

SAC MANAGERS: 13 MAY 2010

A perception of SAC: 3 minutes

It was: arrogant, uncooperative, talked at, not consultative, not collaborative, bull in china shop negotiation style, nearly bust due to over borrowing, anti environmental, lacked corporate confidence hence aggressive style, not in control of its destiny

It is: listens, new machinery, active at collaboration, broader base, wider mission, translating best practice from research farm to tractor cab and farm office and now to wider audience. Still not sufficient commitment on environmental? Clear strategy but not yet means of getting there. Financially secure and great prospects

The three propositions: operating environment and our future

1. The role of farmers has to change fundamentally: 5 minutes

- Farmers collective term & not just agricultural land in incentives sense
- Lots to do for public benefit: food production/security comment, biodiversity, water supply and catchment management, etc
- Knowledge: made available, reskilling, new entrants
- Incentives confusing, bureaucratic, misdirected: inactive farmers, SFP lowland bias, LFA 85% land but 12% special payment
- Need a fundamentally new approach penalising poor public stewardship & rewarding exemplary multi functional management
- Out with CAP and in with EU Land & Climate Change Policy
- Role for Rural Policy Unit with help of Advisers: not just economic models

2. Government cannot be relied upon to produce the solutions: 5 minutes

- balance syndrome when policy/expenditure conflicts or one priority eg sustainable economic growth
- Pendulum swings in policy need dampener
- traditional lobbies still a force: where's the votes but politicians short lived
- Pack farmers friend: interim report of two halves unless fundamentally improved should be sent 'packing'
- bureaucrat culture stays: too difficult, own ideas win eg Gill Institute
- much less money available land use strategy will not resolve competition & conflict

3. If SAC did not exist it would have to be invented: 5 minutes

- Not just agriculture or farmers as clients not just Research **or** E&T **or** Advice
- Not silos but integration. Not matrix management. What is it? Integration through working practices. Walk the talk. 360° process
- Ensure virtuous circle culture (us) not viscous triangle (me, you, them)
- Two negative syndromes: BSE, NIH
- KT →KE internal & external: real exchange, adequate priority & funding
- Basic science **&** development **&** demonstration.
- Need more knowledge? or what do we know/have we used it/ have we sold it?
- Not just stick to areas good at, invest in up coming areas and get out of those on wane and not good at
- What's in a name? SAC all elements not strictly correct. Rural University: neither beware adopting to someone else's model.
- But Rural Universe of triple diversity: wider ranging subject matter, many client groups receiving & paying for services and no geographical boundaries
- And be braver: on policy advice, be more commercial, be more in charge of destiny, develop the grand vision and modify to meet opportunities available: strategic opportunism