appear if there is very much room' [Influential farmer no.5].

However, some of the farmers interviewed feel that the POs do not have sufficient freedom, as one bureaucratically fatigued farmer explained:

'I'm sceptical of it [the amount of discretionary freedom] because the scheme is too restrictive.... Personally I think they stop farmers doing the things they would like to do...I'd like to see it much more flexible, and to be treated like a grown up' [Influential farmer no.2].

The POs were asked if they have sufficient discretionary freedom to do what they think is appropriate for each site. All bar one of the 10 POs interviewed felt they can be sufficiently flexible, as this typical response indicates:

'We have got a good degree of flexibility within the schemes, which allows you to tailor things for site specific circumstances. Difficult to have much more flexibility and still a manageable scheme that is defensible to the National Audit Office. It is public money so there has to be some structure in place' [ADAS].

In addition, the POs were asked if they think the schemes' prescriptions are too tight. Here opinion is divided and some POs feel that they can adapt the schemes easily because: 'We are good at moulding' and where landowners are keen to go beyond the schemes: 'with special projects you can pretty much do what you want as long as it is good value'. Other advisers could think of cases where 'sometimes they are not tight enough, certain stocking levels for example'.

At the launch of the AESs there was some concern among the conservation bodies that the prescriptions were too slack, requiring little if any change in management
skills by farmers, and that this lack of change would reduce the environmental benefits that could otherwise be accrued from the schemes (Colman, 1994). It was not surprising to find a division of opinion on this issue amongst the actors in the regional network. The NFU regional policy adviser noted that some farmers think the grazing prescriptions on the Broads ESA are too tight and that this may cause some farmers to leave the scheme, whilst a FWAG adviser noted: 'Tier 1 prescriptions in ESAs are too loose...[and] Countryside Stewardship is about right'. These differences in opinion are based on different conceptions of the scheme. The NFU think that the stocking levels on the Broad ESA are too limiting and farmers are unable to utilise the grassland to its full potential. By comparison, the FWAG adviser feels that ESA tier one prescriptions do little more than sustain the status quo and, as such, there is little benefit to wildlife. Subsequent reviews and changes to prescriptions in some ESAs have sought to overcome these problems, and the environmental and agricultural groups involved have sought to find common ground. As an ADAS Team Manger explained:

"We have been through a complete review. Five years ago in tier 2 of the Broads ESA where you could apply a low level of nitrogen, someone suggested we cut it out, and the Broads Authority argued against it because it would have had minimal environmental benefits and would upset uptake, and five years on it is no longer an issue. Those feeding in know there has to be a practical balance.... The conservation groups aren't trying to tighten up and the farmers want it to be practical. 10 years ago there was more of a case that the environmental organisations wanted to constrain farming practices and farmers wanted freedom to farm, so there was a need to balance. Both parties now recognise what the schemes are trying to achieve so the resulting compromise has meant there is less to overcome' [ADAS].

EN noted that their approach to SSSI management agreements has become considerably more flexible to meet farmers’ needs and to meet changing conditions brought on by different weather patterns. This marks a departure away from their image formed after the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. Consequently, farmers are:

'learning to ring up and say "can I do this? I know I'm not meant to but..." and then you've got to be practicable and say yes' [EN].

The regional and national actors were also asked about the discretionary freedom available to POs. It was suggested that the level of discretionary freedom was not
necessarily a product of the schemes' implementation but connected more to the personality of the PO:

'It is very much down to the personality of the individual project officer. Certainly some of the feedback I have got, some project officers are very flexible in their approach to scheme prescriptions, and will ... adjust things staying inside the concept of the scheme, which are appropriate to a particular site. Others just stick rigidly by the rules. It is very much down to personality and relationships.... Obviously it is difficult for MAFF because they have to be prescriptive, they have to be set and because everything has to be in statute they are very restricted, but then having said that, the field officer guidance can be a lot more flexible, and increasingly the feeling is that they are moving towards that sort of thing, and allowing more flexibility' [EN].

A number of the regional actors also noted that the POs within East Anglia are perhaps more flexible than in some other parts of the country. As the NWT explained:

'The Norfolk project officer is really brilliant, very flexible and getting the best deal for wildlife. A lot comes down to the project officer. What I've heard around the country...it can be a lot more bureaucratic if the project officer wants it to be' [NWT].

However, whilst the flexibility was welcomed by most interviewees, MAFF is cautious about recommending more flexibility:

'A balance needs to be struck between flexibility and ease of explanation and application. If you negotiate everything it imposes a huge additional resource cost and also it becomes a game to farmers seeing what they can negotiate...and they are quite happy with simple flat prescriptions provided you can design the schemes so as to deliver environmental objectives...Conservationists perceive it [more flexible schemes] as being desirable but they don't appreciate the practicality and the resource cost...and there would be less money available for the schemes...we have made some moves in that direction...the ESA schemes are now more flexible, to implement biodiversity action plans' [MAFF].

The idea that farmers will treat the schemes as a 'game', seeing what they can negotiate, may relate to MAFF's desire to maintain some authority over the implementation of the schemes. By setting the prescriptions as a set of rules, they have a reasonably clear idea of what farmers are doing in exchange for the payments they receive. Without this, MAFF appear concerned that this control over farmers' actions will be reduced. The idea that conservationists desire more flexibility highlights a 'gap' between MAFF's and the environmental NGOs' concepts of running
the schemes. Additionally, this 'gap' also extends between the conservation NGOs and the POs of the AES, as the latter are generally satisfied with the discretionary freedom available. This 'gap' is in part based on environmental NGOs wanting the conservation management demands of the schemes to reflect the diversity of the countryside, and their feeling that these complex management decisions cannot be reduced to a simple set of prescriptions (Countryside Commission, 1993). It is also based on the environmental NGOs need to continually move agri-environmental policy forward, beyond what has already been produced.

The Countryside Commission's policy statement 'Paying for a Beautiful Countryside' (1993) called for a reduction in the emphasis placed on standard management prescriptions and for payments under AESs to be linked to the production of environmental goods. By adopting this approach it was hoped that agreements would be produced which incorporate farmers' and advisers' knowledge and would allow agreements to be tailored to the particular site or farm. In light of this critique, the regional and national actors were asked if the schemes should be based on objectives (e.g. attempting to increase certain species or reinstate habitats) rather than stipulating prescriptions for farmers to follow (e.g. ESA prescriptions set out stocking and fertiliser application rates rather than what the farmers are attempting to achieve for conservation). Whilst there is general agreement that objective led schemes would be the best way to make sure that the schemes are delivering the benefits required, it was also noted that this approach has a number of problems:

'Ideally objective led, but objectives have to be specific, condition led. For example, given certain conditions you should expect wildlife to reward your efforts and you don't expect more or less, and that relies on very good advisory services, which are expensive' [EN].

Consequently, to deliver schemes through this mechanism will not only require providing an increased advisory service, but will also necessitate a full understanding of the conditions which will lead to environmental benefits. Given the diversity of the countryside and the individual physical features of each farm, producing conditions for farmers to follow would not only be time consuming to farmers and advisers but would also necessitate increased expenditure on research so as to develop a better understanding of the biological processes involved. In addition to the increased
expenditure necessary to provide the advisory staff, the advisers spoke of the
difficulty of finding adequate numbers of staff capable of providing advice to farmers.
Furthermore, it was thought that objective led schemes would not be so appealing to
farmers because of the large number who lack conservation skills:

'We would like to make the schemes objective-led but we have to stop short of
individual management agreements on each farm.... ESAs are simplest and
farmers can easily see what they are letting themselves in for' [ADAS].

Many of the actors interviewed at the national level suggested that more discretionary
freedom would be desirable, but there is wide variation between the actors as to what
changes need to be made. For example, the National Trust suggested that POs should
be allowed to alter cutting dates on an annual basis depending on the weather
conditions: 'I don't see why project officers can't alter that year on year, it will
always be a compromise', to stronger calls for increased discretionary freedom from
both agricultural and conservation NGOs, as they explained:

'We always push for that [increased discretionary freedom], that's not just
trying to get round the scheme rules, but we generally do believe [in it]... you
always see collections of species and they are clumped, and you can't always
say why they are clumped, and there are a whole range of factors that have
resulted in creating that distribution and I don't think you can artificially
recreate that sort of thing through a rule' [NFU].

'In the consultation document we suggested more flexibility, such as
changing the prescriptions to suit specific species or the right stocking
densities, it is far too prescriptive' [RSPB].

The national actors are keen to point out that, although they would like to see an
increase in the discretionary freedom available to the POs, they feel the real
constraints lie with the lack of schemes on offer. Improvements could best be made if
the schemes became broader in focus and took an holistic view of the countryside
rather than the current compartmentalisation found under the existing schemes'
structure. As an RSPB Policy Officer explained, 'there are gaps in the suite of
current schemes, such as an arable scheme, but we are making progress'. Whilst the
national actors think that increased discretionary freedom would go some way to

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8The introduction of the Arable Areas Scheme in two pilot areas of England in January 1998
(MAFF, 1998a) is an attempt to start to address this imbalance and to provide arable farmers with
opportunities to increase wildlife through an AES (EN et al., 1997).
increasing the environmental benefits delivered by the schemes, they feel this will only contribute marginally to the changes that need to take place if conservation is to be fully integrated into agricultural policy and so practice by farmers. However, the development of the AESs is viewed positively by all the interviewees, as this typical response implies:

'There are lots of problems with the Agri-environmental Schemes but we are heading in the right direction. The design and implementation and bigger policy problems need to be resolved but they are a way of helping species' [RSPB].

Conclusions

Farmers' reasons for enrolment to conservation objectives and schemes are dependent on a wide range of interconnected issues. To bring about further enrolment, farmers have to be encouraged to accept conservation ideas and objectives. This will be dependent on a number of factors. Firstly, farmers' knowledge of the lateral issues affecting agriculture need to be increased, not only how specific conservation practices may benefit wildlife but also how contemporary agricultural practices can be altered so as to decrease harmful effects on the environment. This change would not only be of interest to conservationists, but also to agricultural markets as they are increasingly demanding higher assurance that production is not environmentally damaging. Secondly, the provision of conservation advice needs to be developed so as to encourage the enrolment of farmers who have little conservation knowledge, for example through the provision of a 'first-stop-shop'. Once farmers become participants, the relationships between them and conservation advisers need to maintained through the provision of advice which advances farmers' understanding of conservation. If this relationship is not constantly enhanced, the full potential of agriculture to increase, or at least maintain, biodiversity will be reduced. This change not only requires the provision of adequate conservation advice but also further research into the techniques farmers can adopt to achieve these aims (e.g. ICM or habitat restoration). Thirdly, there is a need to provide simple or small project schemes which will encourage farmers with little conservation knowledge to enrol...
and to use these as stepping stones to their participation at a later stage to longer
term and more environmentally difficult schemes.

Although conservation advisers feel there is some difference between their views on
conservation and those of farmers, this does not appear to constrain the relationships
built between these actors. The conservation advisers work to accommodate farmers' objectives and to try to mould these so as to develop a partnership between them.
The advisers attempt to cement a partnership between themselves and farmers, and to use their knowledge to complement farmers' own understanding of the environment.
This results in a two-way exchange of resources with both parties contributing to the development of conservation objectives. The discretionary freedom available to AES POs is an important factor in allowing this process to succeed. However, whilst there seems to be only a small 'gap' between conservation advisers' and farmers' attitudes towards conservation, it must also be recognised that the advisers only have contact with 'converted' farmers who have, at least, been partially enrolled to environmental objectives prior to their involvement in the schemes.

In general, the AES POs feel they have sufficient discretionary freedom to implement the schemes, to develop environmental benefits and to meet the farmers' own objectives. Although many NGOs in both the national and regional networks would like to see discretionary freedom increased, there is no consensus as to what this should mean. Some actors, mainly agricultural interests, would like to see a relaxation of prescriptions so as to allow farmers to alter management practices depending on weather conditions, or to increase stocking levels where this will not be detrimental to wildlife. In contrast, other actors, mostly those with a primary environmental interest, would like to see discretionary freedom increased so as to mould the scheme more specifically to the environmental opportunities of particular sites. Increasing discretionary freedom does, however, pose a number of additional problems. Firstly, it will require more input from AES POs and will increase the cost of administrating the schemes. Secondly, it will reduce the coherence and consistency of the schemes across the country as agreements will be specific to individual farms. MAFF will, as a result, lose some of their ability to control farmers' actions and will be unable to judge
exactly what AES payments are achieving. The environmental NGOs acknowledge this difficulty and accept that further discretionary freedom is not necessarily the right approach. Instead, conservation NGOs feel that their aims will be better addressed through a more holistic agricultural and environmental policy. This will require a better integration of 'traditional' support based on production with environmental objectives and schemes. Such an approach will not only increase the environmental benefits farmers can deliver, but will also go some way to the provision of a more coherent set of policies for farmers to follow.

Within the policy process, conservation advisers play an important role in the translation of agri-environmental policy to farmers. Their position gives them a unique understanding of the many different factors that lead to farmers' enrolment to the agri-environmental network. Because of this, they have considerable resources to contribute to the policy process. This highlights the importance of the linkages between advisers and other members of the regional and national networks. By encouraging advisers to pass on their unique understanding of farmers' reasons and reluctance for joining the AESs, it may be possible to further develop or refine agri-environmental policy and to encourage further enrolment by farmers. This also highlights the recursive nature of the policy process. The implementation of the schemes does not represent the final stage; the problems encountered with implementation are fed back into the process and are used by the actors to press for change so as to further refine the schemes.

By examining the regional and national actors' understanding of farmers' environmental awareness and ability to carry out AES, it is also possible to start to explain why these actors make certain demands on policy. For example, both environmental and agricultural NGOs are aware that, whilst a great number of farmers have agreed to accept environmental objectives through enrolment to AESs, they are also aware that considerably more farmers are still locked into a productivist approach and regard conservation as in conflict with their objective of increasing production and profitability. They are, therefore, keen to push for further
developments to agricultural and agri-environmental policy so as to ensure that conservation is not merely regarded by farmers as an optional extra.

This chapter has shown how all actors are drawn into discussions on implementation and that is it not confined to those whose task is to put the schemes into action. Whilst there might appear to be 'gaps' between some levels of the network as to how AESs should be implemented, these 'gaps' can be understood by recognising how the actors attempt to influence others and the policy process according to their membership of a sub-network. This also highlights the cyclical character of the policy process. This is a central theme for Chapter Eight which examines how the actors assess the actual and possible benefits AESs deliver and how these views are used to further influence the policy process.
Chapter Eight

The Actors' Assessments of the Agri-environmental Schemes

Introduction

It was argued in Chapter Three that policy is produced cyclically with no clear distinction between the phases of development, implementation and evaluation. This chapter examine actors' assessments of the current agri-environmental schemes and possible future policy options. These findings provide some insights into how informal methods of evaluation are developed and constitute an important part of the policy process. This approach also meets Majone's (1989) position when he argues that policy should be evaluated against actual outcomes, and the benefits or losses the policy delivers, rather than trying to measure success according to pre-ordained goals or objectives (see also Sabatier, 1991). In practice this means that actors evaluate the net benefits of a policy throughout the process (see Figure 8.1), and not at any one point, even if those seeking to set and shape policy will be frequently engaged in major ex ante evaluations. Other actors will attempt to evaluate policy on the initial benefits delivered.

What this means is that, at each stage, different forms of evaluation will feed into an ongoing process of policy development (Hellstern, 1991), analogous to Barrett and Fudge's (1981) view of the policy process where action leads to reaction. The evaluation framework thus applies to all actors in the network. In this case, farmers adopting environmental objectives will make "front-end" evaluations as to whether the scheme or environmental projects suit their farm business strategies. They will evaluate whether these activities are practical and increase wildlife. Once they have been carrying out these practices for some time, or the AES agreement comes to the
Figure 8.1 The Basic Evaluation Framework

(Hellstern, 1991, p.284)
end, they will decide if their actions have yielded positive or negative results, and this in turn will feed into subsequent decisions regarding future environmental objectives or further enrolment into AESs.

To appraise the AESs, the actors draw on different evaluative tools. A range of formal techniques have been developed for assessing environmental policy (see for example, DoE, 1991, 1994a; Garrod and Willis, 1994), but evaluation also depends on individual intuition, experience and values (Healey and Shaw, 1994; Holdgate, 1995; Owens, 1994; Young, 1977; 1981). Majone (1989) argues that:

"values and opinions count a great deal in evaluation not only because of the ambiguity of the outcomes of practice - the difficulty of assigning specific causes to particular effects, of measuring outputs, and assessing unintended consequences, of distinguishing between flawed conceptions and failures of implementation - but even more because of inescapable disagreements about the kind of evaluative criteria that are meaningful, fair, or politically acceptable in a given situation. Such ambiguities and disagreements can never be fully resolved by improved measurement and testing techniques, but can be represented and clarified by debate and mutual persuasion" (p.168).

Majone’s argument emphasises the importance of communication between actors and suggests that a more open, consultative approach to policy making will increase the range of ideas fed into the assessment process. The government’s position in the process of evaluation has changed because of this shift in the pattern of governance and they now work with the diverse membership of the network to evaluate policy (Rhodes, 1997).

Whilst government should be aware and responsive to these various conceptions of evaluation amongst the actors, and incorporate them into policy assessment, such an awareness does not automatically lead to accountability or to the legitimacy of decisions taken by them (Rhodes, 1997). Rhodes (1997) also argues that the "hollowing out of state" has made the task of accountability more difficult. Consequently, "accountability can no longer be specific to an institution but must fit the policy and its network" (p.21). This has changed the government’s role in the evaluation of policy. Rather than the government being treated as solely accountable
for the impact of policy, the other members of the network are also accountable in part for the results (ibid.). This shift in emphasis means that as actors are drawn further into the policy process, the resources they hold and their ability to influence others become progressively more important as they seek to develop policy to meet their own particular aims, and these issues are central to this chapter.

The assessment of environmental policy, or more specifically AESs, is complex and it cannot be reduced to a single approach. It is possible however to identify three interrelated types of evaluation associated with the AESs which feed into the overall process. Firstly, AESs can be judged according to the number of farmers enrolled and by assessing farmers' compliance with their management agreements. This type of study is usually undertaken by the statutory agency implementing the scheme or contractors to them. Additionally, some socio-economic monitoring may also be carried out, although this tends to be reduced to simple statements (see MAFF, 1991; Rebane and Tucker, 1996) rather than understanding the complex reasons why farmers have enrolled and abide with the schemes. This 'formal' monitoring is important for providing information on the acceptability of the schemes to farmers and can be used to develop a preliminary analysis of the AESs' success. Secondly, the AES can be assessed according to the environmental goods delivered. Although considerable environmental monitoring has taken place and there are positive signs that wildlife is benefiting, it is generally agreed that it is too early to measure exactly what impact the schemes will have on the landscape and biodiversity (NAO, 1997; Saunders, 1994). Thirdly, because the two approaches above do not provide actors with sufficient information to make an evaluation, each will assess the actual and possible outcomes of policy (e.g. environmental, social or financial benefits) according to their individual experiences and values; this leads to the informal evaluation of the AESs. Although these 'informal' assessments are highly personalised and constantly change as new issues and information come to the fore, they are an integral and on-going part of the system of evaluation. In attempting to understand how these develop and influence the process, it is important not to try to mould these evaluations into a rigid structure as this will constrain rather than enlighten our
understanding of the recursive nature of evaluation that accompanies the policy process.

This chapter seeks to examine the how these different types of evaluation are used by the actors. In the first section the formal monitoring of the AESs is reviewed. This provides a base from which to examine the actors' attitudes to this type of evaluation and how this may influence the policy process. The second section examines how actors informally evaluate policy through a discussion on the AES's 'value for money'. This provides some insights into the reasons why actors view the benefits of the AESs differently and how this can lead to the formation of 'gaps' within the policy process. The final section examines the recursive nature of evaluation by reviewing actors "front-end" assessments of a possible policy option, namely cross-compliance. This section also emphasises that there is no logical point from which to begin to examine how actors evaluate policy because these constantly develop and change through time.

Monitoring of Agri-environmental Schemes

This section is divided into three parts. The first reviews the current 'formal' monitoring of the AESs undertaken by the MAFF and the implementing agencies. The purpose here is not to develop a critique of what the schemes have delivered but highlight what this official monitoring seeks to examine. This provides the background to the two following parts of this section which draw on the empirical evidence to examine the actors' attitudes to this type of monitoring and how it is used as a resource during the development of AESs.

The European Commission has implemented two Regulations (1405/94 and 746/96) which seek to strengthen the monitoring requirements of schemes included under the Agri-environmental Regulation (2078/92). Regulation 1405/94 defines the procedures for financial monitoring (CEC, 1994) and Regulation 746/96 (CEC, 1996) covers,
amongst other issues, the monitoring of environmental impacts. These Regulations arose because of the need to ensure some consistency in the monitoring of AESs by each member state, to produce a more coherent and comprehensive set of results and to ensure that farmers are not being over compensated by the range of schemes available (CEC, 1996). Concerning the monitoring of AESs, Article 16 of Regulation 749/96 places a requirement on member states to ensure that:

"Monitoring must make it possible to determine how the undertakings have been implemented in practice. In addition, monitoring shall facilitate, if necessary, the adjustment of the agri-environmental measures on the basis of the needs that come to light during implementation" (CEC, 1996, p.23).

This Article allows for monitoring procedures to be adjusted as the schemes develop and as new policy initiatives and problems with AESs arise in each member state. In the UK, monitoring of most AES (especially ESAs) has been sufficient to meet the demands of the EU (Tucker and Rebane, 1997).

Monitoring of AESs in England is based on four broad topics; uptake and targeting\(^1\), environmental evaluation, access benefits and socio-economic effects (on farmers, ancillary industries and the public), and compliance checks which assess whether farmers are abiding by the prescriptions of their management agreements.

At the beginning of all English AESs a target level of uptake is set to act as a guide to assess the attractiveness of the schemes to farmers and the level of expenditure to be set aside for the associated premiums\(^2\). Target uptake in ESAs is set at 75% of all eligible holdings within five years of the start of the scheme \(^3\) (NAO, 1997). Uptake has varied considerably between ESAs (see Figure 8.2). Differences in uptake are attributed to the financial attractiveness of the schemes, the ease of applying schemes to existing farm practices, farmers' reluctance to enter into contracts of five or more

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\(^1\)Targeting of schemes relates to the objectives of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (see chapter four).

\(^2\)For overviews of the monitoring of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme and ESAs, including, uptake, targeting, environmental assessment and socio-economic effects, see Rebane and Tucker, (1997) and NAO, (1997) respectively.

\(^3\)This target percentage relates to overall take up. Targets are also set for uptake in particular tiers. In some schemes the objective is to secure specific habitats rather than to enrol large areas into the scheme (NAO, 1997).
Figure 8.2 Percentage Uptake of Eligible Farmers in Environmentally Sensitive Areas in England (1996)

Source: NAO, 1997
years and areas being held for development purposes (CEC, 1997a; NAO, 1997; Rebane and Tucker, 1997; see also Chapter Seven).

Although overall targets have been reached in some ESAs, the targets for particular tiers (especially those which are more demanding) have not been attained (NAO, 1997). As a result, in some areas increases to wildlife benefits may be low (Brotherton, 1991; Morris and Potter, 1995). Participation rates should therefore be treated with caution as a way of evaluating the success of a scheme, even if uptake levels do provide a point from which to start to evaluate farmers' attitudes towards conservation (see Chapters Five and Seven).

Socio-economic monitoring has been carried out in the first five designated ESAs (see Table 1.1), examining the impact of the schemes on farm income, output and employment (NAO, 1997). In addition, socio-economic monitoring in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme has reviewed the use of farm inputs and how the schemes affect both upstream and downstream ancillary industries (Rebane and Tucker, 1997). This type of monitoring can highlight farmers' attitudes to scheme prescriptions. For example, non-adoption of higher ESA tiers can be attributed to difficulties in complying with the scheme rules, loss of freedom/flexibility to farm, and indicate where payments are considered too low to compensate for income forgone (CEC, 1997a; NAO, 1997). These surveys can also be used to assess what impact the withdrawal of the schemes would have on farmers' attitudes to conservation.

The objective of environmental monitoring in ESAs is to assess changes in the landscape, ecology and historical features of each area. In addition, Countryside Stewardship Scheme monitoring includes changes in the level of public access (NAO, 1997; Rebane and Tucker, 1997). The importance of environmental monitoring is discussed in association with the empirical evidence presented below. Compliance monitoring aims to ensure that farmers are abiding by the rules of the AES agreement. Under the instructions for the Habitat Scheme, MAFF state that:

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Rebane and Tucker (1997) note that very few socio-economic studies have been undertaken for the other AESs, although socio-economic monitoring of NSAs and the Tir Cymen scheme began in 1997.
"the overall aim [of compliance monitoring] should be the protection of public funds in a cost-effective manner relative to the commitment to making the Habitat Scheme workable at a local level and the availability of resources" (MAFF, 1995 paragraph 186).

This gives AES POs and others carrying out compliance checks considerable leeway for interpreting the outputs of management agreements. Compliance checks are carried out on 20% of ESA agreements in any one year, thereby ensuring all participants are inspected during the five year lifetime of the schemes (NAO, 1997). Compliance monitoring of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme under the Countryside Commission sought to check 40% of agreements in any one year (Rebane and Tucker, 1997). This higher level of compliance monitoring under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme may be related to the need to ensure agreements are delivering significant benefits to wildlife (one of the Scheme's primary aims) and because the scheme requires farmers to undertake more difficult environmental works than are found under ESA prescriptions.

The following two sections draw on the empirical evidence to assess how 'formal' monitoring is used by the actors when attempting to evaluate the benefits (ecological and financial) the AESs deliver.

**Actors' Assessment of the Importance of Monitoring of Agri-environmental Schemes**

The vast majority of farmers interviewed have not received any formal environmental monitoring on their agreement land. Most farmers concede that they do not have the skills to monitor wildlife changes and would welcome monitoring if it helps them to understand changes taking place:

'just because you are interested, it doesn't mean you are an expert. There may be a lot going on that you are missing' [Participating farmer no. 11].

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Information on the compliance monitoring of the FS-a Scheme is confidential because it is felt that the disclosure of this information might prejudice the effectiveness of the tests or the attainment of their objectives (MAFF, pers. comm.).
Farmers following organic or ICM systems are also keen to understand if these practices are having a positive influence on wildlife. Because of farmers' partial knowledge, they are not in a good position to evaluate the benefits arising from their actions and this may limit their enrolment to other AESs/higher tiers of ESAs, or hinder a more holistic attitude to environmentally friendly farming techniques.

The need for more monitoring to inform farmers of the benefits they are delivering was taken up by a RSPB Agricultural Adviser who explained:

'Overall, there is a complete lack of monitoring of what they have achieved, and what farmers don't know is how their farm has improved' [RSPB].

He recognises that farmers will be encouraged if they are made more fully aware of the improvements to wildlife they are achieving. All the farmers interviewed said they had seen an increase in wildlife on their farms and feel that what they are doing is benefiting the environment, but this assessment relies on individual expertise, which in many cases is based on personal intuition.

National and regional actors are divided as to whether sufficient monitoring is taking place. Many conservation advisers think current monitoring is inadequate; they feel that an increase in monitoring would allow them to better understand if the conservation practices they advocate to farmers are leading to wildlife gains:

'there are some things that are being promoted as good things, like game strips or field margins, but I don't know how good they are' [RSPB].

Those who argue that too much monitoring is taking place are concerned that monitoring is too expensive and not necessarily a good use of available funds. All interviewees recognise that 'there is a big resource cost in deciding exactly what the schemes are delivering', and although monitoring is essential for understanding wildlife improvements its cost may be prohibitively expensive. Monitoring of ESAs has been very intensive and expensive, whereas the monitoring costs of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme have been reduced through an extensive approach.

The Countryside Commission purposefully limited expenditure on all forms of

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6For example, MAFF spent £3.3 million on the environmental monitoring of ESAs between 1995 and 1996, in comparison to £29.1 million on grants to farmers (NAO, 1997).
monitoring to 5% of the Scheme's budget (MAFF spent 8.5% of their total budget on all forms of monitoring in ESAs in 1995/6) so as to enable the majority of funds to be spent on payments to farmers. The rationale behind the extensive system was explained by the Countryside Stewardship Scheme's monitoring manager:

In the past you adopted a scientific approach to monitoring which, without belittling science, was probably wrong, in that the old style approach was that you needed a big enough sample to meet statistics and to extrapolate etc. If you do that you end up spending nearly as much on monitoring as on the schemes, and you generate so much data that nobody looks at. What is needed is a much sharper and more focused approach. OK you lose robustness, but you gain more over the process of development....The ESA programme in the past has spent far too much money and has taken far too broad an approach and the information has not been used effectively. With Countryside Stewardship we went the other way at the outset, and decided we couldn't spend more than one or two percent of the total budget on monitoring [environmental issues]' [Countryside Commission].

The view that MAFF has spent far too much on monitoring is reiterated in the National Audit Office report on ESAs which concludes that monitoring should be more extensive and cost effective in the future (NAO, 1997). This conclusion appears to have already been adopted by MAFF who, in their reviews of the first five designated ESAs in 1996, note "monitoring of environmental results such as changes in wildlife abundance is expensive, and it is likely that in the future MAFF will have fewer funds available for this purpose than in the past" (MAFF, 1996c, p.5). MAFF were asked if it is justifiable to reduce monitoring when still so little is known about the effects of the AESs on the environment, to which they replied:

'Significantly less [is] to be spent on monitoring in the future' [but] ...you need the monitoring in the early stages of the schemes rather than later. If you find something is working on one piece of chalk downland then you have a reasonable supposition that it will work on another piece of chalk downland' [MAFF].

It appears that MAFF have found a way to justify high levels of monitoring in the past (i.e. ESAs needed intensive monitoring at first because of their originality) and that they are now confident that they know when the schemes are delivering an acceptable level of environmental benefits (see below). However, this approach to monitoring is indicative of a short-term outlook on policy and may be a symptom of the desire to save costs now and respond to problems as they arise later. Any reduction in
monitoring will displease the conservation NGOs who are keen to see an increase in activities, not only to understand the biological changes taking place but also to ensure that the schemes are increasing biodiversity rather than simply maintaining the status quo.

The evidence presented here shows how different actors regard the importance and purpose of environmental monitoring. For farmers, conservation advisers and environmental NGOs, monitoring is essential for understanding the benefits being delivered by the AES. Where monitoring reveals an increase in benefits, they can use it as a lobbying tool. Those charged with setting spending limits on monitoring (e.g. MAFF and the Countryside Commission) are principally concerned that funds are used 'efficiently' rather than for increasing knowledge of the benefits delivered, revealing a 'gap' between those who implement the schemes and the national actors.

In light of the expected decrease in expenditure on monitoring and the difficulties associated with assessing environmental benefits, the regional and national actors were asked how they thought benefits could best be measured. There is general agreement that this measurement is difficult. For MAFF, the starting point lies with the objectives of the schemes:

"The schemes themselves will have specific objectives, when they are set up, so the evaluations are largely the extent to which those objectives have been achieved. I mean we are not very far down the road in trying to do things like contingent evaluation, or things like that, apart from on a very experimental scale. It is more a question of 'have the objectives been achieved?' and 'how much are those things that have been achieved additional to what would have taken place anyway?' In other words how much dead weight is there in the scheme and what have you been paying for that would have happened" [MAFF].

It would therefore seem that MAFF are confident that the schemes will produce the desired outputs, or at least those which they think are important, even if other members of the agri-environmental network do not think AES objectives (and especially those of ESAs) are acceptable (see Chapter Seven). Because actors' values are different, 'gaps' in evaluation and the lessons to be drawn readily emerge, and they
can only be overcome through continuing debate and persuasion within the network leading to revised AES prescriptions.

**Actors' Concepts of Evaluation**

If it is assumed that AES objectives and prescriptions act as the primary measurement of environmental benefits delivered, conservation advisers carrying out compliance checks will be charged with evaluating the schemes according to these criteria. The advisers were asked if they have ever visited sites where what is being produced is unacceptable. Most of the advisers said they had. When asked how they reached this conclusion they said, 'It's more a gut feeling' or:

'You just know when something is totally unacceptable...it upsets your eye, because for example, the agreement just hasn't been followed' [Countryside Stewardship Scheme].

Conversely, advisers also claimed that they can tell when benefits are being achieved as this EN Conservation Officer explained:

'It is hard to explain. On Peter Hill's farm you do get a feeling, and it's in a number of ways, the land looks well managed...it's the sum total of small things' [EN].

Dependence upon 'gut feelings' has important consequences. It highlights the need for a high level of conservation expertise among POs and the subjective appreciation of benefits (see Brotherton and Devall, 1988). These personal evaluations play a significant role in how POs develop their attitudes towards the AESs and how these are reported to others actors in the network. While the conservation advisers feel they have sufficient knowledge to evaluate the schemes, it is difficult to judge the reliability of this opinion without further empirical research into their assessment practice and whether this is based on a common set of values.

Despite the unsatisfactory nature of this situation, the actors' personal evaluations are especially important given the schemes' short period of operation and by the novelty of the schemes. The actors were asked if they feel that the schemes are providing
value for money (VFM). Interviewees noted the difficulties associated with making this kind of judgement and readily accepted that there are always areas of ignorance and uncertainty within policy which cannot be accounted for through formal evaluation techniques or further research (see also Carter et al., 1992; Franz, 1991; Gibson, 1992). As a result, some issues can only be assessed according to personal experience or intuition. In these situations, the 'political debate' plays an important role in the development of policy. This point was taken up by MAFF who explain that judging VFM cannot be based on formal methods of evaluation alone:

'It is a problem for all government policies. How do you judge value for money in terms of defence policy or the National Health? It is the same mixture of economic evaluation and monitoring of effectiveness and political judgements about priorities and that is what everyone does' [MAFF].

Political judgements are not only relevant to government but also to the other actors within the network. The key political issues are sustained and changed in part by the lobbying of the interest groups. However, these issues cannot always be addressed through simple evaluation techniques and this requires the government to enter into consultation with other actors so as to gather the information necessary to evaluate the issue at hand. This highlights the importance of the communication between actors and their ability to influence. This ability to change other actors' ideas through the exchange of resources not only affects the enrolled actors' current views on evaluation but also the future decisions they make.

The national and regional actors agreed (at least initially) that AES provide VFM. Many feel that they have yielded greater benefits than expected given the low commitment of agricultural expenditure on AESs:

'Considering they [AES payments] are very small beer in comparison to other agricultural subsidy, they are exceeding good value, no matter how you measure the environmental benefits' [EN].

'our argument is that they [AESs] have actually achieved more than the money spent on them. Obviously, they have led to environmental improvements, and it has also won hearts and minds to a different approach to land management, and that is worth more than the money spent on them' [CPRE].
These interviewees are emphasising the importance of how farmers' environmental awareness has increased through enrolment, and that the change in farmers' attitudes that this represents is equal to, if not more important than, the benefits associated with the schemes' biological outputs.

Other interviewees' evaluation of VFM drew on the wide range of benefits provided by AESs:

'We mustn't see it as a farmer subsidy but a payment for public goods for which there is no market; but it does benefit the public. It [ESAs especially] is a land management payment' [National Trust].

Evaluation of the AESs is therefore extremely complex and affected by the actors' organisational affiliations.

The broad consensus on VFM can be explained by the interest groups' collective but separate wishes to influence policy. Future development of AESs will rely on further changes to agri-environmental policy, and this will depend on continued lobbying within the UK and Europe. Despite their differences of emphasis, by adopting a positive stance to the AESs, the lobbyists and government departments present a common front concerning the schemes' environmental and social benefits, and this leads to a 'passage point' from which to start further negotiation. The 'gaps' in this broad consensus appear when the interviewees are asked about the actual VFM being delivered by the AESs. Many national, regional and farmer interviewees argue AES payments are inflated because they have to appear attractive against commodity or area payments and this impacts on how the actors view their VFM.7 AES's competition against mainstream support relates back to fundamental problems of the CAP and Agenda 2000 will seek to address this imbalance8.

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7 Although the payments from the schemes are inflated because of the competition between environmental and contemporary support, there is some evidence that the ESAs reduce costs to the exchequer through decreases in livestock and arable subsidy payments (Garrod et al., 1994).

8 Future CAP reform arising from the WTO talks and Agenda 2000 is expected to reduce further market prices and change the mechanism of support towards direct support for farmers based on environmental and social issues and away from production related subsidy (CEC, 1997a, 1998; MAFF, 1995, 1997a; Potter, 1996). However, whether this 'de-coupling' of support will achieve environmental benefits will depend on the ability of the actors to set clear objectives (Potter, 1996; Tilzey, 1996).
Farmers enrolled into AES were asked if they thought the schemes provide better VFM than mainstream support (i.e. area and livestock payments). Many farmers feel that AESs do achieve better VFM than other forms of support as this typical response illustrates:

'It is better to pay this money to keep this land of what you would call outstanding landscape in good order. It is money better spent than just to keep a field in the middle of Cambridgeshire and just have the money go in farmers' pockets with no natural value what so ever' [Influential farmer no. 10].

Many farmers went further, stressing the importance of incorporating environmental issues into mainstream support: 'it would perhaps be good if they could link in environmental measures with them, that would be sensible'. The need to link environmental benefits to wider agricultural support leads to the issue of cross-compliance (see pp.263-273). Some farmers stressed the importance of the mainstream payments in providing an adequate income, without which many farmers would be forced out of the industry. Such losses would not only affect the rural economy but might have a negative impact on the environment (Hodge, 1990; Marsden and Munton, 1991). Although farmers have in recent years been over compensated through AAPs, the support mechanism may become increasingly important as wheat prices fall. As this farmer explained:

9The positive and negative benefits associated with the withdrawal of production related support were assessed by MAFF's CAP review group in 1995 (MAFF, 1995). The group suggested that if support was withdrawn without accompanying measures to support the environment the following impacts on the environment may occur:

- overall use of agrochemical inputs will fall (a positive effect)
- lower cereal prices could result in some former grassland in arable use reverting to extensive livestock grazing (a positive effect)
- there would be a reduced grazing intensity of livestock in less favoured areas (positive benefits in some areas, negative in others)
- lower cereal prices might boost intensive livestock farming at the expense of extensive grazing (negative effect)
- a fall in farm incomes and the agricultural labour force is likely to lead to a reduction in voluntary management of environmental features such as hedges, stone walls, wetlands and woodlands (a negative effect)
- some land would go out of agricultural use into other uses such as development, forestry, amenity use and environmental use (with both negative and positive effects, depending on the use)
- an increase in small enterprises and associated buildings could lead to a less attractive landscape (a negative effect)” (MAFF, 1995, p. 8).
The IACS scheme was designed to control production and in this country it has been developed for conservation [through environmental conditions on set-aside]. The price of cereals last year [1995] was not expected...if cereal drops below £90/tonne then we will need every penny of that [AAP] money' [Influential farmer no. 11].

Recent figures released by MAFF show that farmers' incomes declined by over 40% between 1997-1998 (MAFF, 1998b). Whether or not farmers should continue to receive support under further reform of the CAP has become an important issue (see CEC, 1997a and b; House of Commons, 1998; MAFF, 1995; Potter, 1996). It was therefore not surprising that the farmers interviewed thought AESs provide VFM given that the majority are, or have been, in receipt of payments from these schemes. In a few cases farmers stressed that the payments received under the AESs are essential because:

'It costs a lot more to keep landscape looking nice, a lot more than anyone in a town would realise. They all think it all happens either by God at night or just nature, and in fact there can't be all that much difference between keeping a landscape tidy and maintaining a golf course' [Influential farmer no.15].

Interviewees from environmental NGOs at both the national and regional levels expressed concern that farmers are in receipt of payments for works they would have carried out regardless of the funds available (see also Hodge et al., 1994; Garrod et al., 1994). This 'dead-weight' within the schemes is viewed as a waste of scarce resources as these interviewees explained

'You could argue that all this money is going into ESAs and it is only maintaining the status quo. Some figures show that 80% of money is in tier 1 and that isn't necessarily good value for money. And the way to change that is to require...farmers to get into positive management' [EN].

'When I look at the amount spent on ESAs, and in reality the very small improvements they achieve, quite a lot of money is money for old rope....What is the benefit to the public to give you [farmers] money to do nothing? We should look to what else can be done, you know, hedges, permissive footpaths' [Countryside Stewardship Scheme].

Thus if these schemes are to achieve higher levels of VFM, it is necessary to modify prescriptions so as to further encourage and assist farmers in delivering environmental goods. This requires more than having farmers enrolled and meeting their present
agreements (over 90% in 1995-1996, NAO, 1997). The agreements have to be sufficiently demanding to ensure additional environmental benefits. Yet this position also demands environmental evaluation of the goods being realised and relates back to the objectives of the schemes and how these were developed. Therefore, it is necessary to understand not only how schemes are judged ex post but also what issues were debated during the development of policy and how these ex ante evaluations lead to subsequent policy decisions.

The farmers' concept of VFM draws on a different line of reasoning to other members of the agri-environmental network. Only a small minority of farmers think that VFM centres upon the environmental and social benefits delivered. For the majority, the concept of VFM focuses around the need for financial support, either to provide the means for carrying out environmental tasks or maintaining farm incomes, emphasising the importance to them of the schemes' financial attractiveness. In contrast, environmental NGOs will judge the schemes on the environmental benefits delivered, while the government (in this case MAFF and DoE) assess VFM in terms of political judgements in addition to social and environmental welfare gains. This is not to suggest that any one group of actors is unaware of the positions of others, but that VFM will be based on the central objectives of the organisation or individual. What is important is how these concepts of evaluation feed into the policy process and what effects these different positions have on the development of policy. The next section attempts to understand this process through an examination of views on cross-compliance which at the time of the interviews was being canvassed as one means of taking forward the AESs.

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10This is not to suggest that all farmers are profit maximisers, but that they have to weigh up environmental objectives and schemes against their ability to remain in business, whether or not this relates to maximum profit or their ability to survive given the environmental constraints they impose on themselves (see Battershill and Gilg, 1997; Chapter Seven).
Ex ante Evaluation: the case of cross-compliance

During the interviews, the discussion on cross-compliance sought to examine the actors' opinion of this policy option as it was an interesting topic of debate at the time (see Colman, 1994; Countryside Commission, 1993; DoE, 1991; DoE/MAFF, 1995; Potter, 1986b, 1993b; RSPB, 1993; Taylor and Dixon, 1990). Analysis of the interviews revealed that the discussions on cross-compliance could provide a case study from which to examine actors' ex ante evaluations.

It was noted in the introduction that ex ante evaluations cannot by their nature be judged according to readily obtainable information and, as a result, they are based on actors' previous experiences and intuition. Moreover, the actors' opinions will constantly change as new ideas and information come to light. It is important therefore not to try to mould this type of evaluation into a formal assessment as this will overly simplify what is really happening and will not allow the complex and dynamic nature of the process to be revealed.

In light of these methodological constraints, the empirical evidence presented below has not been placed within a rigid structure; instead, the debate and the concerns of the actors towards cross-compliance are discussed so as to develop an understanding of how the actors view this policy option. From this it is possible to start to understand the complex process in which the actors are involved and how these early evaluations may shape actors' subsequent decisions and their further involvement with the policy process.

Cross-compliance is suggested as a way of:

i) increasing VFM by incorporating environmental stipulations into mainstream agricultural policy, thereby raising environmental benefits without increasing public expenditure;

ii) encouraging farmers to adopt environmentally friendly techniques;

iii) curbing over production.
It has been defined as:

"broadening the purpose of one grant, subsidy or other payment towards several different objectives which are different from the original and primary objective. Currently, agricultural policy typically consists of a structure which goes 'one policy, one set of incentives, one payment'. It would be possible to get added value from this policy by widening the objectives" (Dixon, 1993, p.185).

Cross-compliance for agricultural support was first suggested in the 1980s in the USA. Farmers would only receive mainstream support if they agreed to adopt certain farming practices designed to reduce soil erosion (Batie and Sappington, 1986). However, cross-compliance was not introduced until the Food Security Act (1985). The Act incorporated a range of policies which required farmers to apply appropriate conservation techniques on highly erodable land if they were to be eligible for farm programme benefits (Batie and Sappington, 1986; Hoag and Holloway, 1991; Potter, 1998). In the UK, Taylor and Dixon, drawing on the research of Furness et al. (1990), have advocated cross-compliance as a mechanism for including conservation objectives in agricultural policy (Taylor and Dixon, 1990). Cross-compliance would need to be entirely voluntary. Farmers could either opt in to the scheme and agree to produce environmental goods "as part of their food producing activities" or "remain outside the scheme and to rely on the market to direct their farm income" (Taylor and Dixon, 1990, p.21). In addition to environmental benefits, cross-compliance can also be used to assess whether farmers are really committed to the environmental maintenance of the countryside (Russell and Fraser, 1995), and its introduction would increase the efficiency in the use of public monies (Dixon, 1993; Countryside Commission, 1993). Cross-compliance does, however, have a number of drawbacks and these are explained through the empirical evidence.

The 1990 White Paper 'This Common Inheritance' stressed the need to integrate agricultural and environmental policy across the EU "so that those benefiting from EC support schemes will be required in return to protect and where possible enhance the environment on their holdings" (DoE, 1990, p.99). This was viewed by the RSPB as a clear commitment to cross-compliance (Dixon, 1993). The 1995 White Paper 'Rural England' went further and noted: "we are committed to looking for ways of
extending cross-compliance wherever it is practicable and sensible in doing so" (DoE/MAFF, 1995 p.115). So far, implementing the principle has been approached cautiously, even minimally, although the 1992 reforms of the CAP introduced elements of cross-compliance to the UK under set-aside and the 'greening' of the HLCAs.

Although there appears to be a positive attitude to cross-compliance in MAFF and DoE, the interviewees from the two departments explained that there are two main problems with its introduction. Firstly, there is a need to ensure that cross-compliance will be applied across the EU so as to ensure that British farmers are not disadvantaged:

'The party line is that we, the government, can see practical difficulties of cross-compliance, but we are interested in exploring the idea further. But because it will require European level agreement we want to get more of a debate going with our European partners, that is the formal position. Some of us within government are more enthusiastic than others....For some people it is hard to grasp but virtually everything is decided in Brussels in the Agriculture Council. It makes the debate about subsidiarity seem slightly strange when you talk about agricultural policy. So, cross-compliance would have to be agreed in the Agriculture Council...until the majority of EU agricultural departments sign up to the idea nothing is going to happen. I say that and you are talking to the DoE here, but you could go around Europe and talk to other environmental departments and you might well find that people like me are quite keen on things like cross-compliance, but again there are tensions within all those countries. So the minister in the Agricultural Council may be saying something different to what the environment minister might be saying in that country' [DoE].

Putting the practical difficulties aside (these are discussed below), the issue of European and home divisions are important as they reveal some 'gaps' between government departments over the introduction of cross-compliance, not only in the UK but also in other member states. Whether the differences between government

11Under the AAP Scheme, the management of set-aside requires that farmers do not "damage or destroy or remove any of the following features which are sighted on or immediately next to land which is set-aside: vernacular (traditional) buildings, stone walls, hedges, trees including hedgerow tress, watercourses, ditches, ponds, lakes and archaeological remains" (MAFF, 1996a, p.26). The greening of the Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowances (HCLAs) has attempted to ensure that payments under the HCLA system no longer provide incentives for increasing stocking rates to ecologically damaging levels, and thereby reducing the risk of overgrazing.
departments represent the guarding of "traditional policy spaces" (Jones and Clark, 1998) is unclear.

Secondly, the DoE interviewee explained that not only is the government tied by agricultural policy as dictated by the EU, but also that cross-compliance does not meet MAFF's primary demands for the reform of the CAP:

'The government's overriding imperative for CAP reform is an economic one, which is the UK consumer and taxpayer is getting a bad deal out of the CAP. Therefore, if the producer support levels could be radically reduced, or we would say abolished, then, [there would be] cheaper food and less of a tax burden on the UK taxpayer. And therefore, the government would be chary of anything which slows up that process' [DoE].

MAFF's principal objective for CAP reform is to tighten CAP expenditure. Moreover, MAFF's proposed reform package seeks to remove the schemes to which cross-compliance will be attached (House of Commons, 1998; MAFF, 1995). Hodge's review of the 1995 Rural White Paper suggests that any positive move towards the use of cross-compliance should only be viewed as a short term measure for this reason (Hodge, 1996). This was further explained by a civil servant at MAFF:

'If you accept that agricultural support is not going to be tenable in the long term, because of constraints on GATT and things, then it [cross-compliance] is not actually a long term solution' [MAFF].

It was also noted that:

'There is a school of thought, or a worry, that if you put in place an extensive programme of cross-compliance measures, which then started delivering a broad range of environmental benefits, you might then find a big lobby develop saying "well hang on, we don't want to give up all these environmental benefits on the back of these payments therefore we must keep these payments going". Now that would be contrary to this government's overriding objectives for CAP reform. So again you have to add that into the melting pot' [DoE].

MAFF and DoE are not alone in citing these problems, as the National Trust's Agricultural Adviser explains:

'I disagree with most of [Wildlife and Countryside] Link with this, and you are muddling two things. I don't believe you can achieve a huge amount of environmental benefits by cross-compliance, because a lot of the things you are trying to prevent have been caused by the fact there is a subsidy at all. And I think there is a danger that everyone will think well, we have cross-
compliance now and we will carry on with the system, whereas I think the system is flawed and that actually you need to pay less for production and more for environmental benefits, and that is not cross-compliance' [National Trust].

These quotes indicate 'gaps' between the actors over cross-compliance. Although the National Trust are willing to side with MAFF’s argument because their end points are the same (i.e. radical reform of the CAP), this does not necessarily mean the organisations are in agreement over the reasons why reform is needed. It is also interesting to note that the National Trust have adopted a very different approach to reform by comparison with other conservation organisations (see below). This has not arisen because the National Trust feels the government is right, but that other conservation bodies are adopting the wrong approach to reform. Conservation NGOs such as the RSPB suggest using cross-compliance as a 'stepping stone' slowly to encourage farmers to adopt environmental objectives, especially while current support mechanisms are in place. The RSPB (along with the CPRE) appear to be taking an incremental approach to policy change by developing additional stipulations to current agricultural policies.

Even though cross-compliance could be integrated into existing policies, MAFF and the agricultural lobby feel that its adoption would increase managerial control over farmers to which the agricultural lobby would be resistant (CLA, 1994; NFU, 1994). One member of the agricultural lobby noted:

"The CLA doesn’t like it [cross-compliance]...there is great concern that the environmental tail is beginning to wag the agricultural dog and this is another example of it. If you give in to the environment[al lobby] you won’t get any thanks, they will just want more. If you want farmers to do conservation compulsorily then you will have to pay them to do it’ [CLA].

This view echoes some of the concerns put forward by the NFU, CLA and MAFF over the introduction of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (Cox et al., 1986, see also Chapter One). Throughout the development of the 1981 Act, agricultural interests were keen to avoid 'control' and to ensure that the principle of voluntary self-regulation was upheld. This would ensure farmers' management rights were maintained and they would be in a strong position to press for compensation if policy
changes reducing profitability were imposed. The introduction of cross-compliance would impinge on these rights, and this was not welcomed by agricultural interests:

'Cross-compliance doesn't go down well...farmers being made to do things will be difficult' [NFU].

The CLA addressed this issue head-on in its submission to the consultation round of the 1995 Rural White Paper. The CLA argue that current voluntary schemes have yielded positive benefits and it is these which should be further modified:

"We ask that Government rejects cross-compliance as a means of realising environmental objectives. Positive incentives for environmental management have proved themselves effective in protecting, maintaining, enhancing or recreating wildlife habitats, landscapes, historical features and recreational opportunities" (CLA, 1995a, p.6).

In place of cross-compliance, the CLA proposes that three different types of voluntary agreement should be made available to farmers12. The farmers interviewed accept that a voluntary approach may not be sustainable. If so, there is a need to strike a balance between persuasion and compulsion, but this will not be easy:

'I think it might build up a huge resistance if you went around saying, here's your carrot but you can't have it. You know, I'm not sure that's the way to go, you should persuade people because they want to do it, but maybe that's wrong, I'm not sure' [Influential farmer no. 8].

Although some regulations have been introduced to reduce the pollution of watercourses (see Lowe et al., 1997), the Countryside Commission are wary of adopting a regulatory approach or even of using the word compliance:

'It's not the right word to use. It sets up all the wrong signals. Farmers will regard it as adversarial, the same way as SSSI...[it] sets up a conflict....More important to talk about a change to the nature of payments that will help the farmer stay in business and ...benefit the environment. It is better that way than slapping conditions on' [Countryside Commission].

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12The CLA's submission to the 1995 Rural White Paper notes three standard components that should be introduced to agricultural support instead of cross-compliance. These are: a) annual land stewardship payments for all rural areas (subject to the observance of specified environmental conditions); b) annual land management payments for targeted land (areas of greatest environmental value or potential); c) land management needed to achieve environmental land management objectives (CLA, 1995a and b).
Although the schemes would not be compulsory, a broad range of interviewees argue that many farmers will not survive financially without some support and consequently in practice farmers will be forced to comply. The Countryside Commission recognise there is more than one issue at stake. Farmers will need support to ensure their survival, but this they argue should be integrated with the aims of conservation through a change to the 'nature of payments' so as to meet these dual objectives. This position reveals how the Countryside Commission has become sensitive to the needs of farmers and how they have come to adopt an approach which seeks to integrate environmental issues into agricultural policy through subtle change rather than compulsory regulation.

There is also concern that farmers with the most environmental features on their farms will be penalised by cross-compliance, as the National Trust's Agricultural Adviser explained:

'One of the other problems with cross-compliance is that the people who end up paying the most...are...the farmer[s] with the most conservation. That is not the same with all cross-compliance but, if you take the idea that they should meet minimum standards of maintenance of traditional buildings and hedgerows and ditches and so on in return for their Arable Area Payments, let us say, who are the ones who are going to have to do the most conservation? It will be the Devon farm with small fields, lots of hedges and traditional buildings and all that. Your prairie barley baron in East Anglia hasn't got any hedges and it is not going to cost him at all. And that is an inherent weakness of cross-compliance, and the advocates have not been able to tell me how they are going to get round that one. So I think that instead of doing that we dock half the Arable Area Payments and put it into environmental payments. So those producing the most environment will get the most money [National Trust].

Farmers also express concern that a blanket scheme will not be sufficiently flexible to meet the wide range of farm types and environmental features:

'providing you allow for farm to farm variability. It is no good having a prescription for the whole of the south east of England, maybe there are some things you could do that with. Maintaining variability in principle is really important because it is the only way you will get farmers to do something' [Influential farmer no.7].

'The people who design these rules get into trouble because...they don’t realise different farms are run on different patterns and that a change for
This imbalance between farm types may be difficult to surmount. However, such problems could be reduced by developing schemes according to the 'Character of England: Landscape, Wildlife and Natural Features' map (EN and Countryside Commission, 1996). While the arguments put forward by the two farmers above may meet with approval from conservation organisations because it shows that these farmers are aware that policy has to be sufficiently flexible to meet the environmental features of each farm, it is unlikely that agri-environmental policy in the future would be based on individual agreements. Most current agricultural support mechanisms do not differentiate between farms (except at a large scale e.g. LFA, arable and livestock systems), with each farm business being left to adjust to the market. Additionally, it is unlikely that future policy would be more flexible given the government's need to reduce expenditure and the difficulties they would face in monitoring whether farmers are abiding by their agreements (see below).

Currently, AESs are confined either to designated areas or to areas which can provide the greatest conservation benefits. This compartmentalisation of the farmed countryside is seen as a hindrance to the integration of environmental issues into farming in general (Adams et al., 1994; Adams, 1996; Tilzey, 1996). Cross-compliance could address this problem, but whether it would really encourage farmers to implement environmental objectives holistically across the farm is unclear, as an interviewee at EN explained:

'The dichotomy [between conservation and agriculture] is really shown with cross-compliance. Because with it you are really getting an integrated use of that field...the crop itself is business and that is where the rhetoric breaks down and you see the zoning of the countryside.... Unless policy is designed correctly the environment will be pushed to the margin of commercial agriculture and the policies will always be add-ons' [EN].

To overcome this problem, cross-compliance would need to go beyond the maintenance of environmental or landscape features (i.e. through the introduction of conservation headlands and hedgerow maintenance, for example) and to develop a
whole farm approach (Countryside Commission, 1993; Potter, 1986b). This point was taken up by the National Trust's Agricultural Adviser who suggested:

'A whole farm plan would be a type of cross-compliance which I would approve and I would say that a whole farm plan should be a condition of drawing down any sort of IACS payment [National Trust].

Given the arguments expressed earlier by agricultural organisations, a whole farm approach is unlikely to be acceptable because farmers are cautious of losing their rights to manage environmental features let alone the introduction of conditions which will affect the entire farm.

The issue of compensation for income forgone and level of payments to farmers also yields wide debate. Studies on cross-compliance in the USA have shown that it is difficult to set the schemes' payments at appropriate levels to encourage voluntary participation because many farmers are better placed financially outside of the scheme (Batie and Sappington, 1986; Ervin et al., 1984; Hoag and Holloway, 1991). Some interviewees are concerned that the constraints of cross-compliance will result in many farmers leaving the support system for economic reasons. If this happens the introduction of cross-compliance will do little to solve current environmental issues:

'I think it's a myth, people [conservationists] think they will get benefits for nothing, but people [farmers] will weigh up how much extra it's going to cost them and if the sums don't add up then people won't sign up for it. It will have to have tailored payments to pay for the extra bits, so it isn't cross-compliance. It's not a bad idea. You always get some good guys who will sign up for Countryside Stewardship rather than set-aside. It will cost them a little but they can afford to do so, but you can't rely on that' [Countryside Stewardship Scheme].

Whilst this Countryside Stewardship PO is sceptical that cross-compliance will benefit the environment, his caution can be compared with the views being expressed at the introduction of IACS in 1993. This scheme was not received warmly at the time (see House of Commons, 1998; NFU, 1994) but it has become acceptable. Nonetheless, this experience helps to explain why conservation organisations are keen to develop an incremental approach as they have witnessed how farmers adapt to policy conditions once they have been introduced.
Both advocates and opponents agree cross-compliance will increase bureaucracy and will require intensive monitoring - '[it is] usually shot down on the cost of policing or that it is impracticable' [EN]. Indeed, even the RSPB who have been the biggest promoters of cross-compliance noted that: 'It would be a nightmare for compliance. Policing it would be a nightmare'. However, the problems of policing are viewed by some to be a 'red herring'. The implementation of the IACS scheme has led to a very thorough inventory of farms in the UK and consequently problems of baseline data can be easily overcome, as this interviewee explained:

'IACS is giving us a good inventory of the land, therefore it will be easier to implement, but there is a fine line between that and bureaucracy' [ADAS].

This final point echoes those put forward by farmers who are unsure if the bureaucracy associated with cross-compliance will be acceptable. Assuming that bureaucracy can be kept to a minimum, EN noted that the information available from IACS can be combined with physically detectable change through remote sensing and so the difficulties of monitoring can be addressed. Even the National Trust Adviser, who is sceptical of cross-compliance, noted that the level of bureaucracy is dependent on the schemes' administrators and their willingness to adapt. As he explained using a previous scheme for example:

If anyone says that is too difficult [to monitor], that's not so, you can make it as difficult as you want it to be. After all, the Farm and Horticultural Scheme as it was called, you only got into that by producing a business plan, so why can't you produce one for a conservation plan or a land plan' [National Trust].

The production of a farm conservation plan would serve a number of purposes. It would ensure that farmers are aware of what they are trying to achieve, require them to expand their conservation knowledge and make the schemes more transparent and accountable.

The opinions expressed by the actors towards cross-compliance provide insights into the importance of ex ante evaluation and how this is an on-going and integral part of the policy process. Furthermore, all actors assess possible policy options, albeit according to their own terms of reference, and these opinions help form the resources actors will use during further engagement with the agri-environmental network. The
examination of cross-compliance has not attempted to set actors' opinions into a framework as this would reduce the understanding of the dynamic interplay between them and how they build their views through contact with others over time. By observing how the actors assess cross-compliance, it is possible to reveal how policy may develop in the future and which actors will have been influential in its development when the final policy is produced.

Conclusions

The farmers interviewed have in general only a limited understanding of the wildlife gains accruing on their farms and this is compounded by the lack of information they receive from official monitoring. As a result, their evaluation of the schemes is primarily based on the financial payments they receive. Failing to expand farmers' environmental knowledge is likely to restrict their future enrolment into other AESs and their development of a more environmentally friendly approach to farming. Additionally, their want of conservation knowledge hinders their ability to communicate with other actors; consequently, many farmers will not be in a position to pass their experiences on to other actors and this limits farmers' possibilities for influencing the policy process.

The 'gaps' identified between the national and regional actors over the amount and need for monitoring arise because the actors have different expectations of the results. For the conservation advisers, monitoring gives them feedback on their ability to persuade farmers to adopt and carry out conservation works. By comparison, those actors who are charged with ensuring public funds are spent 'effectively' and 'efficiently' are keen to reduce monitoring as they feel the results of previous research are sufficient to ensure the schemes can operate successfully. This emphasises that the actors' evaluations are based on their objectives, and the issues with which they are most concerned. 'Gaps' of this nature cannot be reduced through increased research but through communication and debate; they do not lead to a breakdown in the policy
process but highlight the difficulties of making decisions which are generally acceptable to other actors involved.

The examination of cross-compliance as a possible policy proposal highlights the complexity of issues which need to be negotiated before policy can be introduced. Furthermore, this stresses that the policy and evaluation process constantly evolves through the development of new ideas and attempts to resolve current problems. The problems presented with cross-compliance may be accentuated in this case study because of the lack of ground rules on which to base discussions (Potter and Gasson, 1988). Differences of opinion expressed can be partially attributed to the actors' initial starting points. For example, conservationists see cross-compliance as a way to provide environmental gains through existing policy structures and they have tried to find ways to match their needs with those of the agricultural lobby by integrating environmental aims into existing agricultural policy. By contrast, the agricultural interests are primarily concerned that cross-compliance will undermine their long cherished self-regulationary approach and farmers will lose their rights to farm as they wish. It is interesting that many of the farmers interviewed seemed to adopt a middle position to cross-compliance. They recognise that change will be needed but they are wary that this might significantly alter their farming systems.

The actors' opinions on cross-compliance are formed from previous experiences and current objectives, and these are used to develop their views on future policy conditions. This shows how the actors are constantly engaged in a process of negotiation and bargaining, attempting to influence other actors so as to develop policy which will meet their objectives. Additionally, the changing pattern of the policy process requires that those actors who attempt to shape and set policy have the necessary resources to enter into ex ante evaluations if they are to maintain their position within the network. The development of resources to address possible policy options becomes increasingly important to the implementing agencies and NGOs as their role in the policy network expands and government becomes increasingly reliant on others for information.
Chapter Nine

Conclusions

Introduction

The thesis had three principal objectives i) to examine the form of the new relationship between the traditionally distinct agricultural and environmental interests and its impact upon the development and formulation of agri-environmental schemes in England; ii) through intensive fieldwork, to investigate the changing pattern of policy process with reference to the agri-environmental network; iii) to provide detailed insights into the way the policy process functions through an investigation of the implementation and evaluation of agri-environmental schemes in England. The research sought to meet these objectives by adopting an approach which attempts to include the broad range of actors involved in the agri-environmental policy process in England (e.g. from farmers who implement AESs to the Conservation Management Division of MAFF).

The first section of this final chapter assesses the major findings of the research on the policy process and the AESs. The second section provides a critical review of the concepts and methods deployed in the research and examines the possibility and potential value of using other methods for investigating the actors’ linkages with the agri-environmental network. The third section considers how future research could build upon the thesis results in order to develop further our understanding of the implementation and development of the AESs and the policy process surrounding them. The final section focuses on the main policy messages which can be drawn from the research findings.
The New Alignment of Agricultural and Environmental Interests

By the late 1980s, the state of hostility that had prevailed between agricultural and environmental interests in the late 1970s and early 1980s (for example during the development of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, see Chapter One), had been replaced by one of conciliation (see Chapters Two and Six). The research has shown that the new relationship to emerge has largely been the result of a 'forced fusion', with both sides accepting that a delicate if revised balance between their interests needed to be found if each were to benefit. On the one hand, farming groups recognised that they needed to adopt AESs as designed if they were to avoid imposed regulation and loss of use rights. On the other, environmental groups became aware that if AESs were designed in ways that rendered them unattractive to farmers, participation would be low and conservation benefits minimal. The new relationship has required each set of interests to be recognised by the other even if the relationship remains unequal for a number of reasons. First, the introduction of the Agri-environmental Regulation and subsequent AESs do not represent a fundamental change to the structure of the CAP. Consequently, the core policy doctrines remain intact and farmers are still firmly locked into a productivist approach through the suite of support schemes on offer (Clark et al., 1996). Second, because of the voluntary nature of the AESs farmers are not compelled to place conservation practices before productivist ones. As a result, the AESs remain marginal to many farmers' activities. Thirdly, the overtly accommodatory approach adopted by agricultural interests has enabled them to appear to be accepting the needs of conservationists but, importantly, only on their own terms. For example, AESs provide farmers with additional monetary support for what in many cases requires little change to contemporary farm practice (see Chapter Eight). Significantly, the high participation rate in AESs that this facilitates also ensures that farmers' environmental stewardship role is not brought into question.

It is important to recognise however that radical policy change is rare in general and that most change is brought about in an incremental fashion. With this in mind, the inclusion of the AESs into the CAP signal a significant step towards change and lay
the foundations for possible future and perhaps more politically ambitious agri-
environmental policy initiatives. The development of the AESs in England has
required the inclusion of the environmental lobby into the policy making process. This
marks an important departure from the 'closed' and secretive agricultural policy
community of the past (even if inclusion only extends to agri-environmental policy)
(Cox and Lowe, 1986a; Smith, 1990). This inclusion has also required environmental
interests to adopt different lobbying tactics and practices. Principally, they have
sought to work with agricultural groups so as to secure "win-win" situations and this
has enabled the policy process to move forward - albeit within certain bounds of
accommodation. As has been shown (see Chapter Six), this has led to the
development of 'passage points' from which new ideas, objectives and issues can be
introduced and built upon. In this context of 'reconciliation', the relationships that
have formed appear to be built on personal trust (see Chapter Six). This trust has
developed out of the actors' acceptance of the need to work within the confines of a
common approach and a long working period (since the mid 1980s) which has
allowed personal relationships to foster and flourish. This slow accretionary process
towards accommodation has created considerable 'social capital' which neither side
wishes to jeopardise. For example, at the national level, the NFU representative
explained in interview that it is vitally important for conservation and agricultural
groups to work together for mutual benefits, and where organisations disagree they
should accept this and not argue their differences in 'public'. 'Public' confrontation
reduces trust which may lead to competitive and unproductive positions which may
also hinder informal relationships in private.

The new relationship between agricultural and environmental interests has been
further consolidated by the establishment of the Agri-environmental Fora and Steering
Group. Their meeting have sought to encourage the cementing of linkages between
interests. Furthermore, they have allowed MAFF to be seen as more open and
receptive to the views of other interested parties who feel that they have an important
contribution to make to the development of agri-environmental policy. Indeed, it was
suggested in interview by the Countryside Commission that MAFF have become a
'service provider' seeking to work with their customers (agricultural and
environmental groups) to produce widely accepted policies. However, this should not be read to imply that MAFF are solely responding to other interests' needs. MAFF's role in the setting of the agenda for both the Steering Group and the Fora places them in a position to 'steer' the competing interests towards goals which are acceptable to MAFF itself. Furthermore, by 'out-sourcing' the development of schemes to working groups consisting of various interests (e.g. the development of the Arable Stewardship Pilot Scheme (MAFF, 1998) involved co-operation between EN, RSPB and the Game Conservancy Trust (EN et al., 1997)), the difficult task of developing consensus is devolved to the groups themselves and MAFF can remain one step removed from the point at which agricultural and environmental interests agree their position.

The research has shown that new relationships are also starting to emerge between farmers and conservation groups/advisers. The majority of farmers interviewed have sought to move towards a post-productivist approach to farming (although, their reasons for this are diverse, see Chapter Five). Their participation in AESs and their adoption of organic or ICM systems indicates that there is an increasing willingness on their part to accept environmental conditions and practises as part of their farming methods. Here, too, this outlook has been encouraged through a process of accommodation; farmers seek to incorporate conservation into their wider farm business strategies rather than adopt conservation as priority. This response should not be viewed negatively, but as a step towards a more sustainable approach to farming which seeks to maintain the rural economy through viable farm businesses which produce environmental goods from extensive and diverse forms of agricultural production (Ilbery and Bowler, 1998; Potter, 1996).

The relationships described here between agricultural and environmental interests reveals that although they have become more closely aligned than hitherto, it is important to understand under what terms and from which historical standpoints these relationships have been established. Whilst it might appear that environmental interests have been more accommodating than agricultural ones this appearance has to be framed against the 'art of the possible'. By developing an incremental approach
to policy change (Ham and Hill, 1993; Hogwood and Peters, 1983) based on reaching a point of consensus in the short term, both sets of interests appear to be working together in the belief that their long-term objectives will be secured through a series of subtle adjustments to policy. These results are important as they are the first to examine the types of relationship formed between agricultural and environmental interests, and to assess how the incremental approach into which both sets of interests are locked, may affect the future development of agri-environmental policy in England.

The Changing Pattern of the Policy Process

The change in the process of public policy making in the UK away from a system based on centralised 'command and control', and towards what Rhodes (1997) calls a 'differentiated polity', where policy is produced through complex policy networks, has been shown in the thesis to be important for understanding the development and implementation of agri-environmental policy in England. This change to what is termed 'governance' (Goodwin and Painter, 1996; Rhodes, 1997) draws attention to the shifting boundaries between the state and other interests. Key to this change appears to be a recognition by government (in this case MAFF) that the formulation of complex policies can only be successfully achieved through the inclusion of the wider set of interests in the policy process that it seeks to serve. This inclusion is not only illustrated through the development of the Agri-environmental Fora and Steering Group, but also by the way NGOs seek to lobby MAFF and their role in the development of consultation documents. This can be explained further by reference to two examples arising from the empirical evidence. First, environmental NGOs remarked in interview that their approach to lobbying had changed and that this has helped them to attain an important position in the policy process. For example, interviewees from the RSPB noted that to become more thoroughly involved in the policy process they have had to develop their political awareness and resources which act as their 'membership card' to the network (Peterson, 1994). For the RSPB, these resources had been strengthened by research into environmental issues and an
increase in staff dedicated to government lobbying. These activities have enabled them to counter agriculturalists' claims that environmental groups' assertions are often emotional and lack scientific validity or practical reality. Second, the conservation NGOs' ability to influence the policy process has also changed because of the role they played in the consultation process for the formulation of AESs (see Chapter Six). The empirical research revealed that both environmental and agricultural interests had been consulted or had sought to be involved in the development of *Agriculture and England’s Environment* (MAFF, 1993), the consultation document prepared for the (re)introduction of the AESs. For example, the RSPB's and the Game Conservancy Trust's involvement in the pre-consultation process had helped them to secure the inclusion of a wide range of set-aside prescriptions in the suite of schemes on offer. This marks a stark departure from the closed approach adopted for previous consultation processes (see Chapter One).

The shift towards a more open form of policy-making is important. It emphasises that the design of AESs involved a wide range of environmental and agricultural interests, even if not all interests have the necessary resources to gain entry to this process, or once involved are capable of maintaining their links with the policy-making community. Whilst this recognition might lead to fears of the development of a broader but still 'closed inner policy community', within which some actors may appear to be dominant (e.g. the RSPB), it is important to recognise that they do not possess all the necessary resources to facilitate the future development of policy. For instance, as rural issues evolve (towards, for example, the encouragement of more sustainable agricultural production so as to secure market position), the key actors in the policy network may expand or alter as the resources required for the production of new policies are revised. It is also important to recognise that not all actors involved seek to develop a niche in the policy-making process at the national level. The Wildlife Trusts and FWAG have adopted an approach which seeks to channel their resources to local or county needs. As the empirical evidence has shown, they have not seen this as a hindrance to their ability to influence as they have ensured that they maintain contact with organisations with a national profile (see Chapter Six). This highlights another change to the way the policy process is evolving. The national
and regional actors stressed the importance of communication between the different levels of the network. The policy process may no longer be confined to any one spatial scale as those who work locally may purposefully seek to influence those who work nationally, and an organisation which seeks to influence local policy (e.g. the RSPB’s involvement with individual ESAs) may be drawing on resources, or the objectives of an organisation, which are securely established at the national level (see also Marsden and Murdoch, 1995; Munton, 1995).

The changing pattern of the policy process is also illustrated by the devolution of responsibilities from the national to the regional agencies. An example of this is the role of ADAS (now FRCA) in the delivery of schemes on a county basis through the establishment of 'memoranda of understanding' between them and MAFF (see Chapter Six). Another example is the development of county targets for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. These county targets were produced through consultation between a wide range of interests in the individual county which included not only agricultural and environmental organisations but also farmers (see Chapter Five). In both cases, greater responsibility has been placed on the regional actors to secure environmental goods. Rhodes (1997) argues that this shift of responsibility to agencies and the private sector at the regional level reduces the government's control over the services delivered. However, MAFF have not been totally excluded from the local development of policy because of the contracts formed through the 'memoranda of understanding' and the links they have maintained with the counties through regional managers at ADAS (see Chapter Six).

These findings are important as they are the first to show how the shift towards "governance" rather than "government" has impacted on the development of agri-environmental policy in England. The research has shown that changes to policy formulation techniques have altered the role of those deemed to 'write' agri-environmental policy in England, i.e. civil servants in Whitehall. They emphasise the complexity of the policy network and that the final policy form is reliant on a diverse range of organisations and individuals from across the policy network. It is also important to note that the stitches joining the actors together are not equal or
necessarily permanent. Consequently, the network should not be regarded as static but dynamic and constantly evolving as new issues and objectives are introduced and as additional actors are recruited so as to provide the necessary resources for the policy process to function (this supports the findings of Dudley and Richardson, 1996; Kenis and Schnieder, 1991; Lowndes, 1996).

The Functioning of the Policy Process

The research has sought to understand how the policy process functions by examining the reactive and recursive elements of the policy process (Barrett and Fudge, 1981) and how its dynamic form involves not only those actors who are charged with policy development and implementation, but also those whom the policy seeks to serve (e.g. farmers). To assess how the policy process functions the thesis has examined how AESs have been implemented (Chapter Seven), and how the actors evaluate the actual or possible benefits the schemes deliver (Chapter Eight).

The study of implementation in Chapter Seven revealed that while the main suite of policies available to farmers were developed at the national and regional levels, farmers were not required to stick rigidly to a pre-conceived set of prescriptions. At the point of implementation the farmer enters into negotiation with AES POs and other conservation advisers (e.g. FWAG) in order to develop 'passage points' through which both parties can secure their objectives. This means that farmers were involved in the development of policy, albeit at a very local level. The degree of negotiation depended in part on which scheme was being implemented. For example, the ESA and the FS-a Schemes take a more prescriptive approach, whereas the Countryside Stewardship Scheme required farmers to develop a detailed 10-year plan before entry to the scheme. In this latter case, farmers were actively involved in the policy process because they had to identify what conservation works they wished to undertake. The extent of negotiation was often dependent on the farmers' level of understanding of conservation, and as has been shown, how much they rely on the POs for advice (see Chapter Five). The analysis of the linkages between AES POs/conservation advisers
and both farmers and other regional actors revealed that they maintain a unique position to assist both the implementation and refinement of AESs. Consequently, the POs/advisers are not confined to any one level of the network but move between them. Examination of the implementation of the AESs showed that policy or particular schemes were continually debated and refined through the network from the national to the local. The relationships formed between actors through the implementation of AESs illustrated how actors are stitched into different levels of the network and how, in this case, issues developed at the farmers' level were used to develop policy at the regional and national levels (See Marsden and Murdoch, 1995; Munton, 1995). When coupled with the negotiations that lead to the development of policy (see Chapters Six and Eight), it is apparent that while overall policy conditions were developed at a national level, it is important to recognise that these have not been derived solely from the experiences of national actors, but may have been formed with resources which have their origins at a very local level.

In Chapter Three it was argued that policy evaluation has hitherto often been reduced to a separate and distinct part of the public policy process - a final act rather than an on-going and integral part of the process in which all actors are engaged. Chapter Eight examined how actors' assessments of the schemes' benefits (financial and environmental) were fed into the process of evaluation, and how all actors were involved in constant ex ante evaluations. The empirical evidence established that the formal mechanisms for evaluation of AESs at all levels of the network were weak. Consequently, all actors were forced to rely on personal intuition and experience in order to make their judgements and that these may change as new issues and information come to the fore. The process of evaluation cannot be separated from other phases in the policy process because it constantly feeds into actors' attitudes and actions towards both existing and proposed policies or schemes. The discussion of cross-compliance (in Chapter Eight) highlighted how actors couple formal monitoring with personal/organisational beliefs and opinions when attempting to assess future policy. These beliefs and opinions form an important element of the 'characteristics of the actors' and provided insights into the negotiations and
bargaining that is necessary for the future development and implementation of agri-environmental policy and schemes.

This research has allowed a detailed assessment of the functioning of the agri-environmental policy process in England. The empirical evidence showed that all actors have at least some input into the continuing development, implementation and refinement of the policy patchwork, even if certain actors are more responsible for the pattern than others. If the interactions between the actors are to be used to describe how policy is made, implemented and refined, it is important not to focus on one set of actors/level of the network or one part of the process. The account of the agri-environmental policy process given here can only provide a 'snap-shot' (1996) of the interactions between the individual actors, which is unfortunate given the dynamic and recursive nature of the process. Nevertheless, it is an initial enquiry into the way agri-environmental policy functions in the UK and thereby provides a valuable point of reference from which to assess the future development of AESs.

Evaluating the Concepts and Methods Used in the Research

The first part of this section provides a critical review of the concepts that have been used for understanding the agri-environmental policy process. This review reappraises the use of each concept and stresses that each approach has both merits and drawbacks. The second part of this section examines the possibility and potential value of other qualitative methods for investigating the relationships between the actors in the agri-environmental network.

Evaluation of concepts used for studying the policy process

The top-down or sequential approach to understanding policy process is important for showing where there may be fundamental problems with a particular policy, e.g. where a lack of resources hinders the implementation of policy (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984). The problems of implementation that this approach seeks to address did not
appear to be relevant to the nature of the research into the AESs presented here. However, the top-down approach does provide an initial point from which to focus on the causation of the policy process, i.e. wider policy goals and actions are still formed by those at the 'top' and these feed down to the implementing agents (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973). However, the approach does not enable the analyst to understand how those at the top develop policy, for example through interaction with different actors, or how this allows policy issues to be fed both up and down the policy chain.

The bottom-up approach focuses on the implementation stage of the policy process (Lewis and Flynn, 1979). It can be used to provide important insights into how the implementers put policy into action through the resources available to them (Hjern and Porter, 1981; Lipsky, 1980). The negotiation and bargaining which is a key feature of this approach is very much in evidence during the implementation of the AESs between farmers and AES POs (and indeed at other levels of the network). This approach was therefore useful for understanding local action but not particularly appropriate for providing a conceptual device for understanding the other phases of the policy process.

The reactive and recursive nature of the hybrid model has been used in this research as a key means for understanding the development, implementation and evaluation of the AESs (Barrett and Fudge, 1981; Cloke and Little, 1990). But it is important to note that this cyclical process may be more complete in some policy situations than others. The policy-action continuum suggested by Barrett and Fudge (1981) was found to be in evidence at each stage of the policy process and across the levels studied. However, actors' opportunities for completing the cycle are not evenly distributed across the network. For example, members of the Agri-environmental Fora have regular and formalised opportunities for discussing their views and preferred options for the future formulation and refinement of AESs, whilst some of the farmers interviewed had very limited opportunities for influencing the policy process because of their weak links with other members of the agri-environmental network (e.g. Participant farmers, see Chapter Five). Although, even then, it is
important to note that occasional visits from AES POs provided some scope for these
"semi-detached" farmers to influence the policy process.

The shift in the process of governing towards 'governance' has changed the
boundaries between state and interest groups. In this case the development of the
Agri-environmental Fora and Steering Group has encouraged the inclusion of a
greater variety of interests into the policy making process across the different levels
of the network. Rhodes (1997) argues that these networks are self-organising.
However, the research presented here has shown that interests' inclusion in the
network is dependent on the resources they can offer to the design and
implementation of policy, and their willingness to adopt an incremental approach to
policy change. Groups which lack resources or who take a promotional or
fundamentalist approach to lobbying may be excluded from the network. The linkages
formed by the actors in the network also differ in strength, which again may be due to
the resources particular interests command. The self-autonomy of the agri-
environmental network also appears to be limited as MAFF retains the key position as
agenda-setter for the Agri-environmental Steering Group and Fora. It is also
important to recognise that MAFF are not themselves autonomous and are
constrained by tight financial regulation by both the Treasury and the Commission's
DG VI. The shift towards alternative delivery systems for public policy (e.g. through
agencies) which is also a key element of governance (Harrison et al., 1997; Rhodes,
1997) does not appear to be a key feature of the AESs themselves. However, farmers
with supermarket contracts noted how they have had to alter their practices to meet
their buyers’ regulations. This can be described as representing a shift from public to
private intervention. Understanding how governance may be shaping the development
of agri-environmental policy is particularly useful when comparing the relationships
that existed between the MAFF, agricultural groups and environmental interests
historically, and how the boundaries between them have been altered as AESs have
become more prominent in agricultural policy.

The concepts developed through the policy networks approach provide important
insights into the way relationships are formed and sustained between government and
interest groups (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992a; Rhodes, 1997; Peterson, 1995). This research has shown that a network is not only in evidence between national actors but that regional and local actors are also important members. The empirical evidence reveals how interest groups are tied into the network through the formation of a policy community (see also Dudley and Richardson, 1996; Haas, 1992; Marsh and Rhodes, 1992b; Peterson, 1995; Sabatier, 1991). The networks approach therefore enables the structure of the network to be identified but understanding who is involved in the network is insufficient for understanding how the policy process functions. To move beyond the simple identification of who is involved in the policy process and to investigate how policy is formulated and implemented, it is necessary to develop knowledge of how the actors interact, and the shape and form of the linkages that join the actors to the network.

The research has therefore drawn on the pioneering work of Callon (1986) to understand how actors interact and develop linkages, and how policy issues are refined and enhanced between the actors through the process of enrolment and the definition of 'passage points'. Enrolment between the actors and across all levels of the network has been shown to be a key feature of how agri-environmental policy has been both formulated and implemented (see Chapters Six and Seven). However, whilst Callon's description of the network is useful for providing a point of entry from which to understand how the linkages are formed, the approach is not sufficient for understanding the strengths and weaknesses of actors' linkages to the network or how the policy process actually functions. Callon applies a strict boundary to his network. By contrast this study of the agri-environmental network has shown that boundaries are not tightly defined and that these may expand or shift as policy issues evolve. Furthermore, Callon does not take account of the historical relationships between the actors and how these may influence the types of relationships formed between them. In practice, the relationships formed between the actors of the agri-environmental network have been heavily influenced by previous disagreements and newly-formed alliances. It is therefore important to understand not only how current relationships are formed and sustained through the development of consensus building, but how these relationships have been stabilised through trust built over time. This approach
has the potential to provide greater insights into the way relationships may be sustained into the future. Callon views enrolment as a one-directional process. The examination of the agri-environmental network has shown that enrolment is often not one directional. For instance, farmers both influence and are influenced by conservation advisers (see Chapter Five); and the Countryside Commission seeks to influence the RSPB but is also open their ideas (see Chapter Six). It is also important to recognise that the extent of the enrolment may not be equal in each case. For example, conservation interest appear more willing to accept agriculturalists demands than vice versa (see above).

The empirical evidence has also shown that while there may be key actors (e.g. MAFF, ADAS, RSPB, NFU, FWAG and enrolled farmers) no one actor has a monopoly over all the resources for the successful development and implementation of AESs. Consequently, the ability of any one actor or organisation to dominate the network is constrained, and this situation contrasts with Callon's conception of the network which suggests that it is the key actors which define the identity around which the network will be based.

Evaluation of the methods used for studying the agri-environmental network

The field research examined the structure of the agri-environmental network, how linkages have formed between the actors, and how the policy process functions in practice. In order to develop an accurate account of the network and the associations of the actors within it, the fieldwork sought to 'follow the actors' (Callon, 1986; Callon et al., 1986; Marsden et al., 1993) rather than seeking to impose a pre-defined boundary around the network. Twelve farmers participating in the Former Set-aside option of the Habitat Scheme were used as the entry point. In this regard, it is important to note that whilst farmers are some of the most visible members of the network, they were not the sole focus of the research. They were used in part to provide a point of access into the wider agri-environmental network. Additionally, because farmers' linkages were expected to be less diverse (because of links formed
with individual conservation advisers/POs) than other actors (e.g. MAFF or conservation NGOs) this procedure would facilitate the process of following the connections. Interviews with these farmers led to the identification of the regional actors. Subsequent interviews with regional actors led to further interviews with those at the national level. The decision to stop at MAFF and actors connected to the national level of the network was made because the study sought to examine the development and implementation of the AESs in England, rather than extend the analysis of implementation to the supranational level. This restriction was designed to produce a sustainable and self-contained project. This approach can be justified because each member state is charged with developing and implementing the AER so as to complement other 'home' programmes and the environmental conditions of each country, and therefore international comparison is made more problematic. In hindsight, however, an extension of the network to include interviews with staff in the European Commission may have allowed an even fuller picture of the development and implementation of the AESs in England to be produced. For example, understanding the connections between the national and European levels of the network may have provided insights into the constraints placed on MAFF by the Commission, and how or whether these are likely to be resolved through future developments to the CAP (see Jones and Clark, 1998).

The decision to base the fieldwork in Suffolk and Norfolk was made because firstly, at the time of the interviews, no individual AES focused on arable farming systems (this has now been partially addressed through the introduction of the Arable Aid Pilot Scheme (MAFF, 1998)), although the importance of East Anglian arable farming systems were widely recognised for their biodiversity (DoE, 1994b; English Nature and the Countryside Commission, 1996). Secondly, it was felt that farmers entering into AESs in these cereal heartlands could be adopting a post-productivist approach to their farming methods and this may have stimulated them to form other connections with the agri-environmental network, for instance, through membership of FWAG. Thirdly, it was expected that the agri-environmental network in Norfolk would be well established because of its historical connections with AESs. These connections stem from the introduction of the Broads Grazing Marsh Scheme in 1985.
which was the precursor for the introduction of ESAs. Fourthly, limited funds available for field research from ESRC required the study area to be within easy reach of London. From this choice of study area and the number of farmers interviewed (31, see Appendix B), it was never assumed that the information collected could be extrapolated so as to explain the effects of AESs on arable farming systems in lowland England as a whole. Rather, the aim was to identify local environmental and agricultural issues so as to feed these into subsequent interviews with regional actors. In turn, interviews with regional actors sought to highlight the problems they encounter with the AESs which could then, in turn, be put to the national actors. This snowballing technique was important for gaining a greater understanding of the structure and linkages of the agri-environmental network, the functioning of the AESs, and for investigating how actors from across the levels of the network feed into the policy process. Focusing at least some of the research on East Anglia may raise questions of whether the network in evidence in this particular area is typical of networks elsewhere. Lowe et al. (1997) argue that the quest for "the typical" may not be meaningful where phenomena are locally defined and individually constituted, as in their research into farm pollution in Devon. Such an argument could also be applied to AESs whose implementation is locally specific and dependent on particular members of the agri-environmental network within that locale. Consequently, this study has not sought to understand the entire agri-environmental network in England but to provide a detailed case study instead. The purpose of this case study is not simply to describe actors' links to the network but to show how and why individual actors and organisations are enrolled, and the effects these have on the dynamic functioning of the policy process (at least) within Suffolk and Norfolk.

The qualitative approach to the collection of the empirical data sought to provide a detailed account of how the actors' decisions and actions are influenced by the complexity of their situations (Sayer, 1992; Strauss, 1987). It was felt that a quantitative approach would not provide sufficient information to understand how and why individuals are enrolled to the network, or how they develop and sustain relationships with other actors. Furthermore, the interviews sought to examine actual problems the actors encountered with the AESs and to understand how individuals
evaluate the actual or potential environmental goods delivered by the schemes. Such information could not have been obtained through the use of a formal structured questionnaire and so a semi-structured approach to the interviews was adopted. The semi-structured approach sought to provide some consistency across the respondents' replies by ensuring the same issues were addressed at each interview. The interviews were therefore directed but flexible, and they allowed the respondents to reply using their own terms and language. Such an approach enabled dialogue to be developed with the interviewee and to address the research issues in a manner which would lead to more detailed accounts being given of particular events and relationships. This approach was particularly useful when interviewing actors from across a range of organisations as it enabled questions to be phrased in a manner which was consistent with their context (Schoenberger, 1991). To do this successfully required careful preparation for each interview. For example, before conducting a interview at the CLA it was important to be fully aware of their recent publications or submissions to select committees which relate to agri-environmental policy. This awareness, on the other hand, also enabled some validity of the respondents' replies to be checked during the interview.

The use of a qualitative approach requires a number of methodological issues to be addressed. Firstly, there is a need for 'reflexivity', that is, awareness of how the researcher may influence the interviewee and vice versa. Interaction with the subject is, however, essential for understanding individual perceptions and actions. It should not be expected in any study that the observer can be totally impartial and so, throughout the study, it is important to be sensitive to the researcher's involvement in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the empirical data. Secondly, a qualitative approach raises questions of validity and accuracy. This can in part be achieved by ensuring one has sufficient knowledge of an individual organisation's objectives or the farming system under examination so as to identify where accounts given by respondents may be seen as "unusual", and to probe these replies so as to understand the reasoning behind them. Interviews with a range of employees from the same organisation were used for corroborating the data collected. Accuracy of the empirical evidence was also attained by allowing respondents to answer in their own
terms rather than requiring them to structure their replies to pre-given categories. It is important to recognise that while a qualitative approach does not enable statistical generalisations to be formed, its strengths lie in being able to explain how individuals interpret their actions and perceptions, and from this to produce a more detailed account of the specific processes under observation.

Other methods which could be employed for understanding how agricultural and environmental interests interact include the use of focus or in-depth groups and participant-observation. Focus groups seek to assemble small (6-10) collections of individuals for discussion concentrating on a particular topic so as to gain a preliminary understanding of the way individuals interact in their discussion of it. In-depth groups draw together the same individuals over a number of weeks/months. This approach seeks to create a culture within the group which encourages people to look at issues from multiple viewpoints, leading to more contested arguments which in turn provide greater insights into the reasons behind the conflicts (Burgess et al., 1988). These approaches could be used constructively for understanding the dynamics of the agri-environmental network. For example, they could be used for uncovering the problems faced by farmers when considering enrolment into an AES, or how farmers and conservation advisers interact when discussing the implementation of AESs. But a number of methodological issues need to be addressed before using focus or in-depth groups.

Firstly, the approach requires the researcher to be highly reflexive as their presence and personality will affect the discussion that develops. To counter this, the 'leader' of the group may decide to adopt a particular position. For instance, they may act as a 'moderator' - leading and directing the discussion - or they may attempt simply to facilitate the discussion but allow the group to discuss the issues amongst themselves. Which ever position is adopted will have an important influence upon the data generated. Deciding which approach to adopt may depend on the type of data the research is attempting to collect and this too will influence the analysis and final presentation of the information gathered. Secondly, the composition of the group needs to be carefully constructed, and this may mean individually choosing members
of the group. This process obviously leads to some selectivity, but it is essential to ensure the members are not intimidated by a specific individual. In particular, it should be noted that attempting to bring together individuals whose relationships are not equal, e.g. farmers and AES POs, may inhibit the discussion between the group members and so limit the value of this method. Such problems would be especially acute if trying to develop a group which consists of 'competing' organisations, e.g. RSPB, NFU and County Council Ecologists, where the individuals involved cannot separate themselves from the organisations they are representing. Consequently, under these circumstances group members may be unwilling to discuss their views candidly, and they may filter their answers rather than open themselves for 'attack' later. Furthermore, they may not want to jeopardise the relationships between them already that have been painstakingly developed. The availability of national and regional actors, and the time they have to devote to focus groups, is also likely to be an important limiting factor in the use of focus groups. Focus or in-depth groups would probably be of greatest benefit for understanding the dynamics of the farmers' network. Focus and in-depth groups were not adopted for the research presented here because the study sought to examine the range of actors and their linkages across the different levels of the network in England.

Given the problems that may be encountered when attempting to understand the interactions between local, regional and national actors through the use of focus or in-depth groups, participant observation or shadowing key actors may provide an alternative approach. Participant observation involves spending considerable time with particular individuals so as to experience the problems and situations they encounter. For example, shadowing an AES PO would provide insights into the way they interact with farmers, other organisations and their own colleagues within ADAS. Such an approach would be extremely useful for observing the dynamics and structure of relationships within the network. The shadowing of key actors may not however result in the researcher observing all important decisions and events as their position as an 'outsider' looking in may never be fully overcome. Additionally, attempts to enter situations where there is a definite hierarchy or where organisations may not want to have their practices disclosed may inhibit the use of this approach.
(see Adler and Adler, 1998; Law, 1994; for discussions on the problems and methods of being an observer). The issue of 'distance' between the participant and the observed needs to be constantly reviewed: in particular the degree of acceptance the researcher has gained within the organisation; and the impact the researcher's presence has on particular observed situations. Additionally, the approach is extremely difficult to replicate. Because of these constraints the method is best used when supplemented by other forms of survey which can be used to cross-check what has been experienced (Adler and Adler, 1998).

For the shadowing to be successful, the observer needs to remain long enough in the 'field' to be accepted by the group and to experience the interactions between the individuals involved. The time this will take cannot be predicted at the outset, and is a major limiting factor where the time period for the collection of data is relatively fixed. The approach is particularly useful for studying situations which are rapidly evolving and where the processes in which the actors are engaged may not be accounted for without direct experience (see Lowe et al., 1997). Participant observation could therefore be extremely useful for understanding the policy process, especially during times of considerable change. In particular, it may provide additional and important insights into the functioning of the agri-environmental network. However, the approach cannot go beyond providing case studies of particular individuals or organisations involvement in the policy process. Consequently, it does not provide an alternative approach by itself but could be used to complement other forms of enquiry (Lowe et al., 1997).

The research into the agri-environmental network sought to develop a holistic account of the actors and processes which feed into the design and implementation of the AESs in England. The semi-structured interview method adopted sought to investigate the diverse range of actors involved in the agri-environmental network rather than focus on any one level or organisation. The approach has enabled a coherent account of the relationships between the different actors to be built. Furthermore, it has provided a detailed explanation of the way the agri-environmental policy process functions. In particular, the approach was valuable for examining how
all actors across the levels of the network feed into the policy process, and that the process is not simply based on a causal chain of events but is dynamic and recursive. Whilst the approaches introduced above could be used to develop a greater understanding of particular interests or actors, they would not lead, on their own, to a complete description of the network or its mechanisms.

Directions for Future Research

The thesis has examined how the inclusion of a wide range of public and private interests in the policy process has altered the mechanisms through which agri-environmental policy is designed and implemented at the national and regional levels. The new relationships between the interests involved may be leading to the development of a new 'closed inner policy community' (see above), through for example, the Agri-environmental Fora. The research to date has provided a valuable investigation into the key actors involved in this policy community. Further work into the relationships formed between interest groups and the state (in the form of MAFF) within this community would increase our understanding of how the policy process functions. In particular, it could throw light on whether certain actors are forming a dominant position within the network and whether this might introduce bias towards specific interests' goals. The additional research would seek to investigate what effect this domination has had on the design of AESs and whether other important environmental objectives are being neglected because of the control of the process by individual organisations.

The enquiry into the functioning of the policy process presented in Chapters Seven and Eight showed how the process is reactive and recursive. The thesis has provided important insights into the way policy progresses as actors discuss and form opinions on past, current and future policy developments (see Chapter Eight). To enhance our understanding of the reactive and recursive nature of the policy process, future research into the agri-environmental policy network would examine how the debates and the relationships between the actors have evolved since 1996. This additional
research would also seek to understand whether new actors have become members of the network and whether their inclusion has altered the position held by the actors identified in 1996. Such work would be important for understanding how the network's boundaries and linkages evolve as new issues and policy options are introduced.

The thesis has purposefully concentrated on the key actors (or in the case of farmers, those with definite linkage, such as through AES enrolment) involved in the agri-environmental network so as to understand how the network is structured and functions. The results presented in Chapter Six demonstrated that these actors have agreed to work within the constraints and rules of the network. Further work would seek to examine whether other interest groups are purposefully excluded from the policy community (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992a; Peterson, 1995), or whether they remain outside the network because of their ideological or promotional approach to policy change (Grant, 1989; Lowe and Goyder, 1983).

The empirical research has provided a detailed examination of the agri-environmental network in Suffolk and Norfolk. Chapters Five and Six showed how the actors within this area have positive and well-defined relationships to each other. These relationships have in turn enabled the actors to work together to produce mutual benefits and points of consensus which allow the schemes to function successfully within the counties (see Chapter Seven). Future research would seek to investigate how the networks are composed in other areas. For instance, is the trust observed between farmers and FWAG advisers in Suffolk and Norfolk replicated elsewhere? The composition of the networks between farmers, conservation advisers, environmental and agricultural NGOs, and statutory agencies may be structured differently in other areas. In particular, future work should focus on areas where uptake in AESs has been low (e.g. Dartmoor and Blackdown Hills ESAs, (NAO, 1997)) to examine whether the particular relationships between these actors have an important effect on the operation and success of AESs in such areas. Additionally, research into the networks in livestock and upland areas may provide valuable
insights into the problems encountered by farmers and conservation advisers working with very different farming systems to those found in Suffolk and Norfolk.

Policy Messages

The introduction of the AESs marked an important milestone in the inclusion of environmental objectives into agricultural policy. However, further and more radical reform of agricultural policy is required if conservation goals are to be fully incorporated into agricultural practice. Environmental groups should not, therefore, lose sight of the need for overall policy change. Their inclusion in the policy community is important, but currently only extends to those areas dealing with agri-environmental policy. To initiate the radical reforms they require, environmental groups have to ensure that they also gain prominent positions in the agricultural policy community in both the UK and at the European Commission. This will require them to develop additional lobbying resources either focused on particular sectors (e.g. livestock) or by developing a greater understanding of the forms of lobbying that are successful with the Commission (see Mazey and Richardson, 1992; 1995). Failure to extend their influence in the agricultural policy community in this way may result in AESs remaining marginal to other forms of agricultural support in the long-term.

The research has shown that within the agri-environmental policy network MAFF maintains a key position. For example, within the Agri-environmental Fora, MAFF decides the number of seats available to environmental interests, which agricultural interests should be involved, and the agenda issues to be discussed (see Chapter Six). Therefore, whilst agricultural and environmental groups are actively involved in the development of particular AESs (e.g. the Arable Aid Pilot Scheme), their ability to change the overall direction of agri-environmental policy is limited. Indeed, through the Fora, MAFF is provided with an opportunity to bring together competing interests and to steer them towards policies which are acceptable to itself. Environmental and agricultural interests should be aware of these constraints. Furthermore, the private and statutory interests involved should not allow the
consensus that develops between them within the Fora to fall to the point of the lowest common denominator. To do so may lead to two negative effects. First, it could well hamper their ability to meet their objectives in the long-term. Second, if policy does not progress far enough, MAFF will retake control over the design of policy. Finding the correct balance between the need to take policy forward and maintaining the trust between other interests and MAFF will not be easy. However, all interests should be aware of the problems that working within these confines may impose on the future development of agri-environmental policy.

This research has shown that, in general, farmers lack sufficient environmental knowledge to understand what environmental benefits they are delivering through their enrolment into AESs (Chapter Eight), or why they are being asked to adopt conservation practices (Chapter Seven). Farmers should be encouraged to increase their environmental knowledge for two reasons. First, raising farmers' environmental knowledge would increase their confidence in the ability of conservation practices to deliver environmental goods. Second, it would enable farmers to communicate more effectively with both agricultural and environmental interests. This is especially important for ensuring that when environmentally 'converted' farmers talk to the 'unconverted' the discussion does not focus solely on the financial rewards they receive but also addresses the environmental goods they can deliver. Farmers' insufficient environmental knowledge will hinder their progression towards 'post-productivism'. This will not only affect their enrolment into AESs but also their willingness to adopt more sustainable agricultural practices. Farmers need to understand not only how specific conservation practices will aid environmental goals but also how their production techniques impact on the environment. Developing these horizontal linkages will enable them to meet the needs of a rapidly evolving market place which increasingly requires assurance that farming methods are not environmentally damaging.

It is important to recognise however that farmers can themselves make valuable contributions to expanding conservation knowledge. At interview, conservation advisers explained that there is often more than one approach or outcome that is
acceptable to conservation needs. Moreover, farmers' detailed knowledge of the physical features of the farm can play an important role in developing conservation prescriptions to suit the locale (see Chapter Seven). Clark and Murdoch's (1997) study into the relationships between EN and the farmers of the Pevensey Levels argued that farmers should not be treated as "one-dimensional economic actors" (ibid. p.54, see also Wynne, 1996). Instead, farmers' expertise of locally specific conditions should be coupled with other scientific knowledge so as to enhance and refine AESs to meet the needs of particular areas.

The research has shown that the lack of a clear set of agricultural and environmental goals for farmers significantly hinders their willingness to adopt alternative farming techniques (Chapter Seven). Farmers recognise that they 'are sheep led by a fiscal weapon' [Influential farmer no. 9] and that current agricultural policy still encourages them to adopt a productivist approach to their farm businesses (Chapters Five and Seven). Whilst agricultural policy remains undirected, and AESs remain marginal to the main suite of support available, farmers' confidence to move towards 'post-productivism' will be constrained. Agricultural policy needs to develop a new blueprint which will provide farmers with a clear set of objectives enabling them to meet the growing diversity of demands being placed on the countryside. In addition, farmers need sufficient training and advice so as to be able to respond to these demands. It was suggested in interview with a RSPB representative that research and advice on environmentally friendly farming should follow the same approach as that adopted by government after the Second World War for increasing productivity (see also, Hodge et al., 1994; Winter, 1997). Without such commitment, farmers' adoption of agri-environmental objectives can be expected to remain limited, in extent and shallow in effect.
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Appendix A

The Interview Schedules

The schedules were designed to allow the interviewees to express their own thoughts and definitions to the questions posed rather than direct them to certain kinds of answer. Therefore, the interview schedule acted as a guide rather than setting out exactly how each question should be asked or answered. However, to ensure that essential questions were asked some questions differently phrased appear more than once in the schedule.

Interview Schedule for Participants

About the Farm

1. What size is the farm?

2. Is it owned, tenanted, a mixture? do you know roughly what the proportions are?

3. How many people work on the farm? Full time Part time

4. How many of these are family members?

5. Do they work full time/part time?

6. How long have you been farming on this farm / in the area?

7. Are you expecting to pass the farm on to a member of the family when you retire?

8. What agricultural enterprises/crops do you have on this farm?
9. Which is the most important?  
   (If they are retired, I need to ask what were the most important.)

10. What is (was) your arable rotation?

11. Do you use any contractors for any work in the farm?  
   If so what for? Who is this?  
   Is this a recent introduction to the way you work?

12. Are you the principal manager / decision maker of the business?

13. Who else is involved?

14. What are you objectives for the farm in the medium term? i.e. the next 3 to 5 years

15. In the long term? i.e. the next 5-10 years

16. How have your objectives for the farm changed over the last ten years?  
   Prompts if necessary  
   Maximising profitability  
   Sustaining the farming way of life  
   Looking after the countryside for future generations  
   Maintaining an efficient and progressive farm

17. Do you use an agronomist or other types of crop or livestock advisers?  
   who do you use?

18. Do your advisers ever mention the environmental consequences of a product and give advice on how to avoid damaging the environment?  
   Prompt if necessary That it is better to spray pesticides on rape early or late in the day to minimise its effects on bees and other non-target wildlife or that some pesticides e.g. aphox is more selective and so less damaging to beneficial insects.

19. If you are considering growing a new crop would you seek advice before deciding to grow it?  
   Who would you seek this advice from?
Would you draw up any plans to see how this would affect other operations on the farm?

Would you spend some time considering how the farm would benefit from this new enterprise?

20. Has the farm in the last three years

- made a profit?
- made a loss?
- broken even?

21. Do you rely totally on farming for your income?

22. If not, what are your other sources of income? i.e. other jobs outside farming, investments, other businesses separate from the farm.

23. Would the farm be viable if these other sources of income were not available?

24. Do you or have you belonged to any of the following organisations?

(Farmers were passed a card which listed the following organisations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Card A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Farmers' Union - NFU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Landowners' Association - CLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Farmers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group - FWAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game Conservancy Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - RSPB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk Wildlife Trust / Suffolk Wildlife Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of the Earth - FoE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramblers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council for the Protection of Rural England CPRE or Suffolk Preservation Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Trust for Conservation Volunteers - BTCV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Association for Shooting and Conservation - BASC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Field Sports Society - BFSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Fishing Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local shooting Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Rural Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Arable Farming Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soil association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breed Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Card A continued

Other Farming / Research Groups (please specify)

Parish Council
District Council
County Council

25. Have you served on the committees or councils of any of these organisations?

26. Do you have any designated land on your farm?
   (farmers were passed a card which listed the following designations)

Card B

Site of Special Scientific Interest - SSSI
Environmentally Sensitive Area - ESA
Nitrogen Sensitive Area - NSA
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB
National Park
Special Protection Areas - SPA
Scheduled Ancient Monuments
RAMSAR (wetland of international importance)
other designations

27. How much land is covered by the designation?

28. Does the designation mean that you are unable to carry out certain operations on the land?
   
   Can you explain these to me?

29. What difficulties has this posed to you?

30. Do you have any management agreements with e.g. English Nature over the land?

31. What difficulties do you have with these agreements?

Conservation Projects on the Farm

32. Which conservation schemes do you (or have you) participate in?
(farmers were passed a card which listed the following schemes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Card C</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Habitat Scheme:</strong> Former Set-aside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saltmarsh Scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nitrogen Sensitive Area - NSA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environmentally Sensitive Area - ESA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breckland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organic Aid Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countryside Access Scheme</strong> (access on set-aside land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Countryside Stewardship Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk and Limestone Grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland Heath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterside Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Orchards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside around towns &amp; Community forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedgerow restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other grants for capital works i.e. for ponds, fencing etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural Improvement Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural and Horticultural Development Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Farm Woodland Scheme</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Farm Woodland Premium Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Projects e.g. Norfolk Coast</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any other environmental schemes past or present (please specify)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

33. Have you heard of all these schemes? if not, which ones are new to you?

34. If they have been a participant in an Agri-environmental Scheme
   How much land was entered?

   How many hectares were eligible?

35. Farmers with an ESA agreement
   What tier was the land entered into?

   Has any land been entered into the access tier?
Have grants been received for other conservation works under the ESA agreement?

Setting-up the Agreements

36. Did you enter the Countryside Premium Scheme?

37. How did you first hear about the Five Year Set-aside Scheme / Countryside Premium Scheme?

38. How did you hear about the Former Set-aside Scheme? (and any other schemes in which the farmers are participating)

39. Did you approach someone or did someone approach you?

40. Who did you talk to about the scheme before joining?

41. Did anyone try to persuade you to join?

42. Did anyone discourage you from joining?

43. What were their reasons?

44. Who did you seek advice from when going into the agreement?

45. Did you research the schemes e.g. look for articles, etc. on the schemes?

46. Why did you decide to go into the scheme?

Prompts if necessary
Wanted to do something for the countryside, public image, decrease work load

47. Who do you talk to about conservation?

Prompts if necessary
ADAS, FWAG, family, friends etc.

48. Who is the most important?
49. Do you think other people regard them as important?

50. Have you tried to persuade other farmers to join any of the schemes/ F-FS-a?

51. What reasons have you given them for joining the scheme?

52. Are any of your colleagues or neighbours involved in conservation schemes?

53. How do you regard you land in agri-environmental schemes (the Former Set-aside Scheme) in comparison to other enterprises on the farm

Prompts if necessary
best use of poor land
an important site for conservation
the easiest way to farm now I have reduced my work load / retired

54. Why do you think that other farmers decided not to take part in the scheme?

55. Do you think there is more pressure on you now to join a scheme or do something for the environment?

56. Where is this pressure coming from?
   Is it justified?

Starting up in the scheme

57. When you first thought about joining the scheme did you have a clear idea of what you wanted to do in terms of environmental objectives?

(If they did not have clear objectives at the start)
   do you now have clear objectives?
   how have these changed?

58. Do you know how to achieve your objectives?

59. When you first saw what the scheme entailed did you think that it fitted in with what you wanted to do?
   Did you use the scheme as a guideline?
   Did you think you could mould it to your own circumstances?
what are these?

60. Have you been able to adjust the scheme so that it fits in with what you are trying to do? e.g. timing of cutting

61. Does it appear that the new scheme is a better system than the original scheme? Is there any difference?

62. Can you explain the process of setting up the agreement to me?

63. Is there room for negotiation/bargaining of the scheme prescriptions when setting up the agreement? Does there need to be?

64. What constraints do you think the Project Officers are under when drawing up the agreements?

65. Do you feel that the Project Officers are given enough freedom to draw up agreements with you, or do they have to produce agreements within a tight framework?

66. Do you think that Project Officers should be given more freedom in drawing up agreements?

Putting The Agreement Into Action

67. Have you drawn up a management plan for the site?

68. How did you go about this? Prompt if necessary did you put it together yourself or did you work on it with someone else?

69. Do you need advice to carry out the scheme?

70. Did you approach any of these people for advice, if so what kind of advice? (Card D)

(farmers were passed a card which listed the following organisations)
Card D

Agricultural Development and Advisory Service - ADAS
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group - FWAG
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - RSPB
English Nature - EN
Local Trust e.g. Norfolk Wildlife Trust / Suffolk Wildlife Trust
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers - BTCV
Other environmental groups
Other Organisations or consultancy Groups, please specify

71. Was the advice readily available?

72. Did you know who to ask?

73. Did it make sense?

74. Was any of it conflicting?

75. Out of all the people you approached for conservation advice, who has been the most influential?

76. Would it have been beneficial to you and or your staff to attend a course on conservation management?

77. If they received advice from more than one source were there any difference between the organisations methods of giving advice?

78. Would you have liked more advice?

79. If so, who would you have liked to receive it from?

80. If more advice had been available would this have helped you to achieve your environmental aims, or to have increased the environmental benefits?

81. Have you picked up advice from magazines, leaflets, shows, etc.?
82. Have you sought advice for other conservation work on the farm not connected to the Set-aside scheme?

83. What was this advice for?

84. What do you think nature conservation is about?

*prompts if necessary* improving the landscape, leaving the land in better condition for the next generation, restoring what has been lost to intensive agriculture?

85. Do your staff understand what you are trying to do and why?

86. Do they have ideas about the needs of conservation?

**Evaluation of Your Agreement**

87. Have the environmental benefits you first sought come to fruition?

88. What were these?

89. Was there anything else you could have done to achieve these?

90. Are your original objectives for conservation the same as when you entered the Scheme?

91. Under the Former Set-aside Scheme only sites which provide good environmental benefits can be entered, how did you know if your agreement would be good enough?

92. Did you know what would be required or what would be acceptable or unacceptable?

93. How did you / ADAS decide what was acceptable?

   did there appear to be any benchmarks, or was it based on intuition?

94. How long do you think it will take to accrue the maximum environmental benefits from the scheme?
95. Do you think that it is possible to judge this?

96. Will the scheme last long enough to maximise the environmental benefits?

97. How long do you see the scheme continuing?

98. What would happen to the land if the scheme was withdrawn?

99. What do you think will happen to the site at the end of the agreement?
   prompt if necessary another scheme will be offered.
   It will revert to arable land.
   It will be of high enough environmental value and will be designated
   under another scheme or similar.

Discretionary Freedom and Accountability

100. Is there anything you would like to do to enhance the environment but the
    Scheme does not allow it?

    or the Scheme does not have enough/any funding and the project would be
    too costly otherwise?

101. Do you think the scheme provides value for money?

    why do you think this is?

102. Is the scheme too bureaucratic?

103. Does it need to be if money is to be wisely spent?

104. Should the Project Officer be given discretionary freedom to do what is best for
    the area?

105. Do you think too many conservation schemes are available? See Card C if
    necessary

106. Is it clear who administers the schemes?
107. Should all the schemes be run by one organisation so that it is clear which schemes do what and who runs them and gives advice? i.e. one-stop-shop.

108. Do you think that some organisations give better advice than others?

109. Can you give me any examples?

110. Do you think the schemes should continue in their existing format or could they be improved?

111. Why do you think the scheme should continue?

112. Who should decide?

113. Do you think that Arable Area Payments should be linked to environmental benefits (e.g. through cross-compliance and hence compulsory)?

   **Prompts if necessary** for example cross-compliance may include outlining where perennial grass strips should be sown, where conservation headlands should be established, which hedges should be cut when and where tree or hedge planting may be beneficial to wildlife.

   or should it be kept voluntary, with an incentive payment?

114. If they think AAPs should be subject to cross-compliance, what environmental objectives should be included so as to increase environmental benefits?

115. Are there any special concerns for the environment in your area which are not being met by the scheme currently available?

116. Could this be addressed if more flexible schemes were available?

117. If the schemes were run by a group which worked locally so as to address local issues who do you think would influence the group the most?

   **Prompt if necessary** a local farmer, ADAS, local environmental group etc.

118. Do you think that the schemes actually achieve environmental objectives?

119. How do we know?
120. Who do you think should decide?

**Policy Development**

121. How do you think MAFF goes about drawing up the schemes?

122. Who do you think influences MAFF the most when it comes to drawing up new policies

*prompt if necessary* NFU, environmental organisations, etc.

123. Do you think farming organisations do a good job of putting forward the opinion of the farmer when new schemes are being drawn up?

124. Does the NFU (or other agricultural lobby group) work on behalf of its members or does it appear to only concerned with certain issues?

125. Has the NFU changed its ideas over certain issues in the last few years?

    Why do you think this has been?

126. Who do you think the NFU are trying to influence?

127. Do you think they succeed?

128. Could they do more to get the view of its members across to people like MAFF and the Department of the Environment?

129. Do they consult enough farmers to give an accurate picture of what farmers want?

130. Do you think there should be wider consultation?

131. Do you think that the people involved in the development of the schemes have a clear idea of the direction of agri-environmental policies?

    *do you think agricultural policy needs direction? In what ways should this be developed?*

132. Do you think you can influence the production of policies?
133. Should the schemes be administered more locally so as really benefit local concerns for the countryside?

134. Do think that what has happened on your farm has made any difference to the schemes that are now operating?

135. Do you think there should be some way that your experiences of agri-environmental schemes could be used in drawing up schemes in the future?

136. Have you noticed any decreases or increases of wildlife on your farm five years?

137. What do you think has caused wildlife to increase or decrease?

138. Has there been any environmental monitoring on your farm?

139. When was this carried out?

   Who by?

140. Do you think there is enough environmental monitoring of the scheme?

141. Has there been any monitoring apart from environmental monitoring associated with the farm?

   If so what was the monitoring covering? e.g. compliance or economic monitoring

142. Who was this monitoring carried out by?

143. Do you think there should be some form of monitoring which would allow your views to be passed on to the policy makers?

144. Is there some other way you would like to influence policy making?

145. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or add to?
Thank you for sparing you time to talk to me, If I should need to, would you mind if I contacted you again in the future to discuss any of these issues in greater detail?

**Interview Schedule for Influential Farmers**

The interview schedule for the Influential farmers was based on the Participant farmers’ schedule and many questions were the same for both samples. The Influential farmers’ schedule was constructed as follows.

Participants Schedule Questions 1-33.

Farmers participating in Agri-environmental Schemes were asked questions 34-35 and then:

- How did you first come to hear about the scheme?

- Did you approach someone or did someone approach you?

Followed by questions 39-120 excluding questions 61 and 91-93 from the Participants’ schedule.

Influential farmers not participating in conservation schemes were asked the following questions.

1. Is there anything you would like to do to enhance the environment?

2. Do you know if there is funding for this type of project?

3. Would you consider taking on this project without funding or would it be too costly?

4. Would you know how to achieve the environmental benefits?

5. Would you need advice to carryout this task?

6. Who would you ask for advice?

7. Have you ever approached any of the following people for advice, if so what kind of advice? (Card E) (farmers were shown a card listing the following organisations)
Card E

Agricultural Development and Advisory Service - ADAS
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group - FWAG
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - RSPB
English Nature - EN
Local Trust e.g. Norfolk Wildlife Trust/Suffolk Wildlife Trust
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers - BTCV
Other environmental groups
Other organisations or consultancy groups, please specify

If the farmer had been involved with any of these organisations then questions 8-19 were asked, if not then questions 20-35 were asked.

8. Was the advice readily available?

9. Did you know who to ask for specific advice?

10. Did it make sense?

11. Was any of it conflicting?

12. Out of all the people you approached for conservation advice, who was the most influential?

13. Would it have been beneficial to you and or your staff to attend a course on conservation management?

14. If you received advice from more than one source were there any difference between the organisations giving advice?

15. Would you have liked more advice?

16. If so, who would you have liked to receive it from?

17. If more advice had been available would this have helped you to achieve your environmental aims, or to have increased the environmental benefits?

18. Have you picked up advice from magazines, leaflets, shows, etc.?
19. What do you think nature conservation is about?

*prompt if necessary* improving the landscape, leaving the land in better condition for the next generation, restoring what has been lost to intensive agriculture?

Questions for farmers using conservation advice begin again at Question 29.

If the farmers had not received conservation advice the following questions were asked.

20. Do you think advice would be readily available?

21. Would you like to attend a course on conservation run by ADAS, your local college or FWAG for example?

22. Have you ever picked up leaflets at shows, farming events etc. to do with conservation?

23. Have you ever thought about joining a scheme? (see card D)

24. Which one?

25. What did it involve?

26. What would be your reasons for joining a scheme?

*prompt if necessary* better public image, aesthetic reasons, noticed a decline in wildlife on the farm.

27. What were your reasons for not entering it?

28. Has any one tried to persuade / dissuade you from joining a scheme?

What were their reasons?

29. Do you think there is more pressure on you now to join a scheme or do something for the environment?

30. Where is this pressure coming from?
31. Is it justified?

32. Do you think that Arable Area Payments should be linked to environmental benefits (cross compliance and hence compulsory)? or should it be kept voluntary, with an incentive payment?

*Prompts if necessary* By producing a wildlife management plan for the farm outlining where perennial grass strips should be sown, where conservation headlands should be established, which hedges should be cut when and where tree or hedge planting may be beneficial.

33. Do you ever talk to other farmers about conservation?

34. Are any of your colleagues or neighbours involved in conservation schemes?

35. What do you think nature conservation is about?

*prompts if necessary* improving the landscape, leaving the land in better condition for the next generation, restoring what has been lost to intensive agriculture?

All influential farmers were then asked questions 121-145 from the Participants’ schedule.

**Interview Schedule For NGO / Statutory Regional Staff / Advisers**

This interview schedule was used for Agri-environmental Scheme Project Officers, Regional NGO and statutory agency staff. Not all the questions in the schedule were applicable to all the actors interviewed at this level. Moreover, it was not possible to pre-judge which questions would need to be asked and so a schedule was produced which covers a wide range of questions. Consequently, not every question in the schedule was asked to each interviewee.

**Preliminary Questions**

1. Can you explain to me what your job entails?

2. How long have you worked for the organisation?

3. Have you always held this post or have you worked in other areas of the organisation?
4. Before moving to this job were you working for another conservation organisation or involved in conservation?

5. What did this previous job involve?

6. Have you been on any conservation courses or training?
   
   Who was this run by?

**Network Building and Enrolment**

7. Within the organisation do you have a steering group / working group which discusses conservation issues?

8. What are the groups priorities?

9. Do these priorities match with your own?
   
   if no: How do they differ?
   
   Do you try to persuade others to see your priorities?
   
   Does this work?

10. Do these priorities change regularly, or

11. Are these gradual changes?

12. Can you give me an example?

13. Is it easy to introduce new ideas or priorities to the group?
   
   If so, why do you think this is?

14. Once the group’s priorities have been agreed how does the organisation act upon them?

15. How do the views of the group get passed on to other members of your organisation?
16. Do you think that these views are eventually passed on to the policy makers? i.e. are they passed on to those who influence policy making?

17. Does this group have contact with other similar groups within your organisation at county, regional or national level?

18. Do you liaise with other organisations on the issues discussed by your group?

Do you meet formally or informally?

Do you meet as a group or individually?

19. Do you think it would be beneficial to work together on some issues?

20. What do you think would be the best way to organise these meetings? e.g. should they be developed on a county / countryside distinction map?

21. Would you say that you try to negotiate / bargain with other groups or do you try to find a clear path?

22. Do you try to address issues which you know will yield results rather than try and tackle issues which are difficult to get off the ground, don't have any funding, are not considered a priority by other organisations?

23. How do you try to persuade people to agree with your objectives for environmental concerns?

24. Do you think you are successful in doing this?

25. Does it appear that one group is more influential than another during these meetings?

Why do you think this is?

26. Do some groups seem more responsive than others?

27. Do some organisations appear more successful at getting their ideas across than others?
28. Is there scope within the policies for everyone conservation needs to be met?

29. Do you think that some members of the farming community should be included in these groups?

30. Have you or the organisation ever liaised with any farmers before proposing to take some action or propose a scheme?

31. Do you think your thoughts / aims for nature conservation are adequately addressed through these groups?

32. How could this be improved?

**Enrolment of Farmers to the Agri-environmental Network (not specifically AESs)**

33. How do you make initial contact with farmers?  
*prompt if necessary* do you approach them through a mailshot, do they come to you or a mixture of these?

34. When you first visit the farm do you discuss a specific topic or to talk more generally about conservation on the farm?

35. Do you organise farm meetings / workshops / seminars for farmers to attend?

36. What aspects of conservation do these meetings cover?  
*Prompt if necessary* e.g. schemes available, basic things that are easy to do and require no or hardly any extra expenditure.

37. Do you know most of the farmers that attend?  

is there a core group or is the purpose of the meeting to introduce new farmers to conservation?

38. How do you think farmers regard these kinds of meetings?

39. Do these kind of meetings happen regularly?
40. What other methods have been tried for recruiting farmers to agri-environmental schemes or encouraging them to join FWAG etc.?

Which of these has been the most effective?

41. Do certain members of the farming community appear influential in getting other farmers to join the scheme?

42. Have you been involved in the implementation of any Agri-environmental Schemes?

43. What are your main objectives in terms of conservation benefits when it comes to enrolling farmers into agri-environmental schemes or when giving conservation advice?

44. How do you form these objectives?

45. Do they depend on the farm you are visiting.

Can you give me examples?

46. From these objectives do you have a clear idea of the environmental benefits you are trying to achieve?

Can you give me some examples?

47. Can you tell me what you are looking for when you walk the farm?

48. Do you point the relevant features out to the farmer?

49. What happens once you have walked the farm?

50. Does the scheme entail you drawing-up a management plan with the farmer?

or, do you draw up a management agreement with the farmer?

51. How do you build the management plan with the farmer?
52. Does this require much negotiation and bargaining with the farmer?

53. Do you ever want to persuade the farmer to do more for conservation but are unwilling to suggest it because it would be too expensive, or there is a possibility of failure?

54. Do you ever feel that the farmer would accept a challenge? e.g. experimenting with heathland or reedbed creation.

55. What other influences persuade farmers to do something for the environment? e.g. public pressure, financial, retirement etc.?

57. Do you feel the schemes are flexible enough to so as to fit with the possibilities for nature conservation on a particular farm?

   In some instance are the prescriptions of the schemes are too tight?

58. If the Project Officers were given more discretionary freedom would the schemes need to be so prescriptive?

59. Would this allow for better conservation/more environmental benefits?

60. Would this allow or encourage more farmers to join?

61. Do you think if more farmers were encouraged to join through less stringent prescriptions that the environmental benefits produced by the schemes would decline?

62. Would this however, open farmers up to the idea of nature conservation and therefore set them on the right path?

63. Are there any local issues which are not addressed through the schemes?

64. With more discretionary freedom would this allow more local issues to be addressed?

65. Are you involved in the training/provision of advice to Project Officers?

   If no, do you think your organisation should be? (go to question 69)
66. What has / does this involve?

67. What do you consider the most important objectives to get across?

68. How do you decide what these objectives are?

69. Do you think your organisation should be doing more to provide advise / training for farmers?

   If not, who should be responsible for this?

70. Does your organisation work with this organisation in this area?

71. Has your organisation produced any leaflets / run workshops or seminars for farmers on conservation?

   How have these been received?

72. Do you think farmers have the necessary skills to put the schemes into action?

73. Do you think they get adequate advice to do this?

74. How do you think farmers go about getting advice?

75. Do you know of any areas of conflict between the organisations that give advice?

76. What are these differences?

77. Do you see this as detrimental or helpful because each group has something different to offer nature conservation and the outcomes will never be certain?

77. Do you think farmers would benefit from the provision of one-stop-shops?

78. Who do you think should run the 'shops'?

79. Do you think that these 'shops' would lead to an increase or decrease on conservation, because on the one hand advice may be biased according to the running
of the shop or on the other, increasing farmer participation would outweigh any biases?

Evaluation and Monitoring

80. How do you think farmers regard the land they use for conservation projects?

81. Do you think farmers have a clear understanding of what they are trying to produce in terms of environmental benefits?

82. Do you think it is possible to assess the environmental benefits?

83. Do you think that there is a point where you can say whether a farmer is producing goods which are acceptable or unacceptable?

   How do you do this?

84. How do you judge the grey areas between acceptable and unacceptable benefits delivered?

85. Do you think it is possible to decide what an ideal outcome is? Is it even possible to decide what the outcome should be?

86. Is it possible to evaluate a scheme beyond a single agreement?

87. Do you think there is sufficient monitoring of the schemes?

88. Has your organisation been involved in any monitoring?

89. Do you think that monitoring takes account of the difficulties faced in producing conservation benefits?

90. Do you think that the data collected is put to good use by those responsible for drawing up new schemes or deciding if existing schemes should continue?

91. Do you think the ‘policy makers’ understand the difficulties faced when trying to increase environmental benefits given that environmental benefits cannot be produced to a formula nor will they deliver uniform results?
92. How do you think organisations such as yours should be selling the success of the schemes to the policy makers?

93. How do you think the policy makers decide what is acceptable when it comes to deciding if a scheme should continue?

**Development of the Agri-environmental Schemes**

94. Who do you think should be involved in the decision to continue / expand a scheme?

95. Do you think some monitoring should be devoted to helping produce better policies or schemes in the future? e.g. through consultation with farmers / POs / NGOs working at the implementation level.

96. Do you feel that the system under which the schemes work is bureaucratic?

97. Does it have to be like this of the schemes are to be produced and implemented?

98. What could be done to make the schemes work more easily?

99. What other changes would you like to see being made to the schemes?

100. Should there be more local administration / forum groups to address these issues?

101. Were you involved in the consultation process when the Agri-Environmental Schemes were originally being drawn up?

102. Do you think the consultation process allows your views to get across?

103. Could the Ministry do more in terms of consultation?

104. Do you feel that you are actively involved in shaping policy or do you feel that you work at the end of a policy chain?
105. Do you think that MAFF, DoE and other statutory agencies have a clear idea of how they want to develop agricultural and environmental policy?

106. What do you think have been the main influences in MAFF's moves towards more Agri-environmental Schemes?

107. Do you think that environmental concerns are being used as a scapegoat for reducing expenditure on the agricultural budget?

108. Do you think that cross-compliance would be a good way forward for agricultural and environmental policy?

109. If so, what particular issues would you like to see addressed?

110. Do you think the schemes provide value for money?

111. How can we decide what this is?

112. Are there any special concerns that you have for environment which are not being addressed by the schemes currently available?

113. Do you think that changes to agricultural policy will allow these concerns to be addressed?

114. Are you involved in the lobbying of the government or other influential individuals? Or is this carried out by your HQ?
   
   What does this involve?

   Do you think you are successful in your lobbying?

115. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or add to?

116. Who else do you think I should go and talk to about these issues, inside / outside of your organisation at this level and the national level?

117. I am trying to understand how farmers are involved in the development of policy at the local, regional and national level. I am particularly interested in farmers who
would are regarded as 'influential' to the development, review and dissemination of conservation ideas in the area, for example farmers you sit on conservation organisation committees or are involved with the review of AESs. Who do you think are the 'influential' farmers in the area. Would it be possible for you to give a contact point for them?

Thank you for sparing you time to talk to me, If I should need to, would you mind if I contacted you again in the future to discuss any of these issues in greater detail?

**Interview Schedule For NGO / Statutory Agencies at The National Level**

**Preliminary Questions**

Questions 1-14 same as the Regional schedule.

15. Do the priorities only get formalised when replying to consultation documents/when it has been decided to lobby in a particular area?

   Is because of constraints on time/finances?

16. Do the views of the group get passed on to other members of your organisation?

   Do the issues go both up a down the chain?

17. Would you like to have more involvement with those who put policy into action? e.g. Policy Officers/conservation advisers/farmers?

18. How would you like to see the implementers views incorporated into policy?

19. Does this group have contact with other similar groups within your organisation at county, regional or national level?

20. Do you have regional groups that meet to discuss priorities?

   How are their views passed on to you?

   Then what happens with these concerns?

21. Do you think that these views are eventually passed on to the 'policy makers'?
22. Do you liaise with other organisations on the issues discussed by your group?

23. Do you find it beneficial to work together on some issues?

24. Do you think there is a place for the development of policy at a regional level? e.g. they should be developed within a county/according to the countryside character map?

25. Would you say that you try to negotiate/bargain with other groups or do you try to find a clear path?

26. Do you try to address issues which you know will yield results rather than try and tackle issues which are difficult to get off the ground, don’t have any funding, are not considered a priority by other organisations?

27. How do you try to persuade people to agree with your objectives for environmental concerns?

28. Do you think you are successful in doing this?

29. Do you think you reach a consensus between the groups involved?

   Does this continually evolve as new ideas, results etc. come to light?

30. Does it appear that one group is more influential than others during these meetings?

   Why do you think this is?

31. Do some groups seem more responsive to your ideas than others?

32. Do some organisations appear more successful at getting their ideas across than others?

33. Is there scope within the policies for everyone’s conservation needs to be met?

34. Do you think that some members of the farming community should be included in these groups?
35. Have you or your organisation ever liaised with farmers before proposing to take some action or propose a scheme?

36. Do you think your thoughts/aims for nature conservation are adequately addressed through these groups?

   How could this be improved?

**Enactment and Evaluation**

37. Are you involved in the lobbying of the government or other influential individuals?

   How do you decide which issues to lobbying on?

   Are these confined to those which you know you will be influential in?

   Do you think you are successful in your lobbying?

38. Are you confident that your responses to consultation documents and your lobbying actually reach 'policy makers'?

39. Do some organisations appear better at lobbying?

   Why do you think this is?

40. Do you think it is important to inform the public of conservation issues?

41. Do you think this is an important part of the lobbying process?

42. Have you been involved in the implementation of any Agri-environmental Schemes?

   *If no go to question 55.*

43. Do you feel the schemes are flexible enough to fit the possibilities for nature conservation on a particular farm?

44. Do you feel that the schemes/policies adequately address the priorities you have established?
Can you give me an example?

45. Are the schemes capable of delivering the environmental changes you seek?

46. Do you feel that the prescriptions of the schemes are too tight?

47. If the Project Officer were given more discretionary freedom would the schemes need to be so prescriptive?

48. Would this allow for better conservation or more environmental benefits?

49. Would this allow or encourage more farmers to join?

50. Do you think if more farmers were encouraged to join through less stringent prescriptions that the environmental benefits produced by the schemes would decline?

51. Would this however, open farmers up to the idea of nature conservation and therefore set them on the right path?

52. With more discretionary freedom would you be able to suggest to a farmer - if they were willing - to increase the scope of their projects so as to increase the benefits for nature conservation?

53. Are there any local issues which are not addressed through the schemes?

54. With more discretionary freedom would this allow more local issues to be addressed?

55. Are you involved in the training/provision of advice to Project Officers/farmers?

   If no, do you think your organisation should be?  
   *If no go to question 61*

56. What does this involve?

57. What do you consider to be most important objectives to get across?

58. How do you decide what these objectives are?
59. Do you think your organisation should be doing more to provide advise/training for farmers?
   If not, who should be responsible for this?

   Does your organisation work with this organisation in this area?

60. Has your organisation produced any leaflets/run workshops or seminars for farmers on conservation?

   How have these been received?

61. Do you think the Project Officers are happy with the schemes they are being given to implement?

62. Do you think they find themselves at the end of a long policy chain?

63. Do you think that they feel they are trying to make the best of the schemes they have been given?

64. Do you think farmers have the necessary skills to put the schemes into action?

   If not applicable to go question 71

65. Do you think they get adequate advice to do this?

66. How do you think that farmers go about getting advice?

67. Do you know of any areas of conflict between the organisations that give advice?

   Do you know what these differences are?

68. Do you see this as detrimental or helpful - because each group has something different to offer nature conservation and the outcomes will never be certain?

69. Do you think farmers would benefit from the provision of a one-stop-shop?

   Who do you think should run the 'shop'?
70. Do you think that these 'shops' would lead to an increase or decrease on conservation because on the one hand advice may be biased according to who is running the 'shop' whilst on the other increasing farmer participation would outweigh any biases?

71. How do you think farmers regard the land they use for conservation projects?

72. Do you think farmers have a clear understanding of what they are trying to produce in terms of environmental benefits?

73. Do you think it is possible to assess the environmental benefits?

74. Do you think there is a point where you can say what is acceptable/unacceptable in terms of conservation benefits?

75. How do you judge the grey areas between what is acceptable and unacceptable?

76. Do you think it is possible to decide what an ideal outcome is?

Is it even possible to decide what an outcome should be?

77. Is it possible to evaluate a scheme beyond a single agreement?

78. Do you think there is sufficient monitoring of the schemes?

79. Has your organisation been involved in any monitoring?

80. Do you think that monitoring takes account of the difficulties faced in producing conservation benefits?

81. Do you think that the data collected is put to good use by those responsible for drawing up new schemes or deciding if existing schemes should continue?

82. Some schemes e.g. ESAs have been running for 10 years, do you think these have achieved what they originally sought to?

Could the schemes have done more?
83. Do you think the newer schemes are better than the original schemes?

**Development of the Agri-environmental Schemes**

84. Do you think the 'policy makers' understand the difficulties faced when trying to produce environmental benefits, because environmental benefits cannot be produced to a formula nor will they produce uniform results?
85. How do you think organisations such as yours should be selling the success of the schemes to the policy makers?

86. How do you think the 'policy makers' decide what is acceptable when it comes to deciding if a scheme should continue? e.g. do they have benchmarks?

87. Who do you think should be involved in the decision to continue/expand a scheme?

88. Do you think some monitoring should be devoted to helping produce better policies or schemes in the future? e.g. through consultation with farmers / POs / NGO's working at the implementation level.

89. Were you involved in the consultation process when the Agri-Environmental Schemes were originally being drawn up?

90. Did your organisation's response reflect its own priorities or were you confined to just answering the issues raised by the consultation document?

91. Do you know if any of your suggestions were incorporated into the final document/schemes?

92. Do you think the consultation process allows your views to get across?

93. Could the Ministry do more in terms of consultation?

94. Do you feel that you are actively involved in shaping policy or do you feel that you work at the end of a policy chain and hence you are just trying to finely adjust what the Ministry has decided to include within AESs?
95. Do you think that MAFF, the DoE and other statutory agencies have a clear idea of how they want to develop agricultural and environmental policy?

96. What do you think have been the main influences driving MAFF’s moves towards more Agri-environmental Schemes?

97. Do you think that environmental concerns are being used as a scapegoat for reducing expenditure on the agricultural budget?

98. Do you think that cross-compliance would be a good way forward for agricultural and environmental policy?

99. If so, what particular issues would you like to see addressed?

100. Do you think the schemes provide value for money?

101. How can we decide what this is?

102. Are there any special concerns that you have for environment which are not being addressed by the schemes currently available?

What additional measures would you like to see?

103. Do you think that changes to agricultural policy will allow these concerns to be addressed?

104. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or add to?

105. Who else do you think I should talk to about these issues, inside/outside of you organisation?

Thank you for sparing you time to talk to me. If I should need to, would you mind if I contacted you again in the future to discuss any of these issues in greater detail?
Interview Schedule For MAFF

Preliminary Questions

Questions 1-7 were the same as the Regional schedule

8. What are the groups priorities for conservation issues on farms

9. How are these priorities established?
   Does the group come to agreement on these priorities?

10. Do these priorities match with your own?
    if no: How do they differ?
    Do you try to persuade others to see your priorities?
    Does this work?

11. What causes the group's priorities to change?

12. Are these gradual changes (i.e. do they evolve) or are they substantial changes?
    Can you give me an example?

13. Who introduces new ideas?

14. Do the views of the group get passed on to other members of your organisation?

15. Do the issues go both up a down the chain? i.e. to those who implement the schemes and those who talk to ministers.

16. Do you think you receive sufficient information from those charged with implementing the schemes?

17. How would you like to see the implementers views incorporated into policy?

18. Do you have regional groups that meet to discuss priorities?
How are their views passed on to you?

20. Would you like to see closer collaboration with groups working at county, regional or national level?

21. How do you regard your own position in the ‘policy chain’?

22. Can you explain to me why the Agri-environmental Steering Group/Fora were established?

23. How do you choose who sits on the Groups/National Forum?

24. What are the objectives of these Groups/Forum?

25. What have been the main points of agenda for the Groups/Forum to date?

26. What do you hope will be the end products from the Groups/Forum?

27. How do you think the members of the Groups/Forum regard the meetings?
   Prompt if necessary a chance to lobby MAFF, a way to find out what MAFF’s objectives are, a chance to really debate issues that concern the organisation to do with conservation and farming.

28. How will the Groups/Forum meetings affect the consultation process that has been used in the past for testing out scheme ideas?

29. What is the process behind compiling a consultation document?

30. How do you deal with the responses?

31. Do you think that the consultation process is a good way of incorporating everyone’s ideas?

32. How do you go about incorporating responses to the consultation documents?
   Do you try and find a consensus?
33. Do you think some organisations are more influential than others?

   Why do you think this is?

   What is special about these organisations?

34. Is there scope within the policies for everyone's conservation needs to be met?

35. Do you think that the CLA and the NFU adequately represent the needs of their members?

36. How important do you think scientific back-up is when an organisation is putting forward concerns or emphasising issues e.g. RSPB or BTO monitoring?

**Enactment and Evaluation**

37. Do you have any contact with the actual running of the schemes?

38. Do you feel that the schemes/policies adequately address the priorities you have established?

   Can you give me an example?

39. Are the schemes capable of delivering the environmental changes you seek?

40. Do you think the schemes are flexible enough to meet the objectives of the farmers and the conservationists?

41. Do you think that the project officers have enough freedom within the schemes to do what they think is best for the site in terms of conservation?

42. Do you find that certain organisations or individuals would like to see more flexible schemes?

43. Do you think that you should be moving towards more objective led schemes rather than prescription led?

44. Do you think this would lead to wider acceptance by farmers of conservation and possibly more positive environmental benefits on farms?
45. The converse to this of course is that if farmers were given more flexible schemes this in turn might lead to a reduction in conservation benefits because they would be unwilling to meet the stringent demands of certain prescriptions?

46. Do you think that MAFF would be willing to let the project officers decide what is best for a certain site and so allow the project officer to make the prescriptions fit the site i.e. a tailor-made approach?

47. Do you think an objective led approach would lead to more environmental benefits?

48. Would this allow or encourage more farmers to join?

49. Do you think if more farmers were encouraged to join through less stringent prescriptions that the environmental benefits produced by the schemes would decline?

50. Would this however open farmers up to the 'idea' of nature conservation and therefore set them on the right path?

51. Do you think the project officers are happy with the schemes they are being given to implement?

52. Do you think they find themselves at the end of a long policy chain? Do you think this is how farmers feel and this is why they are sometimes sceptical of the schemes on offer?

53. Do you think that project officers feel they are trying to make the best of the schemes they have been given?

54. Are you involved in the training/provision of advise to project officers?

55. What does this involve?

56. What do you consider the most important objectives to get across?

57. How do you decide what these objectives are?
58. Do you think your should be doing more to provide advice/training for farmers?
   If not, who should be responsible for this?

59. Would you like to see more NGOs getting involved in training e.g. FWAG, RSPB etc.?

60. Do you think farmers have the necessary skills to put the schemes into action?

61. Do you think they get adequate advice to do this?

62. How do you think that farmers go about getting advice?

64. Do you think farmers would benefit from the provision of a one-stop-shop?

65. Who do you think should run the 'shop'?

66. Do you think that these 'shops' would lead to an increase or decrease on conservation benefits because fewer groups would be involved and this would bias the advice?

67. How do you think farmers regard the land they use for conservation projects?

68. Do you think farmers have a clear understanding of what they are trying to produce in terms of environmental benefits?

69. Do you think there is a 'gap' between what farmers think they know about conservation and what environmentalists would like to see them doing?

70. How does the Ministry assess the environmental benefits of the schemes?

71. Do you think it is possible to assess the environmental benefits?

72. Do you think there is sufficient monitoring of the schemes?
73. Do you think that monitoring takes account of the difficulties faced in producing conservation benefits?

74. Does the monitoring data get fed into the mechanism of scheme reviews and refinement?

75. Do you think that the monitoring data is put to good use?

76. Some schemes e.g. ESAs have been running for 10 years, do you think these have achieved what they originally sought to?
   Could the schemes have done more?

77. Do you think the newer schemes are better than the original schemes?
   Have they changed?

78. Do you think the objectives of the schemes such as the ESA's will have to change as we become more familiar with what is possible and as we strive to achieve more environmental benefits and value for money?

79. Do you think that MAFF finds the Agri-environmental Schemes very different to other areas of agricultural policy because the objectives are less clearly defined?

80. Do you think these problems have been overcome and that MAFF is now beginning to understand that it must be flexible if it is to produce good environmental schemes?

81. What benchmarks do you use when deciding if a scheme should continue or expand?

82. Who do you think should be involved in the decision to continue/expand a scheme?

Accountability

83. Do you think there is a point where you can say what is acceptable/unacceptable in terms of conservation benefits delivered on a particular farm?
84. How do you judge the grey areas between what is acceptable and unacceptable?

85. Do you think it is possible to decide what an ideal outcome is?
   Is it even possible to decide what an outcome should be?

86. Is it possible to evaluate a scheme beyond a single agreement?

87. Do you think that MAFF has a clear idea of how they want to develop agricultural and environmental policy?

88. What do you think have been the main factors influencing MAFF’s moves towards more Agri-environmental Schemes?

89. Do you think that cross-compliance would be a good way forward for agricultural and environmental policy?
   If so, what particular issues would you like to see addressed?

90. Do you think that the Tir Cymen Scheme’s whole farm approach has proved a good way of delivering schemes to farmers?
   Do you think this system will be adopted in England?

91. Do you think the schemes provide value for money?

92. How can we decide what is value for money?

93. How do Agri-environmental Schemes compare with other schemes e.g. AAPs in terms of the value for money they provide?

94. Is it possible to make conservation schemes accountable?
   If so how can this be done?
   Who will be charged with deciding? i.e. will it be those who make policy or those who put the policy into action?

96. Are there any special concerns that you have for environment which are not being addressed by the schemes currently available?
What additional measures would you like to see?

97. Do you think that changes to agricultural policy will allow these concerns to be addressed?

98. Is there anything else you would like to discuss or add to?

Thank you for sparing you time to talk to me, If I should need to, would you mind if I contacted you again in the future to discuss any of these issues in greater detail?
## Appendix B

**Farmers' Sub-network Interviews**

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† This interview was attended by the farm owner, his dairy manager and his arable manager who also owned a farm of 1000 acres.

(S) Suffolk

(N) Norfolk

### Regional Sub-network Interviews

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‡ This interview was attended by two staff from the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.
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§ This interview was attended by two members of the MAFF Conservation Division.