



## Agroforestry: an agroecological transformation of England's landscapes

### Policy co-design, the background

Governments in the UK and England are committed to significant land use changes in order to meet ambitious but necessary climate, biodiversity and landscape restoration targets. To meet net-zero emissions by 2050, we need to drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, whilst simultaneously increasing our carbon sinks, such as woodlands and peat soils. At the same time, we need to transform our **food systems** to reduce their environmental impact and also address growing health related concerns and issues of food justice and food poverty. Leaving the European Union and the constraints of the current EU-Common Agricultural Policy means we have an opportunity to make **significant changes** to the way we produce, consume and distribute food and agricultural products.

Given the need for afforestation and reforestation in the UK, **agroforestry**, implemented in an agroecological way, offers many '**co-benefits**' across the nature and human health objectives. These include: carbon sequestration; habitat creation; improved biodiversity; climate mitigation; improved diets; regionalised food supplies; improved rural livelihoods and more. Despite the acknowledged benefits of these systems, **farmer and landowner uptake is currently low**. This is because of a lack of financing, knowledge, advice, supporting schemes, and a missing supply chain infrastructure.

Currently, agroforestry makes up only 3.3% of the UK's land-use. In England, this is only 1.61% (our data based on LUCAS 2015). To make any significant changes in land use, we need to engage with who **owns England** and can make the changes we so desperately need. Land ownership in England is **highly concentrated**, meaning a few key decisions from a few key stakeholders could make a **big change**.

Land owners	Area in acres	Area in hectares	As a % of England
Crown	456,482	184,732	1.4%
Church	175,00	70,820	0.5%
Public sector	2,713,3663	1,098,060	8.5%
Conservation charities	635,914	257,435	2.0%
<b>Public sector total</b>	<b>3,980,759</b>	<b>1,610,957</b>	
Limited Companies & Limited Liability Partnerships	5,756,670	2,329,644	18%
'Old money' - aristocracy & gentry	9,600,000	3,884,986	30%
'New money' - wealthy individuals	5,440,000	2,201,492	17%
Homeowners (domestic homes and gardens)	1,749,439	707,973	5.5%
Unaccounted	5,472,000	2,214,442	17.1%
<b>Private sector total</b>	<b>28,018,109</b>	<b>11,338,537</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,998,868</b>	<b>12,949,494</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 'Who Owns England?' Guy Shrubsole (2019), data additions by authors.

## Our 'menu of 20' policy scenario options for England:

To make agroforestry an agroecological transition pathway, we have discussed the following scenario options and policy priorities. They are in recognition of previous policy papers related to agroforestry in England by Smith (2010), Soil Association (2018), Shrubsole (2019) and Tosh (2021).

1. Change to healthy diets for all (fewer animal products and sugar, more fruit, legumes and nuts)
2. Remove all imported feed products (soy and other grains)
3. Conversion of all intensive livestock systems to mixed farming and free range
4. Re-establishing shelter belts, riparian buffers, trees in the farmed landscape
5. Re-establishing natural grasslands with hedges, single trees and agroforestry
6. Using cover and catch crops in crop rotations and under trees
7. Focus on feeding the soil (4 per 1000 initiative) and regenerative agriculture and forestry
8. Increase food-diversity in varieties, crops and livestock
9. Re-establish common land for grazing and appropriate tree cover increase agroforestry to 5%
10. Within ELMs (Environmental Land Management scheme) further eco-schemes (public goods, carbon credits) directed and funded appropriately to increase agroforestry and mixed farming
11. Phase-out all fossil-fuel derived synthetic fertilisers
12. Phase-out all fossil-fuel derived synthetic pesticides
13. 25% certified organic land by 2030 (to match EU policy) or 30% certified organic land by 2030 (to match Germany, Bavaria, Austria policy)
14. Make 10% agroforestry mandatory on all certified organic farms
15. Urban Agroforestry: establish more community supported agroforestry systems in urban and peri-urban areas: allotments, parks, micro forest and enhance public spaces with fruit trees
16. Legislate for agroecological green belts; 15% of all food for cities from agroecological green belt
17. Transition to agroecology and a 'bio-circular economy' on a food and farming system level
18. Address tenancy to incentivise long-term agreements for multi-use agreements with the potential to support new entrants, open access to land with land reform and transparency of land ownership
19. Address non-compliance with banded land tax (equivalent to council tax) and new land ethic
20. Ensure a 'fair share, fair play and fair say' approach to farming and the food industry; with mandated labelling to enable consumers to make choice based on ethical, political and environmental values through consumption

### Policy Priorities

- Increase training (train advisors), financing and practical support for farmers and landowners wishing to implement agroforestry systems
- Develop regional supply chains for agroforestry products
- Support access to research, practical guidance, and peer to peer mentoring
- Support agroforestry to work towards the 2030 Action Target 10 of the UN Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in the UK: for agroecosystems that are both resilient and productive
- Include agroforestry into wider policy areas: e.g. Path to Net Zero, National Food Strategy, Delivering for Nature



**For more information about 'Agroforestry: An agroecological transformation of England's landscapes' and the AGROMIX project, please contact the authors:**

Rosemary Venn: [rosemary.venn@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:rosemary.venn@coventry.ac.uk)

Ulrich Schmutz: [ulrich.schmutz@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ulrich.schmutz@coventry.ac.uk)

AGROMIX brings together farmers, researchers and policymakers to explore agroecological solutions for more resilient land use in Europe, developing tools to implement these practices.

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