

Sheep breeders round table November 2022

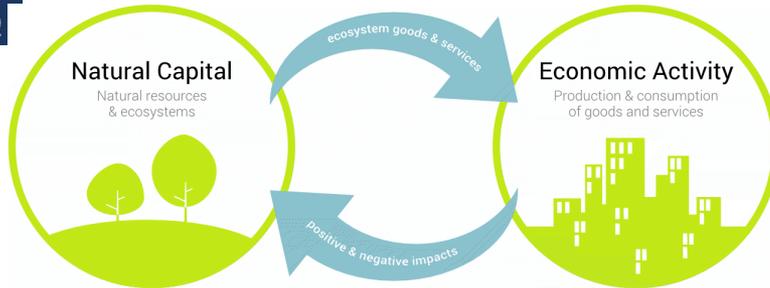
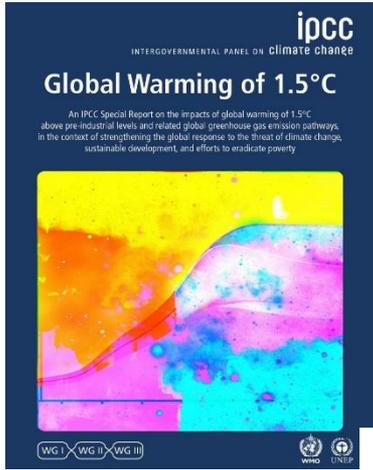


Opportunities for sheep  
farming (within the context of British sheep  
genetics – delivering for the nation)

# Delivering for the nation – delivering what?



# Future challenges







**71,000 sheep holdings**

**Wide genetic diversity**

**Semi natural conditions**

**Sequestering carbon**

**Living along side wildlife**

**Healthy and nutritious food**

**The most sustainable fibre in the world**

**Culturally, socially and ecologically rich**

**Almost the ultimate in renewable technology**





The opportunity is to do more to explain our industry, but also to listen more to peoples interests and concerns, and consider how we can meet them.



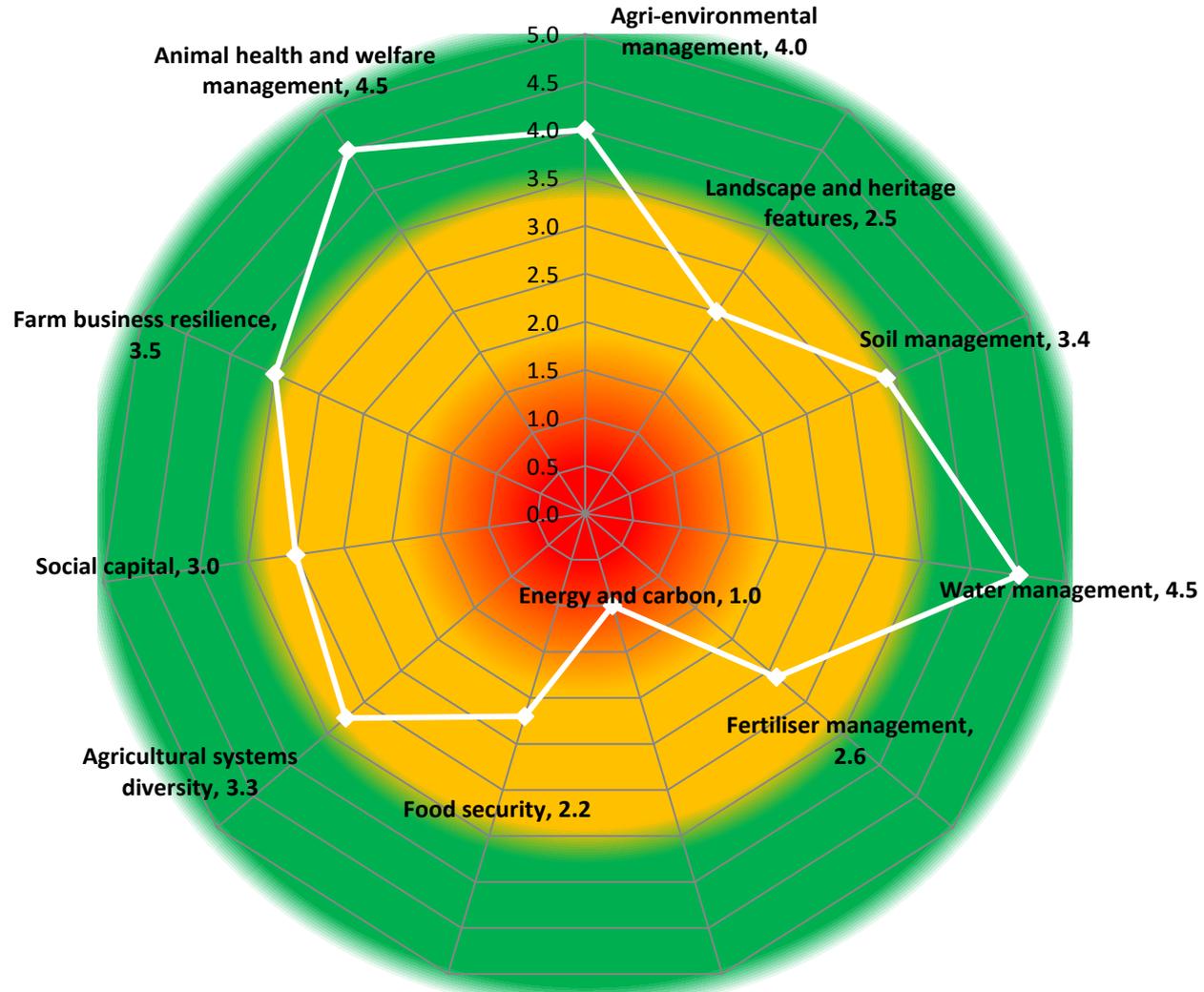
# Climate, nature, and natural resources



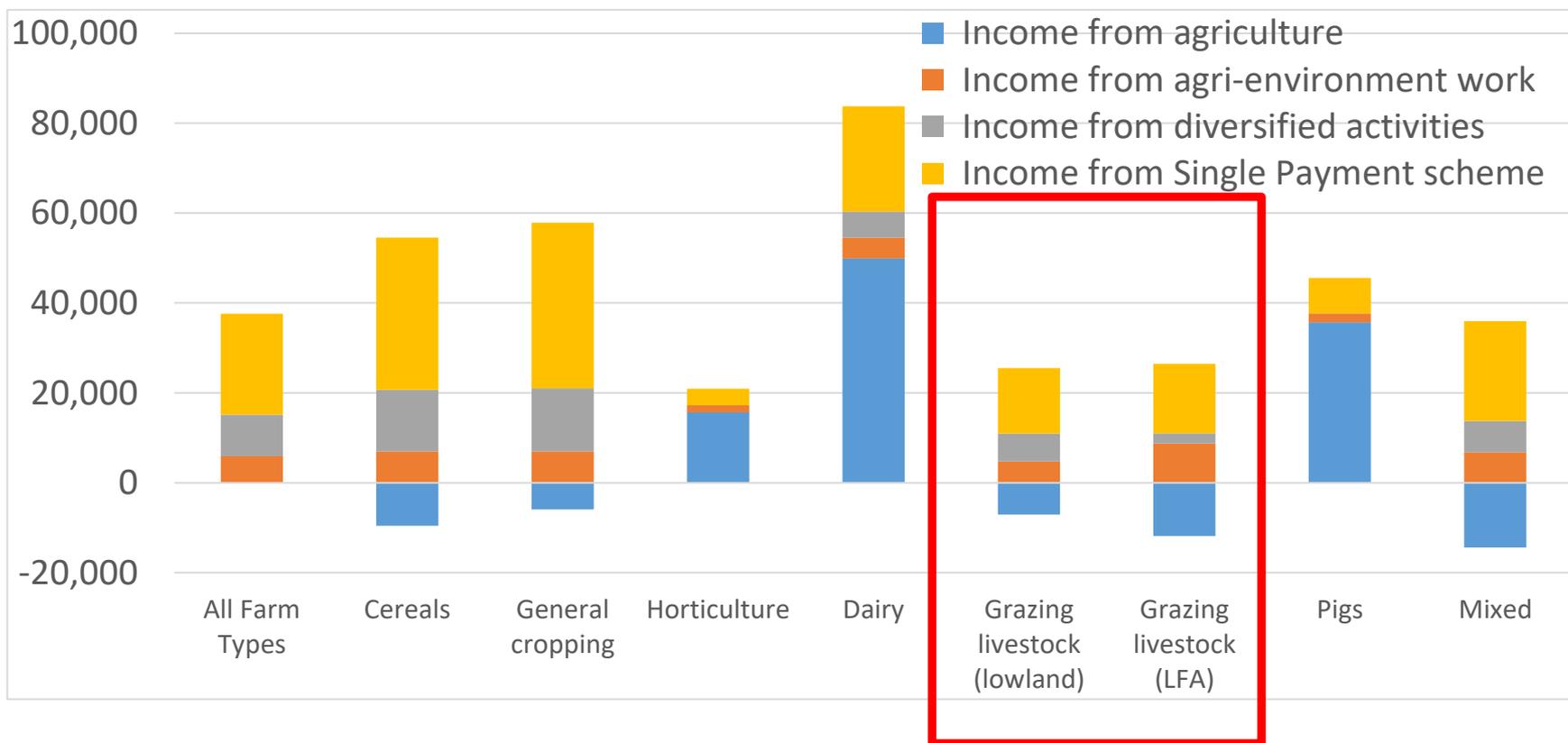
- Full carbon LCAs are difficult and their absence has damaged the reputation of sheep farming.
- Its easy to fall back on controlling emissions and for sheep its easy to fall back onto methane as being one thing that can be measured (to an extent)
- But while methane is important its only one small part of the picture



# Sustainability assessments



# Grazing livestock enterprises are dependent on support payments



Source : Defra, Farm Business Survey



**Table 3. Significant variables between top and bottom performing counterparts – LFA Grazing Livestock**

Selected variables	Mean of top performers	Mean of matched bottom performers
Agricultural output (£'000)	133.9	83.4
Proportion of finished cattle (%)	30%	20%
Proportion of finished sheep (%)	70%	50%
Farm Business Tenancy land	29.1%	16.4%
Full Agricultural Tenancy land	16.6%	31.9%
Total agricultural costs (£'000)	128.7	126.8
<b>Of which %</b>		
Agriculture overheads	45.9%	52.1%
Agriculture variable costs	54.1%	47.9%
Fertiliser costs	6.9%	4.5%
General farming costs	9.5%	16.0%



Courtesy of AHDB.  
Horizon reports





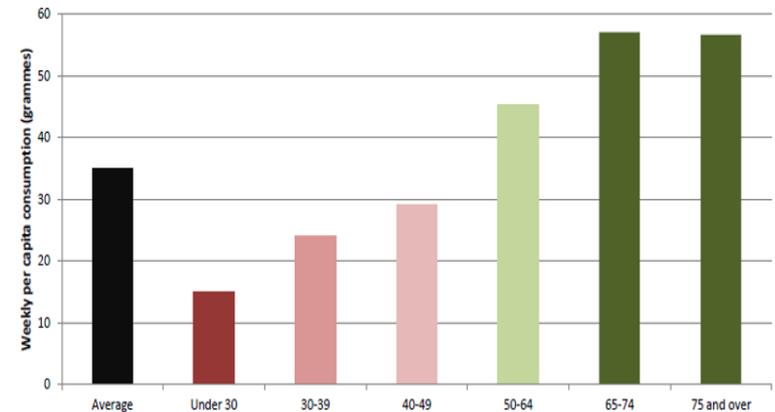
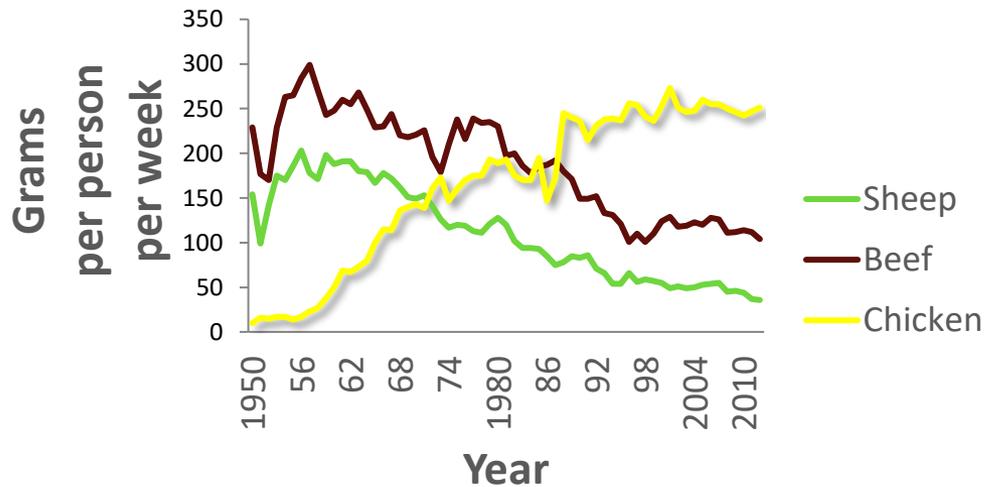
The opportunity is for individual farmers to understand their sheep enterprises better – to record information, to look at it, and make decisions based on fact. Its not about stripping all costs out its about investing in the things that yield a benefit whether that’s genetics or vaccines or feed – and many of these things inter-relate



# Our markets



We are fortunate that we have a good range of market outlets –  
Domestic markets – Multiple retail, Halal, High St butchers, farm shops, direct sales, catering and hospitality  
Export markets – Retail and catering, Halal, 5<sup>th</sup> quarter products





# Are we being efficient or are we being left behind?



Virtually every other food category has blossomed into offering differentiation





The opportunity is to recognise that there is no 'one' market. Differentiation opportunities exist in the marketplace and diversity is evident on sheep farms – to what extent do we fight against this and to what extent do we capitalise on it? Diversity cant be an excuse for poor quality – quality is in the eye of the beholder  
Farmers are right in moving to wool shedders, and farmers are right in creating viable markets for wool....



# Post EU Policy progress



- 7 year transition in England to finish in 2028; similar thinking in Wales but delayed; little clarity in Scotland; but similar objectives in all UK nations.

## In England:

- Traceability, the LIP, and added value through data
- Advice via the Farm Resilience Programme, plus TIAH and RoSA as industry cpd
- E medicines hub and targets task force
- Changing eligibility for Future Farming Programmes
- The end of x compliance and move towards advice, and penalty notices
- Large and small scale capital grants
- Innovation and R&D funding
- Sustainable Farming Incentive – pilot and 2022 roll out
- Animal Health and Welfare Pathway
- Local Nature Recovery pilots
- Landscape Recovery pilots



# Sustainable Farming Incentive

SFI will help farmers manage land to improve food production and farm sustainably.

ARABLE & HORTICULTURAL SOILS STANDARD

IMPROVED GRASSLAND SOILS STANDARD

MOORLAND STANDARD

ANNUAL HEALTH & WELFARE REVIEW\*

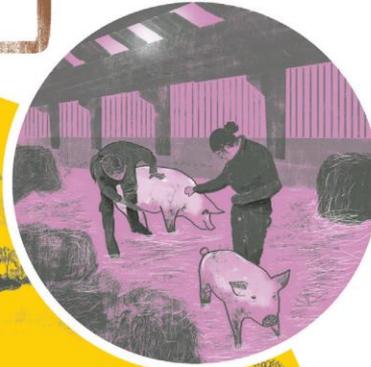
SURVEY MOORLAND FEATURES

IDENTIFY PUBLIC GOODS PROVIDED BY THE MOORLAND

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE PUBLIC GOODS

ESTABLISH & MAINTAIN HERBAL LEYS ON AT LEAST 15% OF LAND  
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

A DISCUSSION WITH THE VET ABOUT HEALTH & WELFARE OF YOUR ANIMALS\*



WINTER COVER  
70% GREEN COVER (INTRODUCTORY LEVEL)  
50% GREEN COVER & 20% MULTI-SPECIES COVER CROPS (INTERMEDIATE LEVEL)  
MINIMISE BARE GROUND OVER WINTER  
NO MORE THAN 5% BARE GROUND

ADD ORGANIC MATTER TO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH

COMPLETE A SOIL ASSESSMENT AND PRODUCE A SOIL MANAGEMENT PLAN

TEST YOUR SOIL FOR ORGANIC MATTER



\*Annual Health & Welfare Review applications open Autumn 2022

# The Animal Health and Welfare Pathway could be a game changer



- Vets could play a pivotal role in changing attitudes and encouraging positive change.
- Similar initiatives in devolved nations
- A focus on sheep health will reduce footprints, increase productivity, improve welfare, and improve reputation – but will need good and well informed vets..



# Productivity opportunity areas?



## Sheep performance

Genetics – genetic improvements without limiting diversity

Soil and grassland management, sheep nutrition and ewe body condition

Health and parasite control

## Business KPIs

Minimise fixed costs

Invest in inputs that pay

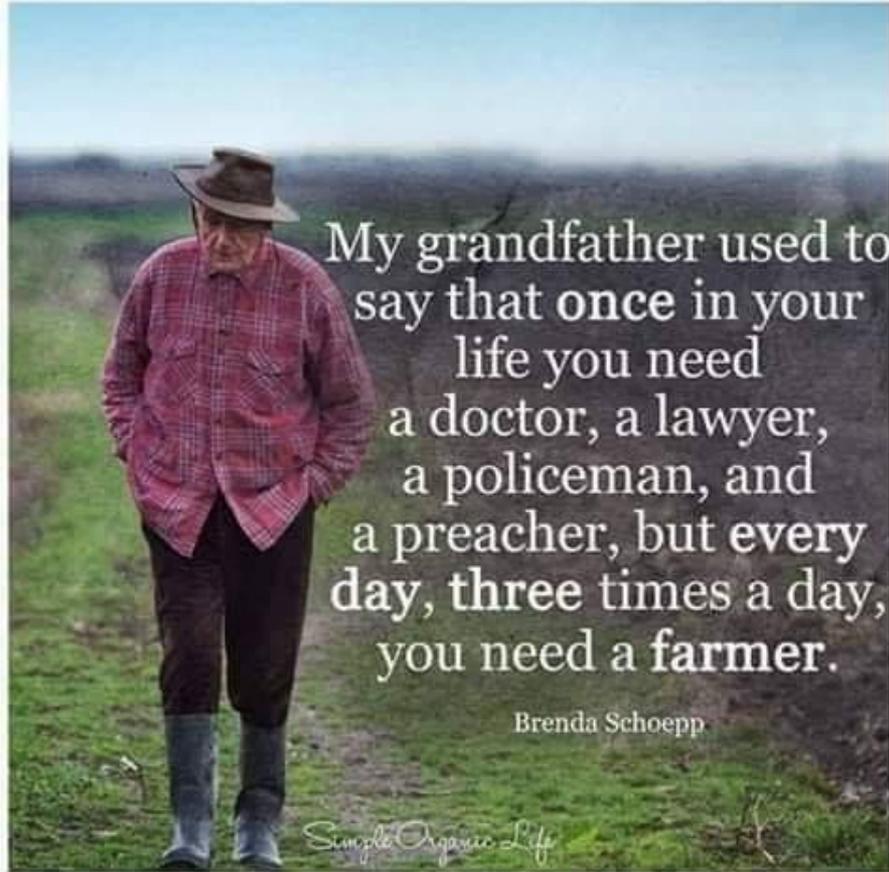
Cash flow

## Markets

Investment (even in the good times)

Innovation





Thank you

