

Sustainable Farm Networks Terms of Reference

September 2024



Sustainable
Farm
Networks



School of **Sustainable
Food and Farming**

powered by Harper Adams University

Membership

Office Members:

Lucy Bates, SFN Project Manager, Facilitator
John Gilliland, HAU Professor of Practice, Chair
Michael Lee, HAU Deputy, VC Sponsor
Simon Thelwell, Strategic Director, SSFF Oversight

Project Steering Group (PSG) as of July 2024:

Lorna Dawson, James Hutton Institute/SEFARI Gateway
Helen Glass, Scottish Agricultural Organisation Society
Mike Gooding, AHDB
Siwan Howatson, Farming Connect
Liz Lawrenson, Landex
Paul McHenry, CAFRE
Lucy McLennan, Organic Research Centre/Agricology
Kate Pressland, Agricultural Universities Council/RAU
Angelina Sanderson, Bellamy Agrifood for Net Zero Network+
Holly Shearman, Innovation for Agriculture
Dan Stevenson, LEAF
Kate Still, Soil Association
Katie Thorley, ABP

Rotating PSG seat for SSFF Steering Group:

Kate Bannister NFU
Hetty Elliot, McDonalds UK & Ireland
Michael Lee, HAU
Alex Stevens, NFU
Sophie Throup, Morrisons

Members:

Demonstration farm networks represented by their network steward, being the individual with the most direct and consistent contact with network members.

Knowledge exchange platforms & resource repositories represented by a nominated individual.

Members of the wider agricultural community, and other partner organisations may also be invited to participate in and contribute to events and resources and attend meetings as agreed by the PSG.



1. Purpose and Aims

- i. To demonstrate best practice in sustainability to Government, policy makers, key industry stakeholders as well as farmers.
- ii. To develop a network of peer-to-peer knowledge exchange networks that are working to progress sustainability in areas including but not limited to:
 - o Demonstration of best practice in resilient, productive agri-food systems.
 - o Demonstration of highest quality environmental practices across the network.
 - o Demonstration of leading innovations in renewable energy.
- iii. To provide a forum for sharing best practice and, where appropriate, data to support progression towards multiple sustainability goals.
- iv. To support a hub-and-spoke model of farm extension/ knowledge exchange/ agricultural CPD connecting demonstration farm networks across regions, sectors and supply chains with teaching and learning institutions.
- v. To share experiences of emerging and innovative practices such as carbon and biodiversity net gain calculators and data platforms, sharing findings across the network and showcasing on farm practices.
- vi. To promote and champion the value and impact of peer-to-peer learning as demonstrated through member networks' activity.
- vii. To work collaboratively towards collective benchmarking of sustainability metrics to support measurable outcomes and progress towards Net Zero.
- viii. To become a leading UK demonstration farm networks grouping which will help to provide evidence and support for all farmers to realise their sustainable farming transition.



2. SFN activity

i. The SFN will work to enhance the reach and impact of demonstration farm network activities, events and findings by facilitating activities that may include but not be limited to:

- o Facilitating regular (e.g. quarterly) meetings of demonstration farm network facilitators, working with this group to identify and deliver opportunities for increased reach, value or impact for their networks.
 - o Mapping to approximate geographical location demonstration sites on a publicly available online hub.
 - o Publicising open events in collaboration with existing online knowledge exchange platforms.
 - o Mapping sustainability focus areas of activities undertaken by networks.
 - o Seeking opportunities for collective benchmarking of demonstration farm sustainability using data collated within networks.
 - o Representation of successes, findings and case studies put forward by member network facilitators through online activity and relevant show and conference presentations including at member networks' events where appropriate.
 - o Seeking and coordinating bids for appropriate public and private funding to support relevant research and network development opportunities for participating networks and organisations.
- Seeking and coordinating bids for appropriate public and private funding to support collective benchmarking of sustainability parameters using farm data collected by networks.



3. Engagement expectation of member networks

i. A minimum level of engagement for member networks will be considered as:

- o Response to communication from the SFN facilitator.
- o Timely return of basic information as surveyed.
- o Representation at the majority of network steward meetings.
- o A two-year commitment to membership.



4. Information collation by SFN

i. At joining, the SFN facilitator will survey member network stewards for relevant information on:

- o Number of holdings represented and enterprises.
- o Hectares of holdings represented.
- o Approximate geographical spread of holdings represented.
- o Focused sustainability areas of the network.
- o Relevant staff CPD training.
- o Interests in future SFN activity.

i. Over the course of the project, the SFN facilitator will survey member network stewards for relevant information on:

- o Network events and highlights.
- o Impact of the SFN on the reach and impact of demonstration farm activities and events.
- o Where member networks are engaged in high level data collection that results in quantitative and collatable figures for sustainability metrics such as carbon capture, emission reduction, biodiversity increase and profitability of businesses- the cumulative numerical value of these where available and sharable.

All data collected and held by SFN will be curated according to HAU ethics and GDPR policies/ protocols as per Section 7.



5. Frequency and structure of network steward meetings

- i. The Network Stewards Group will meet three to four times per year with dates set a rolling six months in advance. Meetings will be hosted by SSFF either online or in person.

- ii. Meetings will fluctuate between being held in person and online.

- iii. Member network stewards will do their best to attend the majority of meetings, not missing more than one in a row.

Each meeting will seek contribution from the group to present best practice or innovation in the meeting. The host of in person meetings will also demonstrate activity through the provision of an on farm/ facility tour where possible.



6. Communication

i. Meetings, events and other SFN activities are undertaken in the spirit of sharing ideas, experience and findings of demonstration farm networks in a pre-competitive, system agnostic forum.

ii. The SFN's intention is building collaboration for continued improvement in practice across members of the network – to be greater than the sum of our parts in reach and impact.

iii. Matters, resources and initiatives arising from group meetings will be shared with members of the group and the wider agricultural community (in accordance with Section 7 of this document), except where individuals or organisations specifically request redaction of detail.

All members of the group will be treated with equal respect regardless of size, sponsorship or governance structure, with all members listening, recognising, and valuing the diversity of opinion.



7. Data protection

i. All Personal Data collected during the course of the SFN initiative will be processed by HAU, who will act as Data Controllers, in accordance with the obligations of the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. HAU also have their own Data Protection Policy that can be viewed [here](#).

ii. All Personal Data will be held securely utilising appropriate technical and organisational measure to ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the data.

iii. There will be no pooling or sharing of personal data between the signatories to this project unless by specific consent on an individual case basis. Some anonymised data will be shared between the partners within this project, but no individuals will be identifiable from this data.

iv. Personal data will not be shared with any third parties and will not be moved outside the EU.

v. Outcomes from the SFN will be considered on a case-by-case basis and, if necessary and appropriate will be the subject of further collaboration agreements.



8. Review of Terms of Reference and Composition of SFN

i. Sustainable Farm Networks office members (Chair and Facilitators) and PSG membership will be reviewed together with the Terms of Reference biannually to anniversary of launch (July).





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