

Hungry [f]or Public Goods? What the Scottish Public Demand from an Agricultural Support Scheme

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Background

- ❖ **Agricultural support payments** represent a substantial transfer from taxpayers while having considerable influence on the food system.
- ❖ Scotland is now facing important decisions amid the greatest policy overhaul in five decades, but **what does the public demand** in terms of agricultural objectives?
- ❖ Successful and legitimate policies require insight about the public's preferences, for which **evidence is substantially lacking**.
- ❖ We explore public prioritisation for **16 objectives** of a future agricultural support scheme in Scotland.



Results

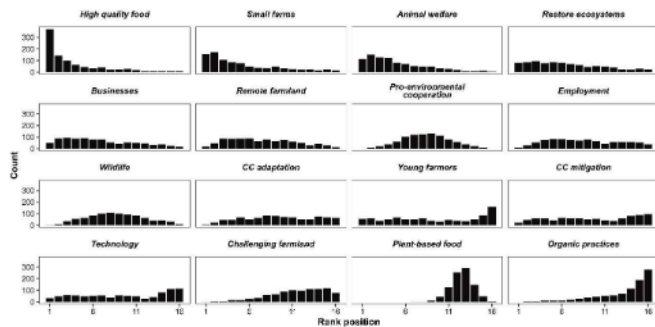


Fig 1. Ranked posterior estimates of Random Parameters Model

Further analysis

Both of these plots show the number of respondents who are predicted to rank each objective in each rank position based on their choice-making behaviour.

Fig 1 allows all individuals to vary. Fig 2 assumes groups of individuals. A clearer story emerges in

Fig 2

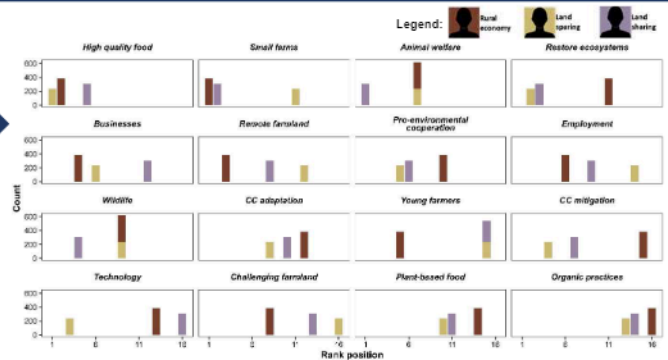


Fig 2. Ranked posterior estimates of Latent Class Model

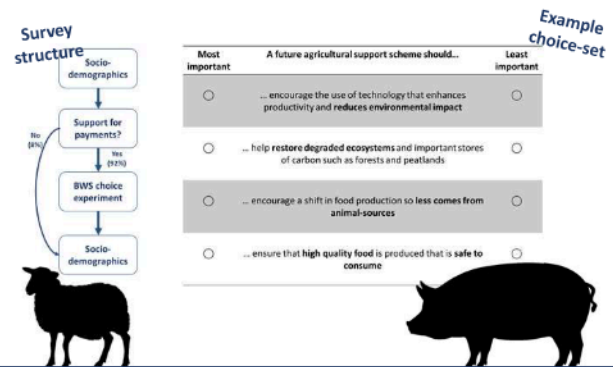
- ❖ The vast majority (92%) of respondents **support** an agricultural payment scheme in some form
- ❖ On aggregate, the **primary objective is the production of safe and quality food** and of least concern are interventions that support organic farming (Fig 1)
- ❖ However, there is **substantial heterogeneity in preferences**
- ❖ Further analysis uncovered three groups, the largest of which favour objectives related to rural economy and livelihoods. Yet, **the majority (~60%) prioritise the delivery of public goods from land**, be-it by intensifying production via technological solutions or via multifunctional farming landscapes with small farms, wildlife and concessions on food production (Fig 2)

Objective

To estimate the public's preferences for a large set of agricultural policy objectives

Method

- ❖ Survey; novel experimental design; representative sample of Scottish public ($N = 1001$)
- ❖ **Best-Worst Scaling** approach; two statistical analyses to fully explore preference heterogeneity



Conclusions

- ❖ Most Scottish citizens support incentive-based agricultural policies, in particular oriented to support the production of high-quality food, animal welfare, and small farms
- ❖ This study provides decision-makers with key insights into the contestable and acceptable aspects of agriculture and support payments, and hints at the need to strategically account for diverse viewpoints to improve policy legitimization