

Summary highlights:

# Pasture and Profit Programmes in Protected Landscapes

## What is Pasture and Profit in Protected Landscapes?

Pasture for Life has been delivering the Pasture and Profit in Protected Landscapes programmes across 7 regions and 17 Protected Landscapes since 2022 as part of Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme, administered by Protected Landscapes on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

## What were the aims of the programme?

1. Support farmers to undertake environmentally and economically sustainable livestock farming methods
2. Build resilient farm businesses
3. Support nature recovery and mitigate the effects of climate change

## What did farmers get?

- Events in person
- Webinars and participation online
- Knowledge resources online
- Pfl membership
- Mentoring

**All interviewees would recommend it to others and would tell them to 'just go for it', or similar.**



## What were the main outcomes?

Change happened at a personal level first, with improvements in knowledge, inspiration and motivation to make change.

**As farmers *feel and think differently, they are ready to farm and do business differently.***

As a result of the programme's support, farm businesses were helped to become more financially resilient through changed practices, cost reduction and increased income.

**There was a correlation between the longer the support was available, the more farmers changed their practices.**

The ultimate intended wider impact on the natural environment is a landscape richer in pastoral variety, increased biodiversity and resistance to extreme weather conditions.

**The types of benefits for nature were improved grassland and biodiversity, better health of farmed animals and the return of wildlife to farms.**



Tullochgorum Farm, photo by Clem Sandison

## What was the 'secret sauce' for success?

**Peer-to-peer learning model**

**Experiential learning**

**Programme culture**

**Regional support**

**Sense of belonging**

**Learning through experimentation**

**Content and scheduling**

**Mentor satisfaction**

The format of farmers supporting other farmers was key to creating practice change, as was going to other farms to gain new ideas, see applicability and build strong relationships.

The programme's culture invited farmer to farmer openness, collaboration and warmth throughout the programme and it strongly contributed to facilitating change.

The programme roles of regional development manager and co-ordinator were absolutely key to the provision of support because of our understanding of the needs of farmers to signpost and shape provision.

Some farmers experienced strength and a feeling of support to make change because they felt part of something bigger - an expanding national movement.

The fact that Pasture for Life believes in learning through trial and error - experimentation - meant that mentees felt able to try out changes, listen to their own instinct, and tailor things to their own context

Participants reported a very high satisfaction with the content, scheduling and standard of programme events, as well as the mentors appreciating the Pfl training, admin and support to ensure their mentoring relationships were effective.

## Were there any barriers to change?

### Individual's farming situation

### Awareness of the programme

### Timescale for change to be seen and evaluated

There were many factors on people's individual farms that limited them from making changes during the programme, such as too much work to do and not enough time as well as the pressure to make money.

The programme's marketing needed even more reach to attract more participants. Most interviewees heard about it through word of mouth versus other channels or platforms.

Many people noted that change takes a long time in agriculture and nature restoration needs 'years not months'.

## What else do farmers need?

More of the same! Including direct funding for new infrastructure and subject specific training courses such as an introductory training course for new entrant farmers, arable and mixed farming, carcasses and finishing.

Farmers felt they needed even more mentors with specialist expertise shared between regions, building on the sense of drawing on a national movement.

To enable peer-to-peer support to grow, farmers felt they needed financial support for their time, training and confidence building.

### Build and support the cohort of farmers that can support other farmers to include funding, a central co-ordinator and further training.

## Key take-aways for funders

- As changes to farming practices and the impact on nature takes a long time, consider evaluating the extent of the changes over three to five years, and even better, review at ten years.
- Consider tracking change for some farmers who have been receiving support for a longer time and assessing how their practice and needs change, what interventions help them at each point, such as changes to their mindset to enable practice change to happen.

