

# **Approaches to agriculture and biodiversity in Western Europe**

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Conservation in the UK is weird. It is rarely appreciated how different conservation is in the UK and some other western European countries from the approaches adopted in North America and much of the rest of the world. This difference can largely be explained by the differing ecological history. This difference has profound consequences for landscape planning, agri-environment schemes and the attitudes toward changes such as GM crops.

There is currently considerable debate in the UK as to what land should be used for. The simple objective of maximising food production is now being replaced with more complicated multiple objectives including the provision of ecosystem services. An option is to have multiple objectives with different objectives in different locations.

Predicting the consequences of future changes will require combining economic, social and ecological information. I will describe a collaborative project that brings these components together to predict the response to economic and social change and account for the variation in agricultural methods across farms.

Finally I will argue that we need a different approach to conservation science. Copying the idea of evidence-based medicine we need an equivalent science of evidence-based conservation in which we synthesis the accumulated body of evidence and use this as a basis for decision making. We are using the website [www.ConservationEvidence.com](http://www.ConservationEvidence.com) to help achieve these objectives.