

Ruby Country Net-Zero Beef Farming Forum

INFORMATION SHEET – Expert Witness

What's the Project about?

The UK government has set itself an ambitious, legally binding target of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. To reach this target all sectors of the economy and society will need to play their part. Agriculture is responsible for around 10% of Greenhouse Gas emissions in the UK, about 16% in Devon, and in NW Devon, a predominantly livestock farming area, around 30%. Agriculture in general, and beef farming in particular therefore, can play a huge part in meeting both national and local GHG reduction targets.

The paths to net-zero for the sector, however, are challenging, not always clearly signposted, and need to negotiate a number of significant additional obstacles in terms of changes in agricultural policy and growing public debate around the role of meat and dairy in our diets. How can beef farming in the Ruby Country navigate this new landscape? How can beef farming, a sector so intrinsic to the Ruby Country that it gives it its name, make the move to net-zero whilst continuing to be economically viable? Put simply:

'How can Ruby Country beef farming best transition to net-zero GHG emissions by (or before) 2050?'

The primary aim of the project is to answer this question, and the people, we believe, who are best placed to answer it are Ruby Country beef farmers and beef farming stakeholders. That is why we want to establish what we are calling a Ruby Country Net-Zero Beef Farming Forum, to collectively discuss the issue, identify the challenges, and propose solutions. The Farming Forum is a bespoke methodology taking elements from a number of deliberative approaches including the Citizen's Jury method and it is from this approach that it borrows the idea of the Expert Witness. Expert Witnesses will play a central role in the Farming Forum process, informing Forum members about the latest thinking on agriculture and net-zero, stimulating discussion and helping the Forum make decisions about how beef farming can best transition to net-zero.

Who are we looking for?

We are looking for Expert Witnesses who can help the Forum members understand how best to make this transition. In particular we are looking for about 12-15 witnesses with expertise in various aspects of on-farm GHG mitigation and sequestration, as well as conservation and transitions to Net-Zero farming, with special focus on beef farming, as well as witnesses with specific knowledge of farming in the Ruby Country.

How will the Net-Zero Beef Farming Forum work?

The Farming Forum process will be entirely online. There will be no requirement for any participants (Forum members, facilitators, or Expert Witnesses), to at any point, meet in person face-to-face. The process will likely use the Zoom online meeting app although other platforms (e.g. MS Teams) will be considered. There will also be no requirement for Forum members (or indeed Expert Witnesses) to have any prior experience of using Zoom as training will be given in advance of the first Forum session to those who require it.

The Forum will meet for 6 sessions over a 6-week period beginning Tuesday 20th April 2021:

- Week/Session 1 – Tuesday 20th April
- Week/Session 2 – Tuesday 27th April
- Week/Session 3 – Tuesday 4th May
- Week/Session 4 – Tuesday 11th May
- Week/Session 5 – Tuesday 18th May
- Week/Session 6 – Tuesday 25th May

The precise date and time of the Forum sessions has yet to be determined although provisionally we are looking at a regular day/time of Tuesdays at 11.00-13.00. We fully recognise, however, that people have busy and demanding lives so we will make every effort to accommodate the availability of the Forum members and as such both weekends and evening options will be considered if necessary.

To help Forum members discuss and answer the question they will be presented with information from the 'Expert Witnesses'. In the week preceding each session Forum members will be asked to visit the project website and watch a number of short presentations on a range of relevant topics prepared by the 'Expert Witnesses'. Each presentation will be no more than 15 minutes long, delivered in plain English and there will be no more than 4 presentations to watch before any given session.

In terms of the online Forum sessions themselves, each will be a maximum of 2 hrs long and will include a 10-minute comfort break. The first half of the session provides a specific opportunity for Forum members to question and examine the Expert Witnesses whose presentations they have watched in advance, while the second half provides for a more general facilitated Forum discussion on the session theme. Each session will be facilitated and recorded by the project team.

What would taking part involve?

For an Expert Witness, taking part in the project will typically involve preparing and recording a 10-15 minute presentation and 'attending' one, online, two-hour Forum session. In terms of the presentation, guidance will be provided by the project team on the necessary content and tone, and assistance will be given with respect to the recording process should it be required (see Expert Witness: Presentation Guidance Notes). In terms of the Forum session, Expert Witnesses will need to be in attendance for the first hour to answer specific questions from the Forum and will be encouraged to remain for the second hour of general discussion, though this would not be a strict requirement. We will also hold a roundtable event in the late Spring/early Summer period (before the main holiday period) lasting around 90 minutes with the Expert Witnesses as part of our evaluation process. There may also be a short survey we ask you to complete asking for your views on participating as a witness in the forum. We will ask you to complete a consent form if you agree to take part.

What are the benefits and risks of taking part?

Expert Witnesses will be afforded a unique opportunity to present and showcase their work and to directly engage with local beef farmers and beef farming stakeholders and to contribute to a project which may help inform the Devon Carbon Plan.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Exeter's Research Ethics Committee (ref no 202021-056) and the risks of taking part are thought to be negligible. The whole Forum process will be conducted on-line and the Forum discussions professionally facilitated and moderated. You will have opportunities to feedback your views about the process during and at the end of the process.

How will my information be kept confidential?

The University of Exeter processes personal data for the purposes of carrying out research in the public interest. The University will endeavour to be transparent about its processing of your personal data and this information sheet should provide a clear explanation of this. If you do have any queries about the University's processing of your personal data that cannot be resolved by the research team, further information may be obtained from the University's Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotection@exeter.ac.uk or at www.exeter.ac.uk/dataprotection.

All participants will be allocated a pseudonym 'ID tag' which will protect their identity. All information will be password encrypted and stored on the University network drive, which provides secure, backed up network storage. Only the direct research team will have access to this information.

The sessions held via Teams or Zoom will be recorded and transcribed, with an audio file recorded digitally as a backup. All participants' (including witnesses) names will be removed from any research data files and written transcripts, and individuals will instead be allocated an ID number to protect their identity (e.g. witness 1, witness 2). A separate file containing names and email addresses will be kept for up to one year after completion of the project in order to allow the research team to maintain contact with participants for the duration of the project and to provide any feedback following the process such as a summary of the research results. Only those in the research team will be able to link these names/ email addresses with the research data. This method for the purposes of GDPR is known as 'pseudonymisation'. This file will be destroyed one year after completion of the project. The job roles or named organisations of the Expert Witnesses maybe listed in written output reports for transparency purposes, but no individuals will be named, and no quotations will be attributed to individuals or those in specific job roles.

Data will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties (outside of the research team & professional transcriber) will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). Your data will be held in accordance with current General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation. The transcriber will be bound by confidentiality and will destroy the transcriptions once these have been given to the research team and will not be given personal details (e.g. names, email addresses) of any participants. Any Zoom/ MS Teams recordings or digital audio recording will also be destroyed once transcriptions have been generated

What will happen to the results of this study?

Following the sixth and final session, the project team, having recorded the questions, views, concerns, conclusions and recommendations of the Forum over the previous six sessions, will collate this information into a short report or 'roadmap' outlining the actions identified by the Forum necessary to support the transition to net-zero beef farming in the Ruby Country.

The Forum will be asked to review and endorse sent 'drafts' of the roadmap generated in the final session and asked to review and provide any comments on this. A final draft will then be sent which Forum members will be asked to endorse. The final 'roadmap' document will be fully anonymised, and the identity of the Forum members will be protected as detailed above.

The Forum's recommendations will be used to feed into a wider Citizens Assembly being held in Devon in Summer 2021. Additionally, the research team may produce academic publications assessing the effectiveness of the intervention as a means of conducting public consultation as well as brief reports for community partners.

Who is funding and running this study?

The project is funded through UKRI (UK Research and Innovation) as part of their 'Enhancing place-based partnerships in public engagement' theme and is a partnership between Rothamsted Research and the University of Exeter. The main project team includes Mel Wright (Rothamsted Research); Dr. Alice Moseley, Dr. Sarah Hartley and Prof. Matt Lobley (University of Exeter) and Dr. Steven Guilbert (University of Exeter/Devon County Council).

The project was originally due to run from October 2019 to June 2020 but due to the impact of CV-19 is now running from September 2020 to June 2021.

How do I find out more?

If you any questions or would like further information about the project and the Ruby Country Net-Zero Beef Farming Forum you can visit our project website:

<https://sites.exeter.ac.uk/rubycountrynetzero/>

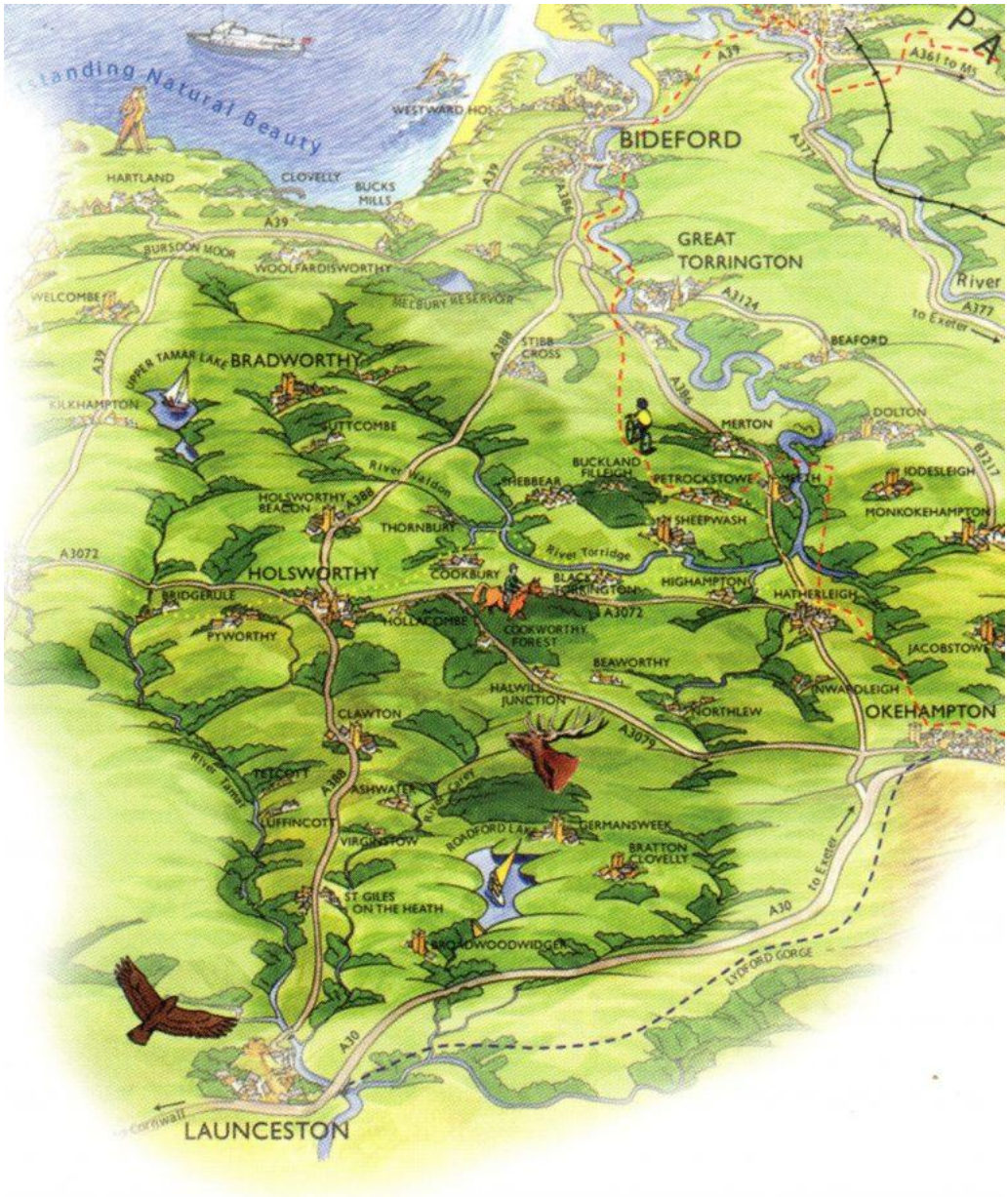
Alternatively you can contact the project team:

Dr. Steven Guilbert - steven.guilbert@devon.gov.uk

Dr. Alice Moseley - A.Moseley@exeter.ac.uk

Mel Wright - melanie.wright@rothamsted.ac.uk

If you have any questions about the ethics approval process please feel free to contact the SSIS Research Ethics Committee direct - ssis-ethics@exeter.ac.uk quoting approval number 202021-056.



The Ruby Country