

Future Farming Resilience Fund

Bishop Grosseteste University/ Rose Regeneration

Measuring the Impact of Farmer Support Networks on Farmer Health and Wellbeing.

Introduction and background to the programme:

A 2019 report into the health and wellbeing of farmers was commissioned by the Worshipful Company of Farmers¹ and was carried out by Rose Regeneration in conjunction with the University of Lincoln. This report identified the crucial, but essentially informal role that farmer support networks play in underpinning the resilience of farmers in distress, by providing support in times of crisis, and giving the message that it is ok to ask for help. It also identified the value of helping these networks to regulate and develop their impact through a process of effective measurement using a common approach. Rose Regeneration's report "Putting the Spotlight on Farming Communities"² trialled this technique with a number of networks and found that there is scope to build on this approach

Due to the intangible and preventive nature of the outcomes delivered by Farmer Support Networks, this process particularly lends itself to the use of social return on investment as a technique. The Social Value Engine (SVE), which is accredited by Social Value UK, is a tool that is used to assess the impact of social policy using social return on investment methodology. This tool will be used to measure the impact that Farmer Support Networks have on their members, for example by looking at the impact that the crisis support that they provide to farmers has on their personal wellbeing, or on the economic health of their farm. It can also be used to evaluate their impact on wider issues, such as cost savings made to the NHS by supporting Farmers with mental health difficulties before they reach crisis point.

Programme Purpose:

The purpose of this programme is to support and embed a measurement framework in Farmer Support Networks, which enables them to improve the impact that they have on the health and wellbeing of their members.

This will be done by:

- Empowering individual networks to appraise their approach and measure their impact.
- Developing a focused tool for farm-support network appraisal and impact measurement, in the form of an updated version of the Social Value Engine.
- Developing a common framework for measurement against which all networks could review their effectiveness and share good practice across the UK.
- Developing the scope for a better-informed dialogue between farm support networks and the organisations that support them based on the wider value delivered by the networks.

¹ HEALTH AND WELLBEING RESEARCH REPORT April 2019 <http://roseregeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/WCF-Health-and-Wellbeing-Research-Report-FINAL-April.pdf>

² Putting the Spotlight on Farming Communities <http://roseregeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/PuttingTheSpotlightOnFarmingCommunities.pdf>

Programme Methodology:

There are three elements to the delivery of this programme: Direct work with the Farmer Support Networks; Developmental work on the Social Value Engine so that it is better able to report on the impact related to Farmer Support Networks; and the production of an overarching report into the social value of Farmer Support Networks as a whole.

The direct work element will be actioned through:

- Recruitment of 8 Farmer Support Networks who will be worked with separately. The aim is that these will be distributed across England in order to ensure regional representation, however this will be subject to Farmer Support Network engagement.
- Embedding social value analysis in 8 Farmer Support Networks, one in each region, through the delivery of face-to-face sessions to explore, identify and measure the social impact that each Farmer Support Network has.
- Supporting Farmer Support Networks to understand and build upon their value offer through the delivery of face-to-face reflective development workshops.

The Social Value Engine will be developed by:

- Identifying additional outcomes that are relevant to the impact of Farmer Support Networks.
- Using Open Data to identify proxy financial values that represent the outcomes achieved by Farmer Support Networks.
- Updating the Social Value Engine to encompass these findings so that it can better measure and calculate social return on investment for the outcomes related to Farmer Support Networks.

The overarching report into the social value of Farmer Support Networks as a whole will be developed through:

- The development of individual reports on progress with each farm support network.
- The creation of a composite report drawing the key learning from each individual report into a composite summary.
- The development of a report charting the refinement and follow on work to refine the Social Value Engine as a tool capable of real impact through scaling up and embedding across all farm support networks in England.
- The creation of a master report summarising all the work undertaken. This will be produced along with an Executive Summary in a range of formats appropriate to a diverse set of audiences.

Programme Outputs:

- 8 x Farmer Support Networks will be empowered to engage in ongoing measurement of their social impact using social return on investment methodology.
- 8 x reports on the social impact of Individual Farmer Support Networks.
- 1 x report to summarise the findings from the 8 Farmer Support Networks involved.
- 1 x report to detail the improvements to social return on investment evaluation and the Social Value Engine in relation to farming and Farmer Support Networks.
- 1 x Overarching report to detail all findings.
- Plus improvements to the Social Value Engine which can be used for ongoing social value assessments.