Impact of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Britain: implications for rural studies

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Abstract

This paper assesses the impact of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in terms of its implications for the discipline of rural studies. In particular, it focuses on the position of agriculture in rural economy and society, the standing of the government after its management of the outbreak, and the performance of the new devolved regional tiers of government. After a brief review of the history and aggregate impact of the outbreak, the general themes of the paper are explored from a range of Welsh case-study evidence, showing the impact on farm structures and the environment, rural communities and their social life. The major conclusions are that the unanticipated magnitude of effect of the outbreak should direct more attention to the nature of the space shared as a public good by agriculture and rural tourism; that the loss of trust in administrations as a result of the specific management of the outbreak reveals scope for new approaches in the study of governance and partnership at a rural level; and the opportunity for the devolved administrations to emphasise a difference in perspective, on both the outbreak and rural issues in general, highlights potentially widening fault-lines in the constitutional reform process, especially as discussion over the future of European rural policies proceed.

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1. Introduction

The 2001 outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) spread to France, the Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands and Northern Ireland, but was overwhelmingly concentrated in Britain. Especially in Britain, it caused a physical, psychological and symbolic upset, and may prove to have been a crucial turning point in the intricate relations between predominantly urbanised economies and their rural counterparts. This paper is an attempt to explore some of the more fundamental implications of the crisis for rural studies in general, albeit from an initial and exploratory perspective. Support is provided by case-study evidence, collected in Wales in the period during which the outbreak occurred.

During the outbreak, media scrutiny was intense, projecting shocking images of the management of the outbreak by culling and carcass disposal, and giving vent to furious controversies over the scientific and economic issues concerned. Emerging from that close attention, more wide-ranging issues of public concern were apparent. These included food safety (following the BSE problem), rural–urban equity (as the outbreak came in the wake of the rural-inspired fuel protests of October 2000), and the performance of the UK government under pressure.

For rural studies, perhaps the most important message is that the role of farming in both rural economy and society needs some reassessment. Its declining economic importance (employing 1.9 per cent of the labour force and accounting for an even smaller fraction, 0.8 per cent, of Gross Domestic Product in 2001: DEFRA, 2002, p. 76) has led many writers, such as Murdoch and Marsden (1994), to explore the shift in the countryside from “production” to “consumption” space, and concentrate on the conflicts that arise as a result. During the FMD outbreak it rapidly became clear that, although the government initially treated its management as a purely agricultural problem, the strict movement restrictions to contain its spread were causing far more severe spill over effects with respect to rural tourism and recreational activity. The systemic
importance of farming, and (highlighted by the outbreak) its interdependence with a range of other land-uses, surely merits greater attention.

A further outcome is that the role of the UK Government (together with its network of relations with the European Union, relevant agencies and sectoral interests) in the conduct of agricultural and rural policy has been exposed in a new light. Even the three (limited)\(^1\) inquiries set up in the wake of the FMD outbreak have questioned the competency of government in reaction to the challenge it faced. They have also heightened the profile of, and given fresh impetus to, development of coherent and integrated policies to deal with rural problems.

The Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food (2002) was charged with examining how to create a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector. It called for a more market-oriented agriculture, simultaneously reconnected with both improved rural environmental quality and greater consumer involvement. Its recommendations echoed the current European Agriculture Commissioner’s aspiration for a shift from production subsidies to better-targeted rural development and agri-environment measures. In the jargon of the European Union, this implies a further shift from “Pillar One” to “Pillar Two” of the Common Agricultural Policy, most recently reinforced by the Mid-Term Review (European Commission, 2002).

The Royal Society’s report (2002) on the scientific implications of the outbreak recognised the unpreparedness and deficiency of government veterinary and scientific services. It stipulated measures such as better contingency planning, early warning systems, and more research effort to allow both routine and emergency vaccination against a range of damaging animal diseases to become the response of first choice in dealing with future outbreaks. The issue of vaccination as a control measure during the outbreak attracted considerable controversy, not least in the media. The government did come to the conclusion, during the outbreak, that it should be used in Cumbria, one of the areas most severely affected by the disease (and later, also in Wales). In the event, however, opposition by the farmers’ unions and food industry concerns about consumer resistance to vaccinated meat prevented its deployment.

The third, Lessons to be Learned Inquiry (2002), noted among other issues that frequent changes of policy and lack of respect for local knowledge severely damaged the reputation of government. It concluded that:

Large parts of the farming and wider rural community became mistrustful of government. The public and the media—which had initially been broadly supportive of the Government’s approach—turned against it. In particular, the policies of culling apparently healthy animals, within 3 km of infected premises, or on contiguous premises, became very unpopular, despite their contribution to disease control (2002, p. 9).

The legitimacy of Westminster government as deliverer of rural policy measures, already under suspicion as a result of existing rural–urban tensions, has been further damaged by the FMD outbreak. Perhaps in search of a rural advocacy role, the Countryside Agency (2001) issued a highly critical report during the outbreak itself, drawing attention to the imbalance in the way in which different sectors were being treated. Compensation paid to farms for culled livestock was, unarguably, relatively generous, whereas the sums devoted to mitigation of the far more serious impact on the non-farm rural economy were meagre.

There is an additional twist in terms of policy delivery: the fragmentation resulting from devolution of responsibility of rural policy to elected administrations in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. In Scotland, the extent of administrative and legislative transfer allowed the Scottish Executive to manage the outbreak in a way that the ‘Lessons to be Learned’ inquiry recognised as better than elsewhere. In contrast, in Wales the weaker framework of devolution was a problem for the responsible Minister. It led him to complain publicly, in the journal of the Institute of Welsh Affairs, that although local responsibility rested with him, overall powers of decision-making remained in Westminster, leading to the worst of all possible outcomes (Jones, 2001).

Having set the context, the remainder of the paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, the bare facts of the 2001 outbreak are briefly described. Thereafter attention is focussed on case-study evidence from rural Wales. We have chosen this particular area in preference to others on two grounds.\(^2\) Firstly, it illustrates the complexities of post-devolution delivery of rural policy on Britain; e.g., the Welsh Assembly Government felt obliged to claim, in a press release, that “Haskins’ (i.e., Lord Haskins, appointed as Rural Recovery Co-ordinator for areas hit by Foot and Mouth Disease in England) writ does not run here” (Welsh Assembly Government, 13 July 2002, Col. 281).

\(^1\)The UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair, responded to a parliamentary question on the need for a public inquiry as follows: “I do not agree that it must be a public tribunal inquiry...it was sensible to have a different type of inquiry in order to produce an inquiry more quickly”. Hansard, 13 July 2002, Col. 281.

\(^2\)For detailed analysis of the effects in the North East of England, see Phillipson et al. (2002); for Cumbria, Bennett et al. (2002); for Devon, Turner and Sheppard (2001); and for the south west of England as a whole, Gripaios et al. (2001).
2. The 2002 FMD outbreak in Britain

The first outbreak of FMD was confirmed on the 21st February 2001 at an abattoir and adjacent farm near Brentwood, Essex. The source of the outbreak was traced to a farm in Heddon-on-the-Wall in Northumbria. In retrospect, the Lessons to be Learned Inquiry identified the failure to impose an immediate ban on animal movements (orders restricting the movement of livestock susceptible to FMD were not imposed until 3 days later) as contributing to the speed and extent of spread of the outbreak. Changes (at least, since the last outbreak in 1967) in livestock marketing, slaughtering and processing systems and a consequent rise in volumes and distances of animal movements contributed to this rapidity and magnitude of the impact. Subsequently, the disease developed throughout the UK, resulting in 2030 confirmed cases involving 1.3 million animals, and continued for 221 days. The outbreaks were concentrated in Northern and South West England, Scotland, the West Midlands and Wales, although there were smaller clusters occurring elsewhere. As such, it was one of the largest epidemics in history, and one the costliest in terms of government expenditure and loss of incomes.

Movement restrictions covered access to land in areas designated as ‘infected’. As a preventative measure, and on the basis of existing public support, a further Statutory Instrument allowing local authorities to close footpaths and other public rights of way was made on the 27 February. Most local authorities chose a precautionary approach, so that by early March public access to nearly all footpaths was prohibited. Together with other voluntary restrictions, this produced a public impression that the countryside was ‘closed’. Although the order was subsequently amended to reverse the effect of a blanket closure on public access to the countryside, it proved difficult to persuade rural local authorities to abandon the controls, and even by 17 May only 26 per cent of footpaths were open. Some disease-free counties, including Ceredigion, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire and East Sussex, excluded the public from footpaths access for even longer than elsewhere.

The other, more dramatic public effect was the lurid media portrayal of the effects of the methods used to control the spread of disease. These predominantly involved rapid culling and incineration of carcasses, although some were buried in landfill sites and, towards the end of the outbreak, some were rendered. These images ensured that FMD was rarely absent from the public gaze. The number of cases, both suspected and substantiated, ran beyond the veterinary and support resources needed to deal with them. In late March, the government called on the logistic support of the armed forces to assist in control efforts. It also introduced various policies of pre-emptive slaughtering to stamp out the disease. Although never fully implemented, this could have involved slaughter of all sheep within a 3-km radius of an outbreak; slaughter of animals on holdings contiguous with those affected by an outbreak; and slaughtering on evidence of suspicious contacts that might have spread the disease. In some instances, discretion based on local veterinary knowledge and intelligence was allowed, whereas in others, the policies were applied rigidly. At around the same time, the effects of movement restrictions on animals with limited forage were recognised by providing compensation for slaughter on welfare grounds. In fact, the ratio of confirmed cases to total numbers of animals culled in the management of the outbreak was just over 1–4; details of the breakdown by animal species, and basis of culling, are provided in Table 1.

As animal slaughter accelerated, public attitudes towards the management of the outbreak were transformed. There were delays in disposal, the media vividly exploited the resulting images of heaps of decaying carcasses and vast pyres, and environmental concerns emerged over the burial pits used as alternatives to

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3 The statistics in this section are derived from both the Lessons to be Learned Inquiry (2002), and the National Audit Office (2002) report on the management of the outbreak.

4 The extraordinary emotion generated by the outbreak is symbolised by the story of Phoenix the calf, reprieved by the intervention of the Prime Minister after apparently being given a lethal injection, and surviving for 6 days in a heap of culled carcasses: a report of this story appeared in the Daily Telegraph, 27 May 2001.
 cremation. The UK Parliament’s Select Committee on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs observed that “(t)he relentless slaughter of animals as a result of the contiguous cull policy, and the consequential burning pyres of carcasses, or their burial in huge pits, caused vast and understandable anguish” (House of Commons, 2002). Media interest also stoked concerns about the mounting private, uncompensated consequential costs of the outbreak. To some extent these impacted on farms without an outbreak of the disease and unable to claim compensation for culling livestock on welfare grounds, but the effects were more particularly acute on the non-farm rural economy, following cancellation of public events, and a virtually complete absence of tourism activity. Although the government recognised this early on by establishing a Rural Task Force to coordinate aid to non-farm rural businesses, for various reasons (including EU competition rules) the scale of its support was skewed significantly towards the compensation for the destruction of farm livestock.

A number of studies during the outbreak attempted to estimate the overall economic effects (e.g., Blake et al., 2001; Midmore, 2001a, b). Movement restrictions caused many farms difficulties in marketing their livestock, and also incurred higher costs required due to extra feed purchases; industries both up- and downstream lost business. Closure of public access and cancellation of all rural events curtailed the revenues of many rural service businesses, and also had indirect effects on other sectors. One of the more authoritative reports (if only because produced with access to internal government information resources) was that produced by a combined DEFRA/DCMS (2002) economics team. Their main conclusions, that the costs to public and private sectors, respectively, were £3 billion and £5 billion, are broken down in Table 2.

### Table 1

Animals slaughtered for disease control and welfare purposes (England, Scotland and Wales)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease control</th>
<th>Welfare</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infected premises</td>
<td>Dangerous contact contiguous premises</td>
<td>Dangerous contact non-contiguous premises (including 3 km cull)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep</td>
<td>968,000</td>
<td>991,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>301,000</td>
<td>196,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>22,000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,291,000</td>
<td>1,237,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Table 2

Sectoral economic effects of FMD (£m), 2001–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectoral category</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/food chain</td>
<td>−3120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensated by government*</td>
<td>2580</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct effect</td>
<td>−525</td>
<td>−525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td>−85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism (range)</td>
<td>−4485 to −5340</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct effect</td>
<td>−2700 to −1700 to −825 to −3205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect effect</td>
<td>−1835 to −2180</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Impacts directly compensated by the Exchequer are excluded.

The peak of the outbreak was reached during its sixth week; the largest number of cases reported in a day was 50, on the 30 March. Thereafter, although the outbreak recurred in significant local concentrations of infections, the progress decelerated substantially. Slaughterings, however, did not; their peak, particularly continuing on the basis of dangerous contact, was much later in the cycle and especially (and controversially) involved sheep suspected of carrying the disease. The last case of FMD was confirmed on 30 September; the last Infected Area status, covering parts of Northern England, was lifted on 28 November.

### 3. Case-study evidence from Wales

It is against this background that our case-study evidence is placed. Wales, as a region, provides a microcosm of the course of the outbreak as a whole. Like other affected regions, its agriculture is predominantly livestock-based, with most production concentrated in disadvantaged upland areas. Correspondingly,
it has suffered disproportionately from the effects of the agricultural recession, which started in the mid-1990s and has continued up to the present. Its main causes are numerous, and include the high value of the pound relative to the Euro and other European currencies, the collapse in world commodity prices at the end of the 1990s, the consolidation of industries upstream and downstream of farming, and the extra costs imposed on UK farmers due to the BSE crisis (Welsh Assembly Government, 2001b, p. 43). Since 1997, total agricultural income in Wales has fallen from £210 million, to £46 million in the year 2001, a fall of 79 per cent (MAFF, 1999; DEFRA, 2002). The total number of people employed in farming in Wales, at just over 55,000, (5 per cent of the Welsh workforce) has declined by over 7600 between the same period, and the proportion of farmers working part-time has increased from 39 per cent in 1997 to 48 per cent in 2000. Holdings are still relatively small in economic terms, even though the number has declined by about 10 per cent since 1997 (Welsh Assembly Government, various years). Despite this, agriculture in Wales is economically more important, overall, than in Britain as a whole. It accounts for 1.2 per cent of GDP and agriculture in the rural areas supports 8 per cent of full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs (Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, 2001).

Tourism is also a major constituent of the rural economy, with increasing appeal as a catalyst for economic, social, cultural and environmental change (Youell, 2001). With respect to employment, it supports up to 100,000 jobs directly and indirectly in the Welsh economy, accounting for more than 10 per cent of the workforce (Wales Tourist Board, 2000). In Wales as a whole, the biggest growth trend in recent years has been in the short (1–3 nights) holiday market, accounting for 32 per cent of all domestic holiday spending (Wales Tourist Board, 2001a). It is estimated that total annual expenditure by overnight and day visitors in the rural areas of Wales is of the order of £1 billion, representing 50 per cent of total Welsh tourism revenue (Newidiem, 1999), and in these areas it has been estimated that tourism supports 25,000 direct jobs (Wales Rural Forum, 1998). Farm tourism is a particularly well-represented type of rural tourist activity, contributing significantly to Wales’ image as a holiday destination. It currently contributes at least £10 million per annum to the incomes of some 1600 farming families in Wales, typically representing between 15 and 50 per cent of their annual incomes (Wales Tourist Board, 2001a).

Certainly, the impact of the FMD outbreak was profound across rural Wales in economic terms. The 118 confirmed cases in Wales represented nearly 6 per cent of total cases in mainland Britain (WLGA, 2002), and led to the slaughter and subsequent disposal of 1.25 million animals. The economic effects have been estimated, firstly in a report for the Welsh Development Agency (Midmore, 2001b, cited by Welsh Assembly Government, 2002) and secondly by the Economic Advice Division (2002) of the Welsh Assembly Government itself. Although the latter were more cautious in terms of the relative impact on GDP, the range of predictions of these studies is broadly similar, suggesting reductions in 2001 of between 0.5 and 1 per cent. A comparison of the estimates is provided in Table 3.

However, Midmore broke down the estimates by regional division of Wales, and showed that whilst the absolute magnitudes of impact were larger elsewhere, in relative terms more economic damage occurred in the areas where cases were concentrated, Anglesey, Powys and Gwent. For example, the Mid Wales division suffered a greater percentage reduction in GDP (two and a half times the Wales national average) and a rather larger potential impact on unemployment (half a percentage point more).

These estimates highlight the critical importance of the tourism sector in rural Wales, with many tourism businesses experiencing relatively high losses of revenue as a result of FMD outbreak. Because of the multi-sectoral nature of the industry, a range of enterprises was affected, from hotels, farms, guesthouses and tourist attractions to transport operators and activity centres. A survey of tourism businesses in late spring 2001 suggested that in the early months of the outbreak, three quarters of respondents had experienced an average 60 per cent reduction in revenue, with similar declines in advance bookings (Wales Tourist Board, 2001b). Small providers of serviced tourism accommodation in inland, rural areas reported the largest losses, and in many cases these were diversified farms. Youell (2001) suggested an average 75 per cent loss of turnover in Welsh rural tourism enterprises

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WAG Study (2002)</th>
<th>WDA Study (Midmore, 2001b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncompensated farm losses</td>
<td>£50–£90</td>
<td>£49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food supply chain losses</td>
<td>£20–£30</td>
<td>£35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism losses</td>
<td>£70–£100</td>
<td>£248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£140–£220</td>
<td>£332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
during the months of February–September, amounting to £596 million.

To understand the repercussions of these aggregate statistics in terms of individual, business and community responses to FMD in Wales, and their implications for rural restructuring, we have utilised survey material from research commissioned by the Countryside Council for Wales during the latter period of the outbreak itself. This exploration of the extent to which FMD affected individual livelihoods, and how individuals and policymakers planned to react to the crisis in Wales, was accomplished through three in-depth studies: a telephone survey of farmers; a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants in the institutional framework engaged in dealing with the FMD outbreak; and a participatory rapid rural appraisal of the impact in two communities of similar size. The communities were selected to reflect, in one case, the situation in an Infected Area, and in the other, the correspondingly different but equally profound circumstances in a rural community outside the Infected Area. Each of these studies is now examined in turn.

3.1. Telephone survey of farmer’s intentions

The aim of the telephone survey was to examine how the FMD outbreak had affected the outlook of farmers in Wales. Structured questionnaires were completed by telephone with a sample including 21 farms with a confirmed outbreak of FMD, 14 farms where a contiguous cull had been carried out, 13 farms where welfare culls had been carried out, and 71 farms with no livestock culls at all. The questions concerned an assessment of the direct impacts of FMD in terms of livestock culled and restocking plans; impacts on future farming practices; and the likely impacts for restructuring of the rural economy of Wales.

Control measures employed to curb the spread of FMD involved the cull and subsequent disposal of all livestock, and this was the position of sample farms caught up in an outbreak of FMD. In contrast, sample farms with culling under the Livestock (Welfare) Disposal Scheme lost, on average, only around one-third of their livestock. With regard to restocking plans, just under half of the sample group affected by culling was planning to replace all culled livestock, with a further quarter of farmers planning to partially restock. Eight per cent of farmers had decided not to restock, while the remaining fifth were still undecided at the time of interview.

There were, however, significant differences in the restocking plans between farms that had experienced different culling regimes. On FMD infected farms, all farms were planning either to restock, or were undecided. In contrast, a significant fraction of the farms subject to contiguous or welfare culling were considering not restocking. Farms that had welfare culls were, however, most likely to fully restock all culled livestock (Table 4). Further analysis of restocking plans by livestock enterprise reveals that more sheep and dairy farmers were intending to fully, or nearly fully, restock culled livestock than beef farmers.

Farms with culls were almost equally split with regard to whether there were likely to be problems with restocking plans or not; of those who envisaged problems, 47 per cent thought that they were likely to encounter problems finding quality replacements, while 44 per cent stated that the cost of replacements was an issue of concern.

The telephone interviews also suggest that the FMD outbreak will have a significant impact on farm restructuring (Table 5). This is particularly the case with respect to farm expansion and intensification. Prior to the outbreak, 70 per cent of farms had planned to continue at current levels of production, but this was reduced to only 47 per cent afterwards; the fact was reinforced by significant change in support for less intensive farming methods (an increase of 16 per cent). A small number (4 per cent) were planning to give up farming altogether, and there was an increase in numbers planning to retire in the near future. A further 5 per cent plan to reduce the amount of paid labour on their farm. Unsurprisingly this suggests that, if these views are representative of agriculture in Wales as a whole, further contraction in the labour force as a result of the FMD outbreak is to be expected.

Major alternatives being considered included reductions in stocking intensities (54 per cent), changing to alternative livestock enterprises (23 per cent), or signing up to an agri-environment scheme (also 23 per cent); only 7 per cent, however, were thinking about converting to organic farming. Significantly, on infected farms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infected farms</th>
<th>Contiguous cull</th>
<th>Welfare cull</th>
<th>All farms with culls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully restock</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially restock</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not restock</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
there was a clear demand for advisory services to help plan for the future, although this was less evident on other farms.

The results of the telephone survey overall suggest that the outbreak of FMD was a severe shock to already fragile confidence in farming. In the aftermath of the impact it appears that some of the more extreme implications of these attitudes, in terms of de-stocking and a labour shakeout, have not materialised (in June 2002, Welsh breeding sheep and cattle numbers were at 91 and 94 per cent, respectively, of their corresponding levels in 2000; Office of National Statistics, 2002: although total numbers of farmers and workers remained broadly stable, regular workers decreased to 82 per cent of the 2000 total and more principal farmers worked part-time. De-intensification, providing potential environmental quality improvements, may be a side effect, especially if allied to participation in agri-environment schemes. Section 3.2 supplements and clarifies this perspective on the farming impact of the outbreak.

3.2. Survey of key informants on the impact of FMD on agricultural structures

The aim of the key informant survey was to obtain expert perspectives from people able to anticipate the likely impacts of the FMD outbreak on rural restructuring. The six key informants interviewed were drawn from farming, tourism, land-based and environmental organisations, and a representative of the banking sector. These semi-structured interviews took place in late August and early September, and were recorded to support note taking. The question guide covered five areas concerned with the impact of the FMD: on the structure, size and specialisation of holdings; the overall structure of agricultural output; the resulting implications for the rural economy; for rural communities; and for the environment.

Nearly every key informant stressed the uncertainty of the existing situation. Interviews were undertaken at a time of reports of fresh outbreaks in Wales, and continuing anxiety about the possibility of further outbreaks on the scale seen in April and May. Thus decisions in response to the outbreak were being postponed; there was also uncertainty about the nature and extent of any future radical reforms to the CAP. In the longer term, the outbreak was seen more as intensifying existing pressures for change, than having a qualitatively different effect. Therefore, present trends towards enlargement and specialisation of holdings were expected to continue, but on farms directly affected by an outbreak of FMD, some prospects for de-intensification were anticipated.

A consensus emerged suggesting that there were really only two major alternatives facing farm businesses following the outbreak of FMD. The first was to concentrate on primary production, leading to larger units and increased specialisation. The second, perhaps riskier, option was to add more value to the core output that the farm produces, either by increasing its environmental and leisure merit, or to improve processing and marketing of output, although the feeling was that scope for further farm diversification was restricted. Paradoxically, some added stimulus to the former may come in the very short term from the FMD movement controls, which demonstrated expansion potential to farms forced to carry greater numbers of stock than normal. However, the future structure of output was seen to depend more on CAP reform than the specific impact of the FMD outbreak; one informant argued that “…only a major expansion of Tir Gofal9 will turn some of these farms around”. A shift of payments from commodity support to environmental incentives and rural development assistance was considered highly compatible with a shift from quantity to quality in production: “…high number production will go out, if continental markets cannot be re-accessed very soon”. The optimal strategy for farming business recovery would involve support for efficiency improvements from rationalisation, and exploration of opportunities for diversification. Farms, which are in general income-poor but asset-rich, would be well placed to take advantage of their position to exploit a range of opportunities. However, a high proportion of

Table 5
Changes to farmer’s goals following the FMD outbreak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal prior to FMD outbreak (%)</th>
<th>Goal now (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue with current levels of production</td>
<td>70.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm more intensively</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm less intensively</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversify farm income (agriculture-related)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversify farm income (non-agricultural)</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave farming for another job</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass farm on to children</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retire soon</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand farm business</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent farm out</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8The organisations represented by interviewees were the National Farmers Union, the Farmer’s Union of Wales, the Country Land and Business Association, the Wales Tourist Board, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales, and Barclays Bank.

9Tir Gofal is the Welsh agri-environment scheme introduced under the Agenda 2000 reforms.
informants expected the consequences to include reduced labour usage on core farming activities.

One informant reflected a general sentiment in the comment that “...clearly, farming is no longer the backbone of the rural economy”, because of the remarkable difference between the impact of the FMD outbreak on farming and the rest of the non-agricultural rural economy. Farming is still indirectly important as producer of both landscape and the community basis for much rural tourism. Its direct economic contribution might be improved through more tourism diversification activities, although the extent to which these could counterbalance with reduced labour requirements was not clear. Concern was also expressed about the psychological effect of the FMD outbreak on the tendency of younger people to migrate from the countryside. Some informants feared that, as a result, there would be even fewer potential successors willing to take over farm holdings when the current generation retires. As a result, the energy and enthusiasm necessary to develop entrepreneurial activities would be correspondingly reduced.

Reduced sociability within rural communities resulting from the FMD outbreak was highlighted as a major consequence of the outbreak. Many rural families avoided social contact during the whole period, and there was concern that the regular cycle of community activities may be permanently disrupted. Most events in the rural calendar were cancelled, with consequent impact on the quality of life for rural communities. A regular setting for social interaction in the farming community was the livestock auction mart, proscribed for a considerable period even after the outbreak. The tension between different economic sectors was manifest in regard to this; auction marts, on one view, were likely to bounce strongly after the end of restrictions: “…the abattoir sector has done itself a great disservice by taking advantage of their increased buying power, even though they could have created substantial goodwill by behaving fairly”. Another sensitive topic to emerge was the division occurring within communities as a result of the compensation being paid; between various groups, within the farming industry (between those farmers who had received compensation for an outbreak or on the grounds of animal welfare) and between the farm and non-farm communities (where tourism businesses suffered far worse revenue losses but received nominal rather than full compensation). According to one interviewee, the aftermath of the FMD outbreak could alienate the farming from the rest of the rural community “…as has happened in England; we do not appreciate the existence of a viable rural economy and society, and if we are not careful we will lose it because of a failure to address this issue”. Another respondent counselled that care should be taken not to relax planning controls in sympathy with the plight of farming, although acknowledged the difficulty of balancing the attractiveness of the countryside as a tourist and community resource, and the ability to earn an equitable living.

A general perspective among informants was that the environmental consequences would be mixed, both in the short and longer term. In the short term on farms where livestock were culled, evidence was accumulating of beneficial effects on species diversity in grassland and bird and other animal life, due to absence of stock; prohibition of access to the countryside footpath and bridleway network had also led to less disturbance of wildlife. Conversely, some farms affected by the movement restrictions but without culling had experienced severe localised overgrazing and poaching of grassland around feeding sites.

In the longer term, much will depend on how other factors evolve, since CAP incentives, the size and intensity of management of holdings, and recreational pressures all have an influence on the degree to which land can be managed for multi-functional purposes. There was no consensus on this issue. Some saw lower support as leading to possible land abandonment, or farming at very low intensity, but identified two adverse effects on environmental quality. Firstly, a depopulated countryside was seen as incompatible with the desire of both tourists and the local rural community to enjoy and utilise a natural environment shaped by farming; secondly, the work of environmental improvement requires, and can most efficiently be achieved through, the existence of viable farming businesses. Alternatively, one informant thought that large farm units were not incompatible with improving environmental quality, and another described the prospect of ranching as “environmentally interesting, at least”. In contrast to the results of the telephone survey, several informants mentioned organic farming as a means to reconcile business, community and environmental goals: one commented, “…farmers are losing their prejudices against it, I’ll put it as negatively as that...”

The responses of the key informants provide depth and colour to the straightforward accounts of the impact on farming provided from analysis of the telephone survey response. In particular, they raise further issues relating to the interaction between farming and broader rural community. A more systematic approach to describing these broader consequences, involving an inclusive perspective (including farmers) in the framework of community studies completes this section.

3.3. Comparative community case studies

To complement these perspectives on the agricultural impact of the FMD outbreak, two small market towns were studied in detail using an adaptation of ‘rapid’
participatory rural appraisal methods (PRA) (Bar-On and Prinsen, 1999; Chambers, 1994). The two communities selected for study—both in Mid Wales, identified as the worst affected region in relative terms—were Tregaron in Ceredigion (a community outside the Infected Area) and Llanfair Caereinion in Powys (a community within an Infected Area). These two communities were chosen for their otherwise similar characteristics, such as size, services provision, employment structure, and character.

The PRA approach involved four phases. First, flyers and leaflets were distributed to all residents and businesses to publicise the appraisal process. In particular, business owners and managers persons were informed and involved in the exercise. Second, semi-structured interviews were carried out with residents and businesses within a 5-mile radius of each town centre. During the interviews, respondents were asked to describe the effects of FMD on them as individuals and on the community as a whole; their perception of its effects on business and the local economy; and their priorities for a rural recovery plan. In total, 76 people were interviewed in Llanfair Caereinion, and 64 in Tregaron; for a breakdown by respondent type, see Table 6. Third, a compilation of a summary of views was prepared and presented to a well-publicised public meeting, which followed immediately after the semi-structured interviews were completed. All interviewees, and other interested parties, were invited to participate; this provided an opportunity for further comment and discussion. Fourth, written consultations with key individuals in the two communities, to clarify and augment material collected in the first two phases, completed the qualitative data acquisition process. The major themes obtained from analysis of this material are summarised for each community. Each account covers the impacts on individuals, including the significant disruption to social and community events, as well as economic effects; the effect on businesses; and the views of community members on priorities for action. The primary stakeholder group represented by the respondent identifies verbatim excerpts from transcripts.

3.3.1. Tregaron

Although Tregaron was outside the Infected Area, anxiety about the potential effects of an outbreak, and consequent stress, featured strongly in the responses. “I am so worried about all this. I cannot see an end to it and we do not know if it will suddenly emerge here” (farmer). Whilst most businesses were adversely affected, economic impacts were uneven and some businesses benefited. “The stores have been busier than ever this year, suggesting that people have bought more locally” (retailer). Others had experienced a gradual return to profitability. “At the start there was a major drop in trade, but now it has just about returned to normal” (tourist provider). Nevertheless, anxiety about future, long-term impacts and potential further hardship also emerged. “Profits will be down 40 per cent this year” (farm supplier). “We are desperately worried about our future. If we have one?”(farmer). “Trade could be even worse next year. We are not out of the woods yet” (business person).

It was also recognised that the impacts had extended throughout the whole rural economy. “Largely it’s the farming community that has suffered, but the knock-on effects are felt throughout the economy” (supplier). Significantly, the responses featured contrasting perceptions relating to past economic activity in Tregaron. For example, “Tregaron is and has been a dying town for ages” (resident), is in stark contrast to “The loss of the livestock market has killed the town. The town was buzzing; it’s dead now” (farmer’s wife). Such differences reveal distinct factions within the town and reveal the importance of different perceptions of particular assets such as the livestock market.

The social and psychological impact was also apparent. “Morale is very low, we are all depressed” (business person). However, this negative outlook was countered with more positive assessments, at least in the longer term. “Things will slowly revert back to normal” (resident).

These views were tempered by an appeal for support and advice to help in the restructuring process. There was recognition of need for a “…concerted effort to publicise next year to recoup income” (tourist provider). Reflecting some bewilderment, a common attitude expressed was of a need for government support. “We do not know what to do…we need proper advice and direction” (farmer with tourism business). “It’s up to the government to do something” (business person). “We need proper discussions and forums where we can question those in authority about what they are doing and will be doing about this” (business person).

Table 6
PRA interviewees by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tregaron</th>
<th>Llanfair Caereinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total numbers interviewed</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In town</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm-related</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/on benefits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to survive and recover from the outbreak, a number of respondents sought redefinition of the image of Tregaron post-FMD to encourage visitors and livestock exports as well as to restructure and regenerate the local economy. “We need to change the image of Great Britain in Europe. Our export market is critical and we are portrayed as disease merchants” (farmer).

“We need to promote Tregaron as free from FMD, and provide better facilities in the longer term” (sixth form student). “We need to support our local shops and businesses” (resident). There was also some evidence of tension between the views of the some of the community, farmers and their official representatives set within a contemporary discourse of a crisis of local governance. “More ventures should take place in the town. The council are not for the future. They want to keep Tregaron as it was” (resident). “It’s better off to get FMD given current prices for sheep and cattle” (resident). Other respondents seemed resigned to a situation that was perceived to be out of their hands. “What can we do?” (business person).

3.3.2. Llanfair Caereinion

Residents of Llanfair Caereinion, the community within an Infected Area, offered several similar responses, especially with regard to the variable commercial effects. In a similar proportion to Tregaron, some of the businesses had also benefited from increased local patronage. “My turnover has improved; farmers are coming in to shop locally more” (shop owner). For others, however, the loss of trade was devastating. “It has been a nightmare. We have lost 90 per cent of our business” (tourist provider). “It’s devastated us beyond devastation” (farmer).

However, the direct impact of the infection and its management added a new sensory component. This was felt physically; “The smell was dreadful. I had trouble sleeping” (student). Indirectly, stress was compounded by disorientation and confusion. The fear of being inadvertently responsible for spreading the epidemic led to social isolation. “Friends don’t visit anymore in case they spread disease” (farmer with tourism business). This perplexity was again amplified by a perceived lack of guidance. “The lack of clear advice and information soon after the first cases compounded the feelings of impotence. We did not know what we could do to stop the disease spreading” (resident). This stress had its counterpart, emerging in poor physical and mental health. “The community has become very depressed…it appears to be the last straw” (health centre manager).

Responses reflect a sense of gloom hanging over the town. “It’s like a bloody cemetery” (business person). The impact on tourism was also apparent. “No foreign visitors” (tourist operator). Notwithstanding these obvious signs, there was a clear perception that the adverse effects on people and businesses impacts were partly concealed. “People must be struggling but we don’t see them or hear them” (publican). “It’s not just the farmers; everybody has been affected in some way” (tourism provider). Whilst many comments were wholly negative, some saw FMD as an opportunity for radical change. “Maybe it’s a blessing in disguise. We have to change things now” (resident). Others were more concerned at the impact on the structure of social life and the community, with negative but also some unanticipated positive aspects apparent. “It’s as though the heart has been wrenched out of the community” (tourist provider). “What community? We haven’t really got anything left now. It’s all gone” (farmer). “For the families concerned in outbreaks, everyone has rallied round and supported them” (farmer).

Reactions to the outbreak reflect subtle differences highlighting economic impotence and financial restriction. “Tighten the belt. There is nothing else you can do” (farmer). “We just need to hope…hope it gets better” (farmer). For others it was the final straw. “I am thinking of selling up and forgetting it” (farmer). Yet the background to the outbreak in Llanfair Caereinion reflected concerns similar to those voiced in Tregaron, where wider rural decline was already well established. “The problems (of lack of custom and trade) had started long before the FMD outbreak” (resident). Thus, suitable solutions to business decline were already well recognised, if varying by both type of product and location. “We need an advertising campaign to promote the area” (caravan site owner). Advertising featured in many responses, although not all implied this emphasis on a collective approach to improve the image of the area. “Plans are being made to produce alternative products to sell into England” (business person). However, other farmers were sceptical of the willingness of independent businesses to co-operate. “The reality is that farmers are independent and don’t want co-operative ventures. Just leave us alone to do our job on a level playing field” (farmer).

Comments reveal more about the significant tensions emerging in the wake of FMD, rather than concrete proposals. There was widespread hostility and mistrust towards officials and their overall handling of the epidemic. “There is so much conflicting information out there. We do not know what to think any more” (resident). “We have got no say; nobody listens to us” (pensioner). “Nobody knows how to get out of this” (publican). There was also a significant discussion about agricultural reform. “We need to learn the lessons on the farming side” (tourist provider). However, most farmers interviewed challenged such sentiments. “It’s not the farmers to blame. Modern agriculture looks after the countryside and the consumer” (farmer). One concrete proposal to emerge was the need to retain more value addition to primary products within the local economy, particularly through local abattoirs and markets. “If
Welshpool\textsuperscript{10} is the biggest livestock market in Europe, why is there no local abattoir?” (pensioner). Others, however, were concerned at the extent to which people abandon local shops for the convenience of superstores in the larger centres. “People do not spend a lot of money in Llanfair Caereinion, they go to Welshpool. How do we stop that?” (agricultural contractor). One popular suggestion, particularly from businesses, was the need for long-term measures to help smaller settlements compete against the larger centres. “Business rates need to be reduced” (retailer).

As noted earlier, all of the empirical work noted in this section was carried out during the outbreak itself, and consequently needs to be interpreted cautiously. The degree of disengagement, division, disorientation and despair emerging as a major feature of the community studies, in particular, may have subsided as the rural population attempts to “get back to normal”. However, the traumatic impact of the period, in all of the ways identified in this section, is likely to have left a residue on the rural social psyche. As such, it will have contributed significantly to the process of rural change, and the paper now turns to the implications of the FMD outbreak for the discipline of rural studies.

4. Implications for rural studies

The first, perhaps predominant, issue to emerge from the preceding perspectives on the FMD outbreak is the degree of economic impact, at scales ranging from the individual to the aggregate. The links between agriculture and its supply chain, the extent to which it supports wider rural communities and the environmental and landscape qualities which attract visitors are all well documented; it was the sheer size of impact that was unexpected. Economic analysts have used the framework of input–output modelling, and other more sophisticated approaches, to determine the strength of supply chain linkages between agriculture and the rural economy as a whole (see, for recent examples, Caskie et al., 1999; Harrison-Mayfield et al., 1998; Midmore, 1993; for a review of the appropriateness of the approach, see Midmore and Whittaker, 2000). Such studies, however, suggest an approximate multiplier from agricultural output to the wider rural economy of around 1.5 (the ratio adopted in the DEFRA/DCMS, 2002, study was 1.48). The far larger, but neglected, interdependency was through the public space good shared by agriculture and tourism, and in the context of the FMD outbreak, the dual economic deterioration of both agriculture and tourism caused at least a perception of rural economic collapse.\textsuperscript{11} Again, whilst studies of landscape-based tourism have illustrated co-dependent relationships (especially, for example in Austria, where shared spaces between agriculture and mountain tourism are contested: Penz, 2000; but for a British example, see Christie, 1999), they concentrate more on their differences rather than their strengths. The consequence of FMD in this respect is to highlight a need for more energetic study, perhaps in a broader interdisciplinary context, of the public good links between agriculture and tourism.

A further issue is the degree to which the implementation of the government’s management of the outbreak was perceived to be efficient, appropriate, and equitable. The policy management infrastructure, at least on perspectives from the ground, appears to have been ill-coordinated and unequal to the challenge of a serious emergency, with disastrous consequences. This criticism is not new: a lack of coordination between central government and its agencies, together with the frequent reorganisations, narrow focus and particular culture of the latter has been held responsible for a failure of effective rural regeneration policies (Gallent et al., 1998; Day, 1998; Goodwin et al., 1995; Asby and Midmore, 1995). In Wales, the desire for more effective government intervention is coupled, confusingly, with hostility and cynicism; by implication, such views could probably be unearthed in England as well.

As a consequence, the UK government’s decision not to hold a public inquiry looks misguided. Ostensibly the choice of three focused, private inquiries was to produce a more rapid assessment of the FMD outbreak’s implications, but also (perhaps understandably) this could have been interpreted as a stratagem to avoid damaging, prolonged critical scrutiny of the administration’s shortcomings. In the event, in addition to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee’s assessment of the episode, cited above, a number of rather more oblique investigations have taken place. The European Parliament, acting as guardian of the European Union’s spending (since part of the cost of the disease control measures, including compensation, may be recouped from the EU budget) established a limited-life committee specifically to investigate the outbreak; and three of the worst affected local authorities (Devon, Cumbria and Northumberland) as

\textsuperscript{10} Welshpool is Llanfair Caereinion’s nearest sizeable market town.

\textsuperscript{11} A report in the \textit{Economist} magazine (“The disaster than never was”, \textit{Economist}, March 9, 2002) argued that in Cumbria the measured impact of the outbreak was negligible: tourism businesses had taken advantage of the lull to upgrade their facilities, and that due to temporary employment created by the clean-up operations, unemployment had fallen during the period of the outbreak. However, though tourism businesses may have survived the downturn in activity, impacts largely fell on employees, especially women, working part-time with little or no reason to register for welfare benefits. The impacts identified in Table 2, above, must have ended up somewhere, and it is likely that they affected individuals and families least able to withstand them.
well as the National Assembly for Wales have all held public sessions in which key actors have been cross-examined. These may have served not only to maintain buoyancy of media interest in the issue, but also to reinforce the original impression that a full examination is unwelcome.

Following seminal investigation and the emerging discourse on rural governance (Cloke and Little, 1990), it is increasingly recognised that the complexities involved in delivery of rural policy are best handled through partnerships between public authorities, their agencies, businesses and community representatives. In the most recent official statement regarding rural policy, it is observed that the Government “...want decisions to be taken with the active participation of local people, and to develop new partnerships in delivering change” (MAFF/DETR, 2000, p. 5). The speed and scale of the outbreak, combined with a lack of preparedness, resulted in controversial actions being taken with very little semblance of the “joined-up” government in which even its own agencies were involved, far less the private or voluntary sectors. For partnership to be effective the mutuality of relationships has to be genuine; under stress, the tendency of the state to organise and manage partnerships to primarily achieve its own ends has become cruelly apparent (Edwards et al., 2001). In particular, the increasingly popular social capital paradigm, especially when applied to rural issues (e.g., by Sobels et al., 2001; Shucksmith, 2000; Falk and Kilpatrick, 2000) suggests that the effect has been destructive of the trust, norms, expectations of reciprocity and linkages and common purpose which are crucial in unlocking a cycle of poor economic and social performance. As a consequence, the “soft” dimension of rural development involving accumulation of social capital is being endangered from diminishing trust between public and its government. This provides further fruitful grounds for re-evaluation of the scope for effective governance and participation following the FMD outbreak.

The final issue raised by the FMD outbreak is the performance of the devolved administrations in the UK in delivering rural policy. Since devolution has been adopted in order to refine and improve the implementation of policies, and all three administrations (Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) in the new tier of government cover territories with more pronounced rural characteristics, it might be anticipated that this would be a crucial arena for innovation. Even prior to the outbreak, signals of a new independence were emerging in Wales (also in Scotland: Bristow et al., 2001). The implementation of the Rural Development Plan (National Assembly for Wales, 2000) and the publication of Farming for the Future (Welsh Assembly Government, 2001b) provide important examples of a distinctive Welsh flavour in rural policy initiatives, as does the establishment of a new agricultural business advisory service, Farming Connect.12

In response to the outbreak itself, the Welsh administration formed a task force to draw up and implement a Rural Recovery Plan, based on an existing Rural Partnership involving a broad range of stakeholders. The Plan, covering support for non-farm business recovery (focused on the nine worst affected unitary local authorities), marketing and development for tourism businesses, rural community regeneration projects, and measures to tackle rural stress is worth £60 million, directly contrasting with the English allocation of £39 million. It also initiated a wide-ranging review of the future role of farming, based on a working group embracing farming, tourism and food industry representatives, environmental and countryside organisations, consumer interests and academics. Its report deliberately set an alternative course to that of the UK government as a whole, rejecting a drive for “efficient” agriculture as environmentally damaging and divisive, and emphasising a commitment to family farming in the context of the social and cultural fabric of Welsh rural society as a whole (Welsh Assembly Government, 2001b). Indications are emerging that, as far as future reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is concerned, the interests of the devolved administrations will diverge significantly from those of the lead Ministry, DEFRA.

The key issue highlighted by the FMD outbreak is the inextricable link between agriculture and rural tourism, and vulnerability that overdependence on them causes, particularly in more peripheral, less agriculturally favoured rural areas which are symptomatic of the devolved regions of the UK. This link can be diversified and correspondingly enhanced by a greater shift from traditional farm commodity support to wider rural, social and environmental objectives, broadly adhering to the form adopted by the European Commission’s Mid-Term Review proposals, which include a sustained and irrevocable shift from the former to the latter, radical decoupling, and limits on the total amount of support payment. Although in all parts of the UK, substantial extra resources have recently been made available to increase agri-environment measures, it remains to be seen whether these are sufficient to meet demand. In particular, in Britain, little attention has been paid to the special difficulties of small farms (as agri-environment payments are made on a “profits foregone” basis), or to the problem of farm succession. Control over the spending associated with European Union programmes rests with the UK Treasury,13 which

12 Farming Connect is charged with helping farms to become more entrepreneurial through planning support, grants, training, demonstration farms and other specialist information, advice and support centres.

13 In practice, the rules relating to the special budget rebate obtained from the European Union during the 1980s (known as the
so far has been unwilling to sanction the implementation of the new entrant scheme. For this particular fault-line in the devolution settlement, accentuated most clearly by rural policy issues, no equitable compromise is yet apparent.

Thus far, the FMD outbreak raises rather more questions than can satisfactorily be answered. It is clear that further, more extensive studies will be needed to supplement the initial perspective that we provide. However, the unique period between 21 February and 28 November, 2001, and its aftermath, will undoubtedly provide rich material for further study, both in terms of the intensity and form of land-use, and relations between the various hierarchical levels of governance which seek to influence rural economy and society.

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(footnote continued)

‘Fontainebleau abatement’), mean that the Treasury funds 71 per cent of any additional money spent on European Union programmes. Consequently, the net amount of any additional spending that can be recouped from co-funded measures is only 29 per cent of the European element, implying extra domestic spending in addition to the British contribution.


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