

that the ecosystems on which Darwinian ecological diversity depends are being most actively destroyed by what ought to be a means of subsistence – food.

No discipline or perspective has the answer to this systemic challenge. It requires more collaborative, less self-serving research. Universities have not helped with their football league approach to the Research Excellence Framework ('REF').

I'm not all gloomy, however. Some great research comes out, clearly in and for the public interest, while ticking the REF boxes. The policy pick-up, however, is weak. There's a failure of politics at present with regard to food. Vast data and studies point to the need to restructure the food system, but too little happens.

Here in the UK, our food research agenda is currently paralysed by the

enormity of Brexit.⁸ Yet this is precisely the moment where we should stop and ask fundamental questions about what sort of food research is most needed to put the UK (and other rich nations) onto a more sustainable track, and to shift food culture amongst the general public more rapidly than has ever happened other than in wartime. This requires interdisciplinary research, and more social science, not just the Life Sciences' pursuit of ever more microscopic dynamics, fascinating though those may be.

Helping deliver sustainable diets from sustainable food systems surely ought to be the framework for all food research.

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How to unlock the contribution of agroecology in farming?

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Food and farming research can deliver public good by focusing on agroecology^{1,2} But how can farmers make use of agroecology in practice and what can research can do to support them?

Two studies we undertook for the Land Use Policy Group provide insights. The first² demonstrated clear potential contribution and called for better information and knowledge exchange systems on agroecological practices, building on tacit farmer knowledge and active farmer participation, alongside an agroecological focus in training, education, research and innovation.

The second³ concluded that farmers want clarity on long-term indicators that consider the finances and resource use to help them future-proof their

farms (e.g. investment in soil fertility).

Farmers need accepted definitions, measurements and indicators of the state of resources and sustainability^{4,5} so they can benchmark their activities.

Research must be clearer on the evidence for practices that farmers can implement. It must provide reliable indicators for monitoring that consider resource use and long-term financial implications and risks. Our Agricolgy project tries to address the need. It is a collaboration between many organisations to provide information on Practical, Sustainable Farming Regardless of Labels.

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