

Good Practice Guide: Influencing environmental behaviour using advice

Principles for use in designing and implementing advisory measures/ schemes/ initiatives to stimulate positive environmental behaviour by farmers and land managers.

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Purpose of Guide:

This document is to provide good practice principles for use in designing and implementing the provision of advice to stimulate positive environmental behaviour by farmers and land managers (hereafter farmers).

The target audiences are policy makers who design such initiatives and their colleagues who manage such initiatives, although it could be of interest to advice deliverers as well.

The guide can be used for initiatives that are purely advisory or combine provision of advice with mandatory standards or a regulatory approach.

The guide has been designed around 16 good practice principles that are summarised in the table of contents overleaf.

There is one principle to a page and each page has some advice on how to implement the specific principle and why this principle has been identified. Each principle can stand alone.

The final section contains some summary information and a checklist that brings together the principles to assist with designing and implementing future policies.

The guide has been developed from a longer report entitled: "Understanding and influencing positive behaviour change in farmers and land managers – a project for Defra". It has built on two workshops with Defra and their delivery partners during the Summer and Autumn of 2007.

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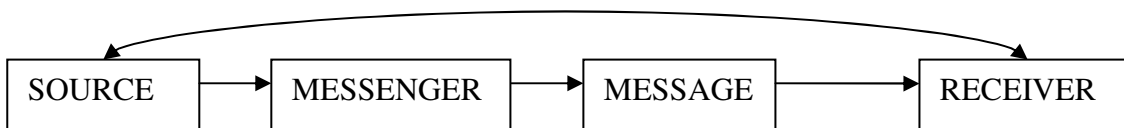
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Executive Summary

When focussing on provision of advice, it is important to consider good practice in respect of:

- the content and form of the message,
- the characteristics of the receiver,
- the characteristics of the messenger, and
- the characteristics of the source of the advice.

Although presented separately they are in fact interconnected and indivisible. As the guide illustrates, advice can be provided in many ways, through many channels and to a heterogeneous and highly differentiated set of receivers.



Advice is evaluated by the farmers and to be effective it must consider:

- Relevance:** Is the advice relevant to the receiver?
Credible: Does the receiver believe the advice to be true? Do they trust the source of the advice?
Importance: Does the receiver recognise that something has to be done?
Responsibility: Does the receiver believe that they ought to do something?
Capacity: Does the receiver believe they can do something about it?
Effectiveness: Does the receiver perceive a difference when they change behaviour?
Visibility: Is it obvious that something is being done?

It is important to recognise and understand how the receiver evaluates the message and to respect and work with their set of values, but it is also important not to let ignorance, inexperience or misinformation go unchallenged.

Advice should be thought of as part of an interactive system of considering, evaluating, deciding and acting and different forms of advice are used at different stages. This can be thought of as a cascade of events:

Advice is available and accessible

Farmers read/hear the advice

Advice is seen as valuable to them (or the cascade will stop)

Advice influences decisions taken

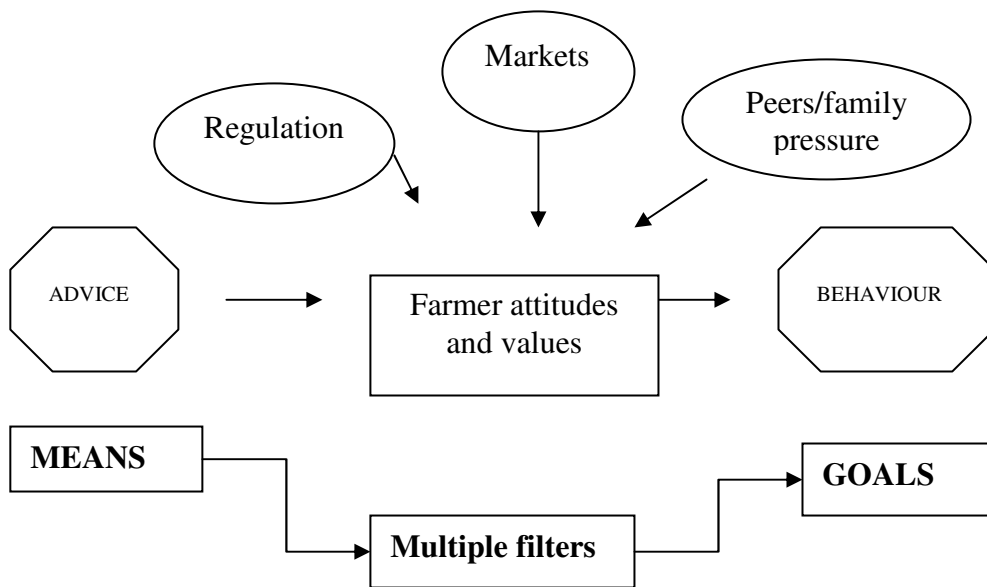
Decisions alter practices

Farmers evaluate change in practices

Evaluation frames how new advice seen

Note: there can be a long period between advice being read/heard and being acted upon due to constraints on ability to act, or changes in willingness to act.

Advice becomes interwoven with many other elements influencing farmer decision making and behavioural change. Therefore any advice provision must be considered as part of the wider context influencing farmer decision making and behaviour – farmers’ capacity to change and their willingness to change. It also has to fit with the wider policy objectives and vision for farming as held by the source of the advice. Advice is not a panacea for all ills, but neither should its role be only narrowly appreciated. Its delivery needs to be designed in full consideration of the wider context in which it will be operating.



2. Principles from Practice

2.1: What is the Goal of the Initiative?

Good practice principle 1:

Farmers need to believe environmental protection is their responsibility, is serious and they can make a difference.

How?

- Ensure advisory messages explain why a change is required, what the advice might achieve and why this goal is desirable.
- Present advice within a positive vision of farming that recognises how many farmers already steward their environment but explains why more needs to be done.
- The goal should be made relevant to the individual farmer, so that national or regional policies need to be translated into local goals.
- The goals should be adapted through time to take account of changing context and new knowledge as this becomes available.
- Ensure success stories are communicated to farmers, illustrating how and where behavioural change has made a difference.

Why?

Our research suggests some farmers may not fully understand the environmental harm they are causing or why changes in behaviour are needed; and others may not feel responsible for looking after the environment. Many perceive non-statutory environmental protection to be incidental to their production or a luxury to be pursued when they have more resources (money, time, staff).

“Farmers need to understand that there is a cost involved downstream when the soil leaves the farm otherwise they will not do anything” (Westcountry Rivers Trust)

*“I don’t think it’s us that is causing the problem, its industry and sewage and stuff like that...”
(Farm Waste Management Plan)*

- When farmers seek to change their behaviour to better align their practices with what they believe to be important, they are more likely to maintain this behaviour without economic incentives or regulatory sanctions.
- Long term behaviour change requires attitudes and values that recognise protection of environment in its own right, not just as a business option.
- Sometimes, an enforced behavioural change that provides *visible* and *demonstrated* benefits can change attitudes, sustaining a change in practice when the driver is removed.
- Conversely, enforcing change when it contradicts a farmer’s value system or local knowledge will require continued incentives and sanctions, or the change will not be sustained.
- It is often difficult to ‘see’ environmental deterioration caused by diffuse pollution and farmers are very influenced by visual cues.

2.2: What are the means for advice provision?

Hooks to encourage advice to be sought

Good practice principle 2:

Farmers need to be convinced of the utility of the advice for them and of the need to change.

How?

- Ensure that any advice provision states why the advice will benefit the farmer. The following are the most common benefits of interest:
 - Resolves a problem or allows them to do what they planned to do more easily.
 - Makes money through increased competitive advantage, increased yields or access to new markets.
 - Saves money through efficiency savings.
 - Avoids prosecution and provides peace of mind; demonstrates cross compliance.
 - Maintains skills, continuing professional development.
 - Addresses a particular interest (bird watching, botany, soil condition).
 - Invests in their farms/properties for the future.

However, these vary from individual to individual so advice provision should use **a combination of hooks to take account of different motivations.**

Why?

Our research illustrated that farmers will pay for advice where they thought it was of value to the management of their enterprise. Conversely, whilst free advice is attractive, it is not always sufficient to attract interest.

*“At the beginning of the project they could not see the point of the initiative nor how they could benefit”
(Birds Eye Pea Project)*

- Change is difficult, expensive and challenging for many reasons relating to issues from practical management through to self-identify and peer pressure therefore the benefits of change must outweigh the costs.

Generic principles about the 'message'

Good practice principle 3:

Messages should be specific, targeted and encourage a response by the receiver.

How?

- Messages should clearly identify how they relate to the farm enterprise and which kinds of farmers/enterprises/sectors the message concerns.
- Messages should use language such as 'you' to make the message relevant and salient to the individual receiver.
- Messages should avoid taking strong value positions unless they can provide a credible refutation of both opposing views (or the receiver will dismiss the message as biased)
- It is easier to provide specific and targeted messages in a dialogue between an advisor and the farmer than using written, blanket media coverage or a call centre.

Why?

"everyone's sat there looking blank and vacant and wants to go home"
(Birds Eye Pea Project)

- Ensuring the message is specific not general means the receiver is more likely to process the information as they can see the relevance and value to their situation.
- The message should be targeted, recognising differences between farming sectors, farming styles and individual personalities, to improve credibility.
- If the message asks questions, the receiver has to process the message.
- If the farmer can explore and validate their own knowledge, they are more likely to judge the advice as practical, robust and credible, and therefore act on it.
- It is important to get the message right first time as changing the story undermines the credibility of the message

Generic principles about Advice Provision

Good practice principle 4:

Different modes of advice provision work in different ways so it is important to use more than one approach, recognising the limitations of each.

How:

- Written advice can be buried by the volume of information received by the farmer – so make the core message distinctive and place it upfront so it is visible at a first glance.
- Use trade/ membership media, e-bulletins, text messages and internet forums that are frequently consulted by farmers.
- Keep the initial information short, colourful, topical and simple but provide easy steps to get more technical and detailed information. The advisors, not the farmers, should do the work of providing this further detail.
- Provide information in paper and electronic format as farmers vary in their preferences and their access to broadband/printers.
- Demonstrate respect for the farmer's knowledge (without reinforcing misunderstandings about the environment)

Why:

Advice is provided through written and verbal (face to face) formats. Written provision of advice occurs through websites, newsletters, information sheets and the media. Print or electronic media often seems most suitable for awareness raising or scanning for options with face to face advice for assessing options and farmer to farmer networks for cementing change. But this will depend on context - what is important is that different layers of information are accessible.

"I quickly scan over it, if it's not relevant I bin it. I'd talk about it with other farmers if it was relevant. Because of our discussion club we're always looking for new ideas" (Farm Waste Management Plan)

- There is an important difference between the act of seeking information and advice and passively becoming aware of issues – the latter is more likely to lead to behavioural change as the advice is seen as relevant and useful.
- Different types of advice have relationships with one another – awareness raising means that farmers may be more likely to seek information giving advice, and in turn, those intrigued by information may wish to pursue technical advice and engage in deeper learning about the topic.
- Multiple sources citing the same message reinforce the importance and credibility of the message, but perceived differences of opinion will undermine the message.
- Demonstration and/or practical experimentation make advice specific and useable for the individual farmer, rather than generic and abstract.
- Individuals vary in the extent of technical information they seek and the degree of detail they need.
- Farmers evaluate advice by comparing different sources.

2.3 Who is the source of the advice?

The advice may come directly from policy makers or via intermediaries who can reinforce, undermine or distort the message.

Provision of advice from policy organisations

Good practice principle 5:

The credibility of the source is based on the reputation of the source organisation.

How?

- Openly recognise previous problems and causes of resentment and illustrate how you have learnt from these in dealings with individuals.
- Consider using intermediaries to build trust for future engagement.

Why?

"I know the guys down here from the FWAG, and they're guys I would trust. They're not frightened to say that Defra got it wrong, or 'this is unworkable', so I would certainly trust them" (Soil Management Initiative)

- Past experiences with an individual or organisation will colour the reception of current advice and being seen to get existing advice wrong will affect the implementation of future initiatives.
- The organisation should be perceived as one that farmers can trust and one that has a shared set of values, vision and agenda for the future of farming in the UK.

Provision of advice by individual policy advisors

Good practice principle 6:

The credibility of the source is based on the reputation of the individual and their relationship with the farmer.

How?

- Ensure the advisor has sufficient evidence to cite and is able to relate the advice to the individual cases (through training and effective recruitment).
- Demonstrate an understanding and interest in the farm enterprise, including being willing to walk the farm.
- Demonstrate respect for the farmer's knowledge (whilst not ignoring misunderstanding or ignorance) – add value to their knowledge by providing further information, research or evidence.
- Ensure advice provision allows the development of a relationship over time meaning staff continuity, longer project time periods and personalised contact.
- Ensure the advisor provides appropriate advice, not just the 'party line' – this means a degree of subsidiarity is required to translate policy to specifics.
- Present advice in farming friendly language.

Why?

"We're very afraid of somebody coming in and telling us what to do, some people are so wound up in their own ways of doing things that they won't listen to anybody else" (Farm Waste Management Plan)

- Credibility is partially determined by technical expertise and ability to translate general technical advice to specific problems; and by the general farming knowledge held.
- Advice may be poorly received if it comes from a 'failed farmer'.
- The advisor will be judged on their inter-personal skills – humour, common sense, confidence, enthusiasm, ability to listen.
- Recognise the advisor's role as a link in networks between farmers and between policy makers and farmers.
- Advice will not be trusted if it is perceived to be biased towards the organisation's agenda.

Provision of advice from other farmers

Good practice principle 7:

Harness existing knowledge networks but be aware of the complexities involved

How?

- Build on and resource existing networks (discussion groups, forums, conferences) rather than set up in competition.
- Advisors could attend existing farmer meetings to give information rather than ask farmers to go to additional events.
- Understand how existing networks function through listening and watching and asking.
- Educate farmers about more appropriate ways of judging who is a 'good farmer'.
- Using farming 'champions' are necessary but not sufficient on their own to effect change.
- Target information provision and awareness raising at those farmers who do not receive advice from other sources (i.e. those too busy to attend farming events or read their mail and/or without a strong farming network – generally smaller farms in marginal positions without full time staff).

Why?

Other farmers are a source of information; a source of evaluation for the advice; a source of capacity to change behaviour (machinery rings, labour, buying groups) and a source of support or criticism for those seeking to change behaviour.

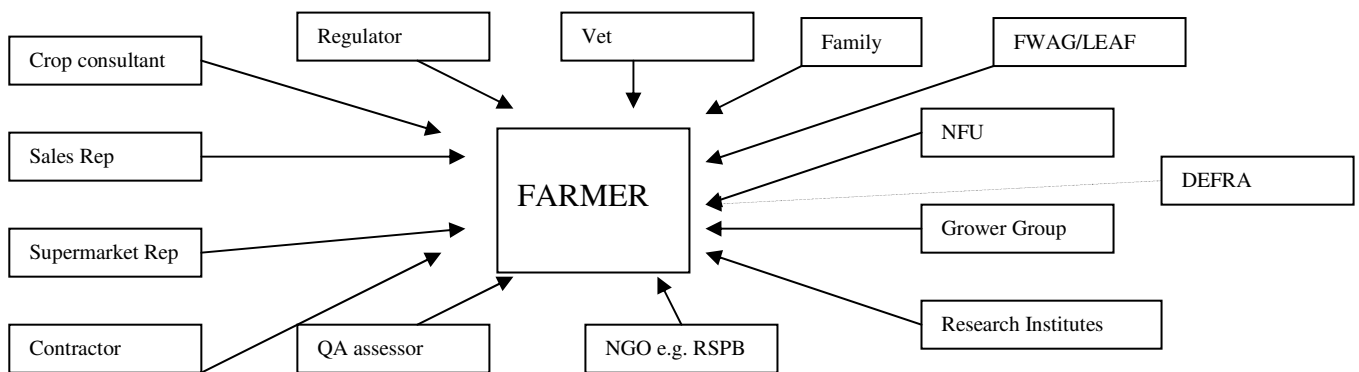
"Markets are good meeting places. I went to the market yesterday and I hadn't been for months. I quite enjoyed it, going in there and having a chin wag. Not just that, but as you say, it's a more realistic price setter than this dead-weight selling" (Westcountry Rivers Trust)

- Advice is more powerful if repeated and reinforced by peers.
- Information and knowledge is continually being circulated – however there is a complex pattern of misinformation alongside information sharing within local social networks.
- Neighbouring farms do not automatically share social or knowledge networks, and 'champions' may reside a long way from others they influence.
- Farmers judge each other, most often by looking over each other's hedges for visible signs of innovation, successful management and economic profitability.
- Whilst networks and social capital can be harnessed to promote behavioural change, they can not be artificially created.
- Farmers evaluate advice by comparing information from multiple sources, and will not accept advice if it differs from that coming from a trusted source.

Provision of advice from other sources

Good practice principle 8:

Recognise other professionals also give advice to farmers and that your message is just one among many.



How?

- Monitor farm information provision to be aware of the messages being given to farmers and correct misinformation where necessary, or at least refer to differences to show the debate is acknowledged.
- Work through, as well as along side, these information sources (i.e. these are also audiences for advice).

Why?

“The old fashioned one-stop shop, where you phoned up ADAS has gone. Now you can phone up any number of advisory people offering the same sort of advice” (Promoter’s Discussion Group)

- Changes to the agricultural knowledge and information networks (changes to advisory services, growth in consultancy etc) has brought fragmentation and disrupted the circulation of information and advice, but a diverse network may be more flexible and therefore resilient over time.
- Be aware that conflicting advice undermines message being provided.
- Although agronomists are most likely to be utilised by arable farmers and vets by livestock farmers, be aware that different farmers vary in their information sources and this is influenced as much by tradition and trust than by the actual type of advisor.

2.4: Who receives this advice?

There are a number of farming styles, farm types, land use sectors and individual personalities. These differences have to be taken into account when targeting and delivering advice. Existing market segmentation or psychological profiling theories can help as long as they are seen as a guide.

Good practice principle 9:

Different farmers have different motivations for seeking, thinking about and acting on advice.

How?

- Consider the possible motivation or trigger for the particular farmer and put advice in this context and this kind of language:
 - Economic savings or gains
 - Fear of regulation or reduces paperwork/hassle
 - Interest in the environment
 - Self-Image as a progressive farmer and/or one that stewards environment
- Establish the context for advice and tailor the message accordingly:
 - Ideally through personal contact and building up a relationship
 - Possibly using a typology of different farming styles, sectors and individual identities
- Contextual issues to consider are:
 - Economic situation, viability, future, successors
 - Farm characteristics – biophysical, shape, size, infrastructure, property rights (short or long term leases, tenancy conditions etc)
 - Farm type (what produced, how, what are the implications for routines)
 - Availability of staff or family labour
- Advocate ‘win-win-win’ solutions that recognise the importance of social and cultural aspects as well as environmental and economic issues.

Why?

“In my opinion it’s not worth chasing productivity at the moment.... it was a practical and financial consideration that motivated me, not the environmental consideration” (Westcountry Rivers Trust)

- Advice will be rejected when it does not fit with the particular farming style, current practices, current infrastructure and self identify of the receiver.
- Advice will be interpreted in the specific farming context for the farmer – are they surviving or thriving, isolated or well embedded, expanding or exiting a sector?
- Advice will be interpreted in the light of their business model and vision for their enterprise.
- Farmers are not only motivated by pure economics – they are also keen to reduce ‘hassle’ which is about their ability to stay in control of their enterprise and ‘drive a tractor not a computer’.
- Culture, tradition, identity and sense of community are part of the complex influences on behaviour.

Good practice principle 10:

The same message will be received differently by different farmers depending on their own experiences and views.

How?

- Deliver advice and training in a way that builds on farmer's skills/local knowledge, respecting their experiences and values whilst encouraging a fresh outlook.
- Deliver advice and training in a way that fosters responsibility and capacity for creating positive change.
- Illustrate how advice adds value to the farmer's existing human and social capital stocks.
- Avoid making assumptions about who will hold what values or set of experiences.

Why?

"Every farm is different. Every farm is totally different. The consumer lumps us all together but every farm is totally different. And every system is different"
(Farm Waste Management Plan)

- The receiver must realise that the information is relevant to them and their practices and activities.
- The receiver must feel the situation is serious and needs action now.
- The receiver must feel they can be part of the solution – for attitudes to convert to behaviour the individual must have a belief in self-efficacy.
- The receiver must feel responsible and obliged to act.
- Advice will be needed by those with less experience than those with more experience.
- Advice, and the attendant risks, costs and benefits will be interpreted in light of their own values.
- Advice and the attendant risks, costs and benefits will be interpreted in light of their own personalities and self identity e.g. are they progressive or traditional (note there is not necessarily any correlation with age!).
- Behavioural change requires learning thus the receiver should have an ability and a desire to learn and increase their knowledge.

Good practice principle 11:

Decisions, especially strategic decisions, are normally made collectively by the farm partners or the family; and management is often carried out by others (e.g. labourers, contractors).

How?

- Think about the size and composition of the farm labour force and target the advice to all those concerned.
- Recognise, and be sensitive to, any family dynamics regarding changes in practice.
- Be ready and able to present a business case for any uptake of advice.

Why?

"I expect if we wanted to make any major changes they wouldn't be too happy if we didn't discuss it with them, which we would, but I think it is part of the family unit, whatever. You do things together."

(Farming Forward Project)

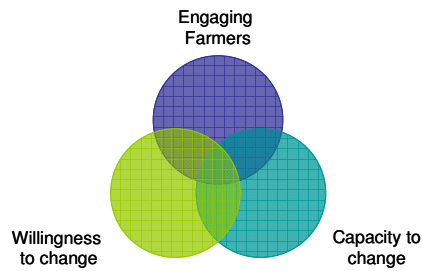
"I said do they [contractors] ever follow the farmer's management plan and they said, never. Not once"

(Farm Waste Management Plan)

- Family dynamics effect the strategic direction of the farm enterprise and can either block or enable innovation and change.
- The ability to change may be constrained by the agendas of business partners or the requirements of those providing the capital.
- Actual practical change is reliant on the skills and willingness of the labour force, ranging from a single farmer, through family help to multiple labourers and/or contractors.

2.5 Putting Advice in Context: Relationship to behaviour

Throughout the guide, there has been reference to the need to link how to engage farmers and provide them advice with the processes of farmers evaluating this advice and deciding if they are able or willing to change their behaviour. This relationship is illustrated by the adjacent figure.



Good practice principle 12:

Behavioural change is long term and may be prevented, or delayed, by constraints and/or shifting evaluations of the costs versus benefits of change.

How?

- Target the right kind of advice at farmers at the various stages in the cycle shown below – some need to be aware of opportunities associated with a change, those seeking a change need advice on options, whilst others might want to be able to evaluate the costs, benefits and effects of a particular option. Some may be 'locked in' to existing practices and therefore unable to act on advice given.



- Evaluation of whether advice has influenced behaviour needs a long time to see if it worked or not (although the longer the time period, the more difficult it becomes to untangle the complex influences of other issues).
- Receivers may be aware of the missed opportunity but are unable to act on advice (so don't rub salt into wounds) but (a) recognise if they are in a position to take the advice or not (b) put energy into overcoming the constraints for those 'locked in'.

Why?

"we decided it would be too much hassle and likely to place too many restrictions on existing practice without providing sufficient financial incentive to change practice"
(Soil Management Initiative)

- Behavioural change has a number of components from becoming aware of the need to change, through to embedding a new change into habit, tradition and farm practices.
- There are key periods in this cycle when the farmer is more able and more willing to consider changing their practice.
- Advice can be given and be dormant for many years until the farmer is able to act on it.

Good practice principle 13:

Advice is interpreted as part of a wider set of influences on behaviour including economic incentives and/or regulatory sanctions.

How?

- Where possible provide a grant for the capital work, time, infrastructure or labour required or, at least some information on economic costs and savings of these activities.
- Be able to pass on contacts and information about other sources of grants or ways to overcome financial constraints or maximise price.
- Ensure that the advice is not contradicted by economic/market signals or regulatory regimes (or at least be aware of these contradictions and be able to counter them).
- Illustrate how behavioural change can reduce the risk of prosecution, illustrate cross compliance and stimulate a lighter regulatory touch.

Why?

“the NVZ rules helped to bring this to our attention and made us more careful” (Farm Waste Management Project)

“Now that cross compliance and ELS have arrived farmers appreciate the work that has been done as it has put them one step ahead of the game” (Birds Eye Peas Project)

- Particularly where financial constraints are pressing, providing grants will make any behavioural change more attractive and remove the financial constraint (this is necessary but not sufficient, particularly if match funding is required).
- Any enterprise will be influenced by processes that reduce costs of inputs or increase the value of the outputs – this can amplify the attractiveness of advice or undermine it if the market/subsidies are pushing in another direction.
- Most farmers dislike regulation, many fear prosecution but most recognise the need for a regulatory backstop – farmers are more likely to respond to advice that may result in a lighter regulatory burden and reduce the risk of transgression.

2.6 Putting Advice in Context: The bigger picture

The context in which advice is given will influence the reception of the message. Sections of this guide have highlighted the role of family or staff dynamics and the social network as a source of advice, criticism or support of behavioural change but broader societal, spatial and temporal contexts have to be considered as well. These may not be anything that Defra can influence, but they are important considerations nonetheless.

Good practice principle 14:

The interpretation of advice is influenced by perceptions of the changing role of farming in society and by social changes affecting the 'family farm'.

How?

- These socio-economic changes have to be reflected in the language used in advice provision and in the assumptions made about who is getting the advice, when they might want/need this information and how they might act on it.
- Where possible, link the advice or information to other broader campaigns by farmers to farmers to illustrate how this contributes to a positive vision for farming and land use. (use branding/tag lines/logos and badges to achieve this).
- Publicise how farming can improve and protect the environment and improve food quality by highlighting and promoting farmers following good practice (but ensure that environmental protection is not seen as optional or a luxury).

Why?

"What I have always wanted to do is bring the public out and show them what we are doing, you know, what was important to me was the fact that, you know, they didn't actually hate us, they just didn't actually know what we were doing" (Farming Forward Project)

- Some farmers are sensitive to public opinion (particularly if this is directly connected to consumer demand) and seek greater recognition and support for their role in producing environmental goods and services.
- Family and enterprise dynamics (relationship with staff, contractors etc) is being influenced by the changing nature of on-farm, off-farm employment which is in turn influenced by changing gender roles, the influence of ICT, the growth in service employment in rural areas and the increased mobility of workers.
- Social networks of place (e.g. exchanges with neighbours over the hedge or at the mart) are influenced by the bifurcation of the farming into consolidating, expanding farmers and residual family farms, the closure of local markets and farm shows, and increased competition for profit, market advantage and access to land or labour.
- Social networks of interest (provision of support and knowledge through discussion with peers) may be enabled by the improvements in ICT although emphasis is put on visiting the demonstration or the farmer.

Good practice principle 15:

The relationship between advice and behaviour changes through time.

How:

- Ensure the awareness raising material highlights how long the environment takes to recover from past practices.
- Ensure the advice explains when visible changes are likely to be seen.
- Utilise experiments to demonstrate visible differences linked to changes in practice.

Why:

“When agricultural practices go through a period of transition things often get worse before they get better” (Promoter’s Discussion Group)

His cows are no longer going into the river which is good. However, there have been no noticeable improvements in water quality (Westcountry Rivers Trust).

- Environmental change is often long term, whilst many of the variables influencing farmer decision making are medium to short term.
- Behavioural change is cemented by visible signs of success but it often takes years to see a visible change in the environment.
- Behaviour now may be mitigating damage created by actions in the past (including actions encouraged or required by prior agencies).

Good practice principle 16:

Change occurs at several levels, from practices in an individual field to changes in society; and is affected both by 'top down' messages from Europe and 'bottom-up' activities by local farmers.

How:

- Design and implement policies on inter-related scales and pay as much attention to the relationships between each level (farm to local, local to regional, regional to national) as to the level themselves.
- Look for common ground between the needs of national or regional policy programmes and the needs of individual farmers and exploit these.
- Present the same programme differently to different audiences – emphasising the national or regional delivery of public goods to policy makers but the opportunities and hooks to the individual farmers.
- Design programmes that take subsidiarity seriously.
- Empower advisors (and provide them with the suitable skills) to adapt policies to local circumstances.

Why:

“often you want someone who’s got 40-50 acres, not somebody who’s got 500 acres because they will look at it in a completely different way. It’s the little fish that are struggling, for want of a better word, to be able to achieve those things. And in some cases they probably have got the most relevant pieces of land from a conservation point of view” (Farming Forward Project)

- Decision making leading to behavioural change takes place at household, collective, local and societal levels.
- The constraints and opportunities offered by following the advice will vary depending on the specific field, local and regional conditions.
- Farmers respond to advice where they feel it is targeted, specific and allows them to be an equal partner in making decisions about their enterprise, rather than an automaton responding to some national or EU policy directive.

Policy Design or Appraisal Checklist

- What is the vision of farming you seek to present?
- What is the problem you are trying to fix?
- What kind of advice do you need – awareness raising; option evaluation; implementation issues?
- Is the advice accessible and available?
- Is the advice relevant?
- Is the advice going to be perceived as valuable to the farmer?
- Is the advice going to be perceived as noteworthy?
- Who needs to get the advice?
- Are you targeting everyone not just farmers but their intermediaries too?
- Do they know it is a problem and why?
- Is the action required perceived as reasonable for a farmer to do?
- Are there things going on that might affect how the advice is received?
- What are the existing messages about this topic – have these changed over time?
- What do other sources say on the topic?
- How are you going to provide the advice?
- Is it one way transfer of information or discussion/debate, social learning?
- What hooks are you using and why?
- Have you tailored the advice to specifics?
- What are the market and regulatory signals the advice is competing/complementing?
- Can farmers understand and influence the message?
- Who is providing the advice?
- Is the source perceived as credible?
- Can you use existing networks and influential actors?
- What is the reputation of those providing the advice?
- Do the individual advisors have the required skills?
- Do you ask farmers what they think?
- What is the situation of the receiver – do they feel able and willing to change?
- What are their constraints?
- How do you know this – relationship, assumption?
- Can they expect to see they have made a difference?
- Can you demonstrate success and benefits from behavioural change?
- Is the action perceived as legitimate?

Summary:

What Farmers Tend to Like	What Farmers Tend to Dislike
More time on the farm, less time in the office Efficient & effective processes Learning & improving their practices Investing in their enterprise Being their own boss Feeling good about themselves Being respected & appreciated	Hassle & paperwork Perceived time wasting Perceived waste of money Duplication of effort Servicing other people's agendas Impairing their options/ability to manage

Further Reading:

Burton R et al., (2006) Influencing positive environmental behaviour among farmers and land managers - a literature review.

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Dwyer J et al., (2007) Influencing positive environmental behaviour among farmers and land managers – Final Report

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