

ALTERNATIVE CROPPING

Greenprint Forum
27th November 2006

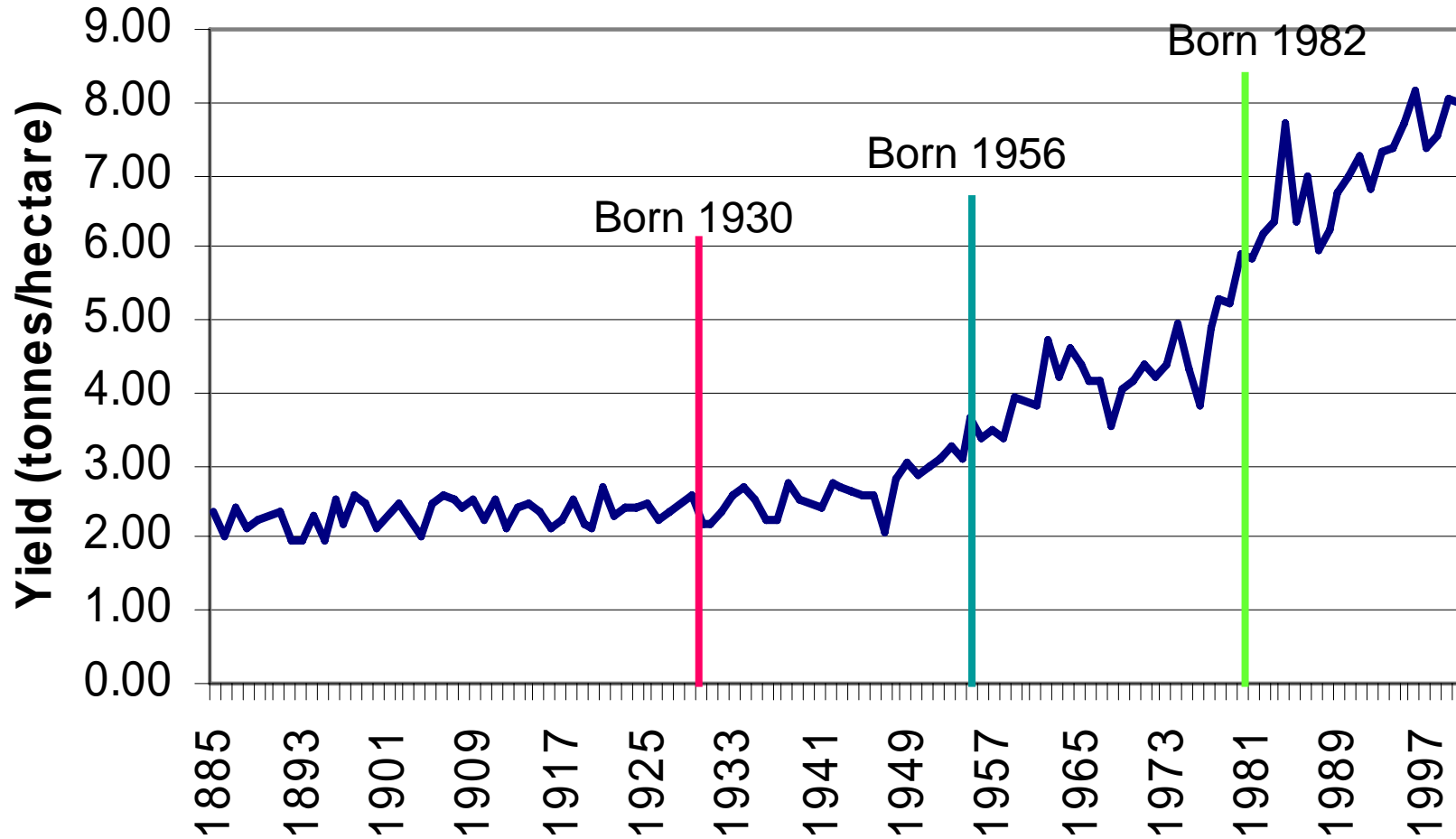
Neil Ridley
Otley College

Have we been here before?

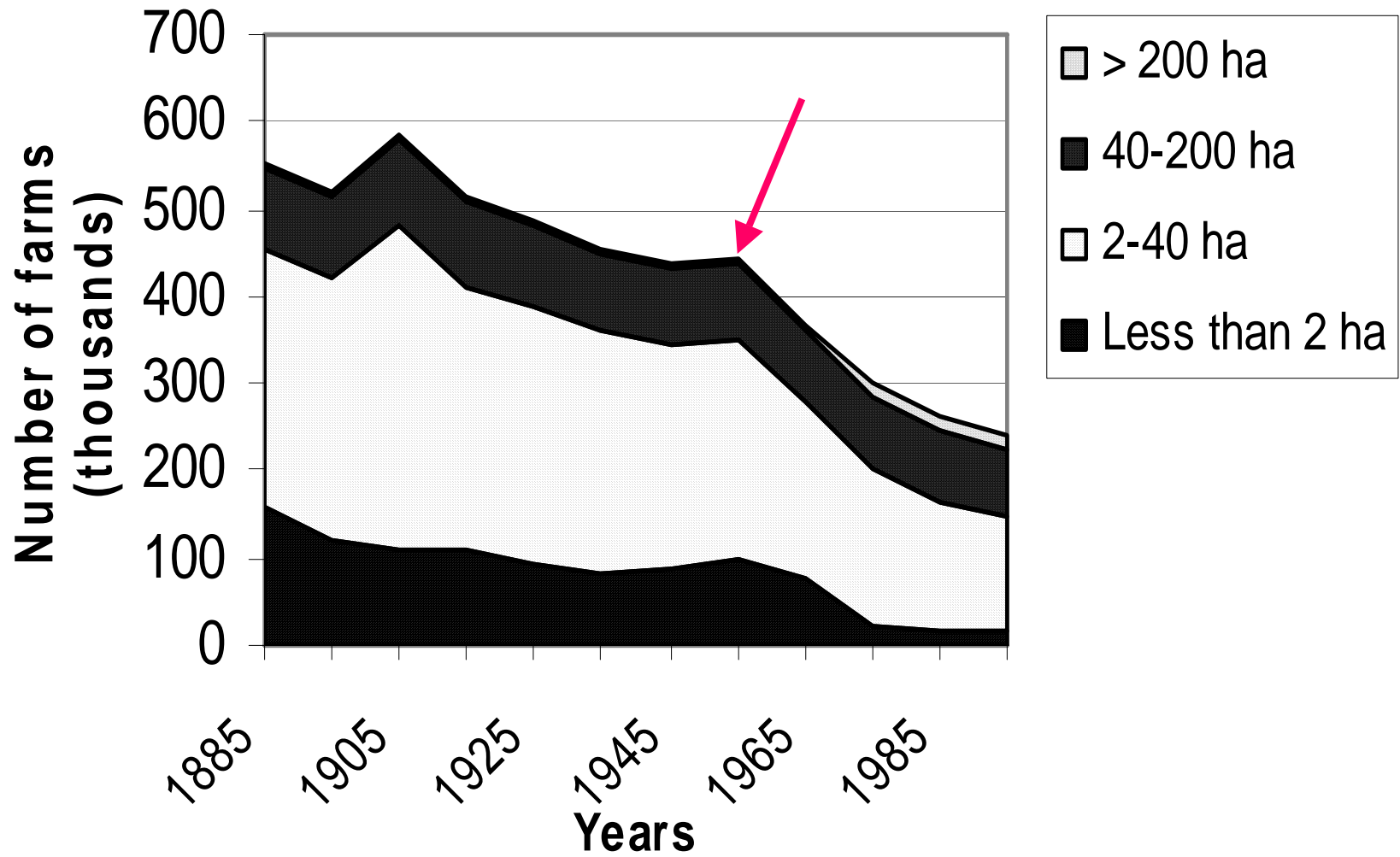
- Landscape farmed for 4,000 years
- Roman Farming
- Saxon Farming
- 1348
- 17th Century (Bounties and rise of “Capitalist” farming)
- 19th Industrialization
- 1947 Industrialization of agriculture
- 1986 Agricultural Act
- Change is slow in farming
- Farmers do not take notice of policy

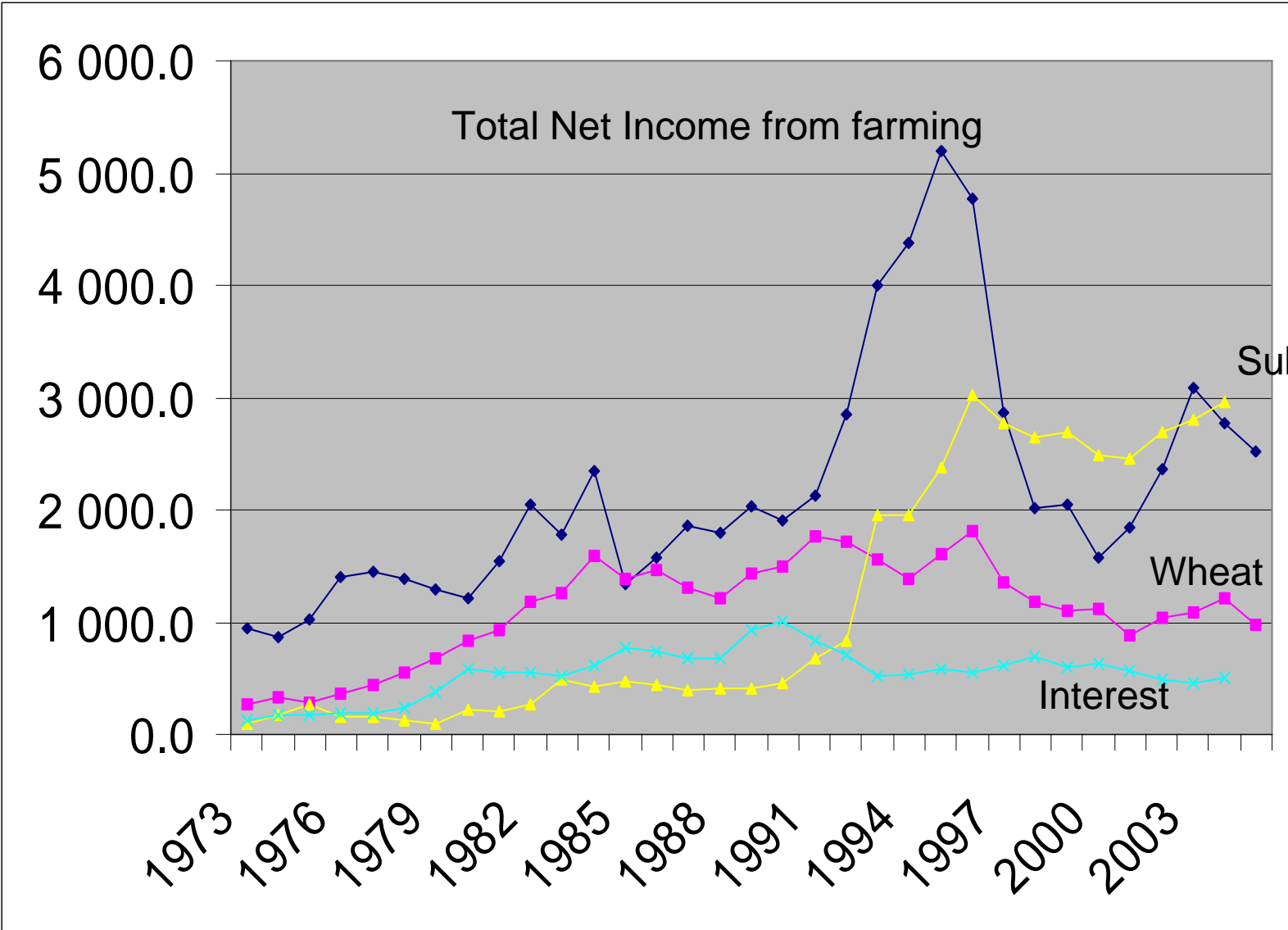
The Generations

Changing yields of wheat in UK, 1885-2000

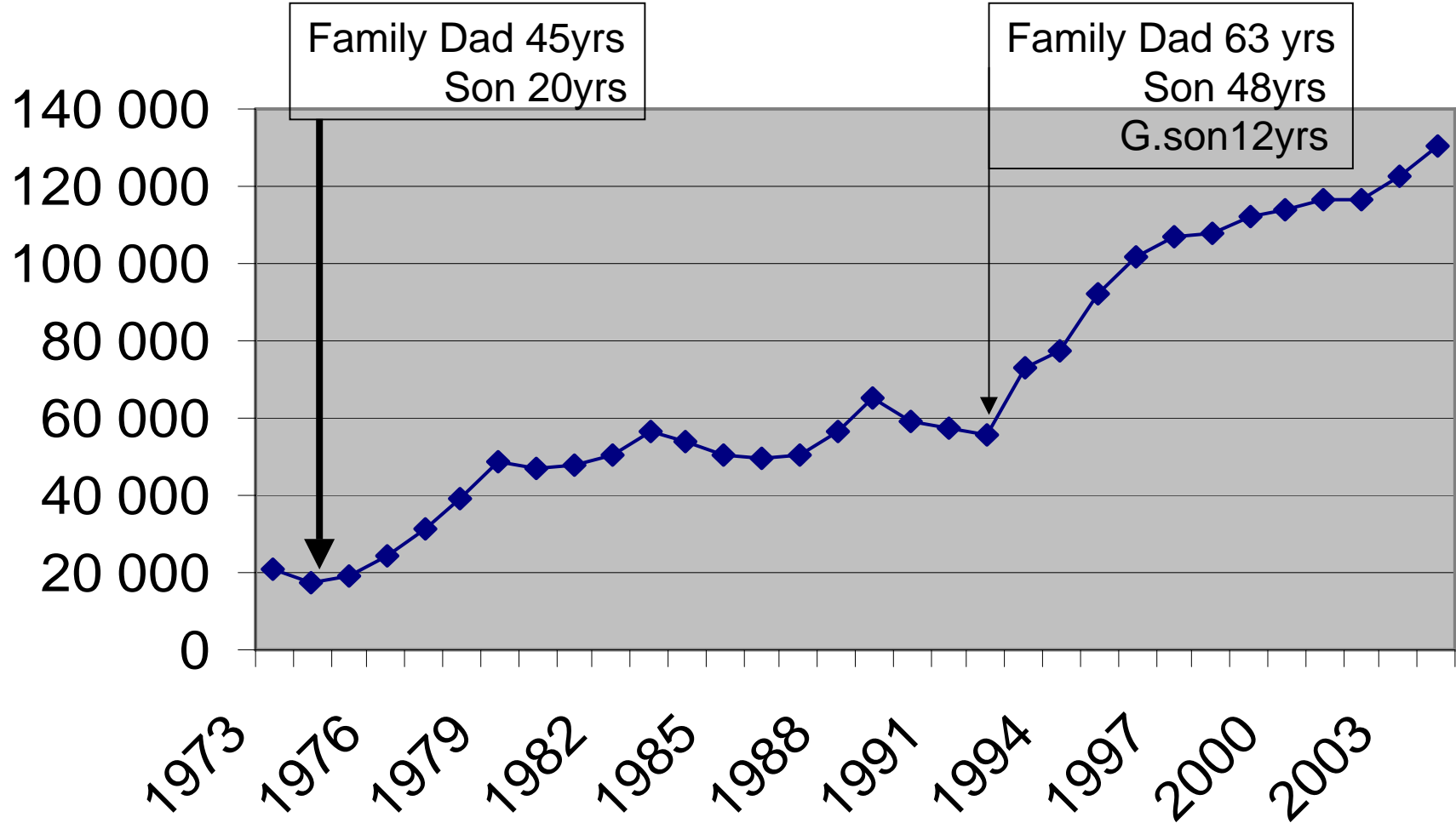


Number of farm holdings in UK (1885-2000)



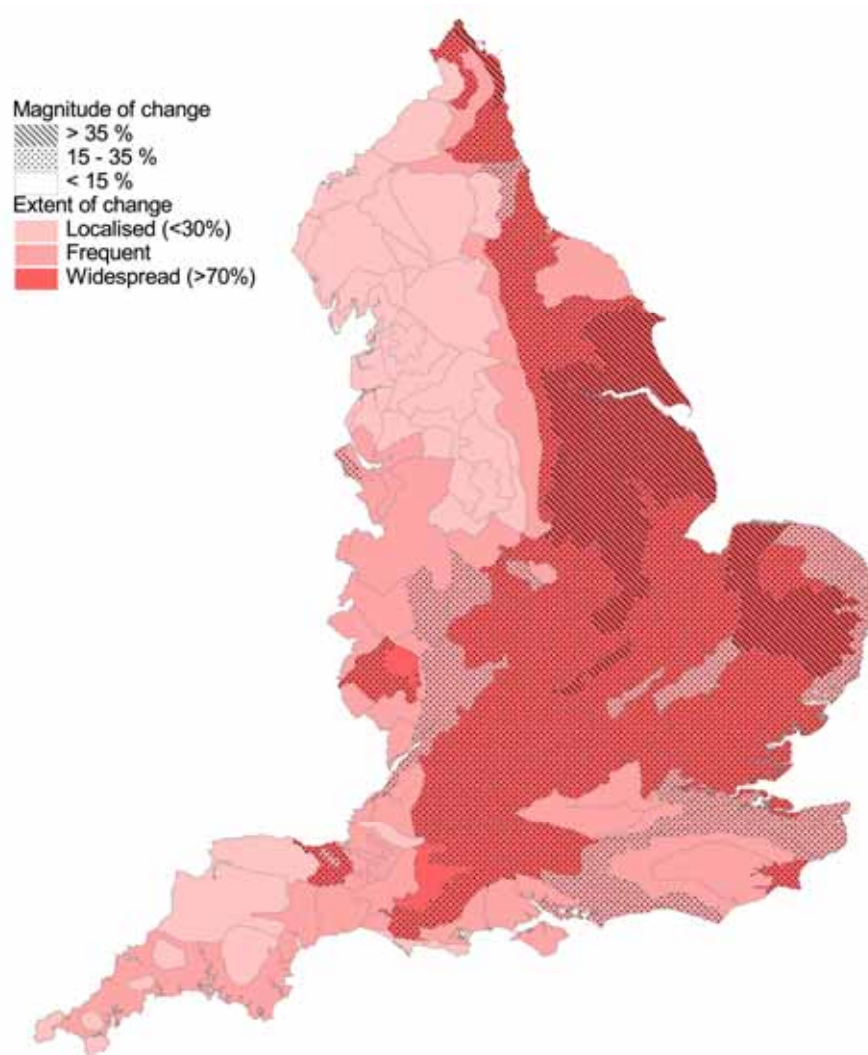


© Crown copyright, 2006 Total assets

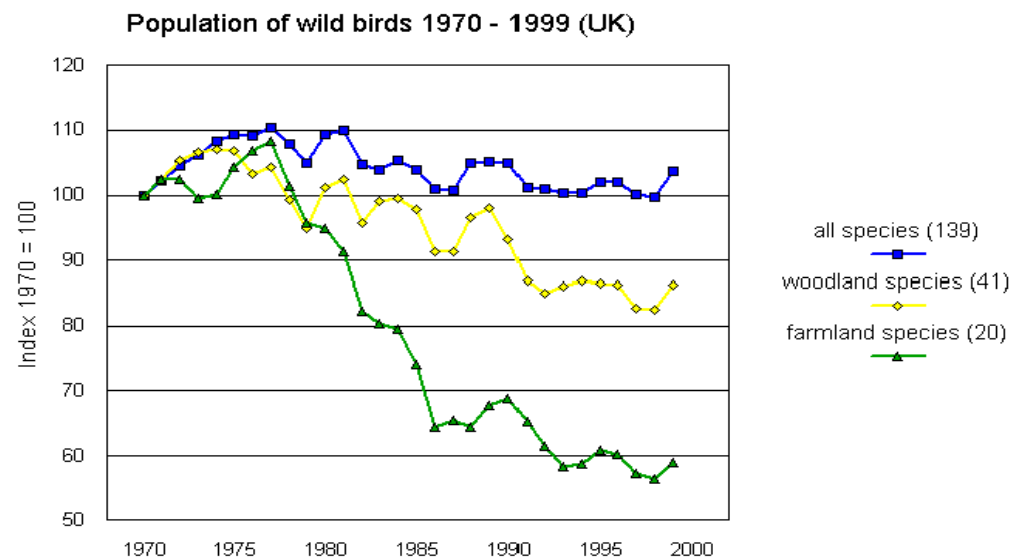


Environmental costs of support

Change in Countryside Character – Arable Expansion

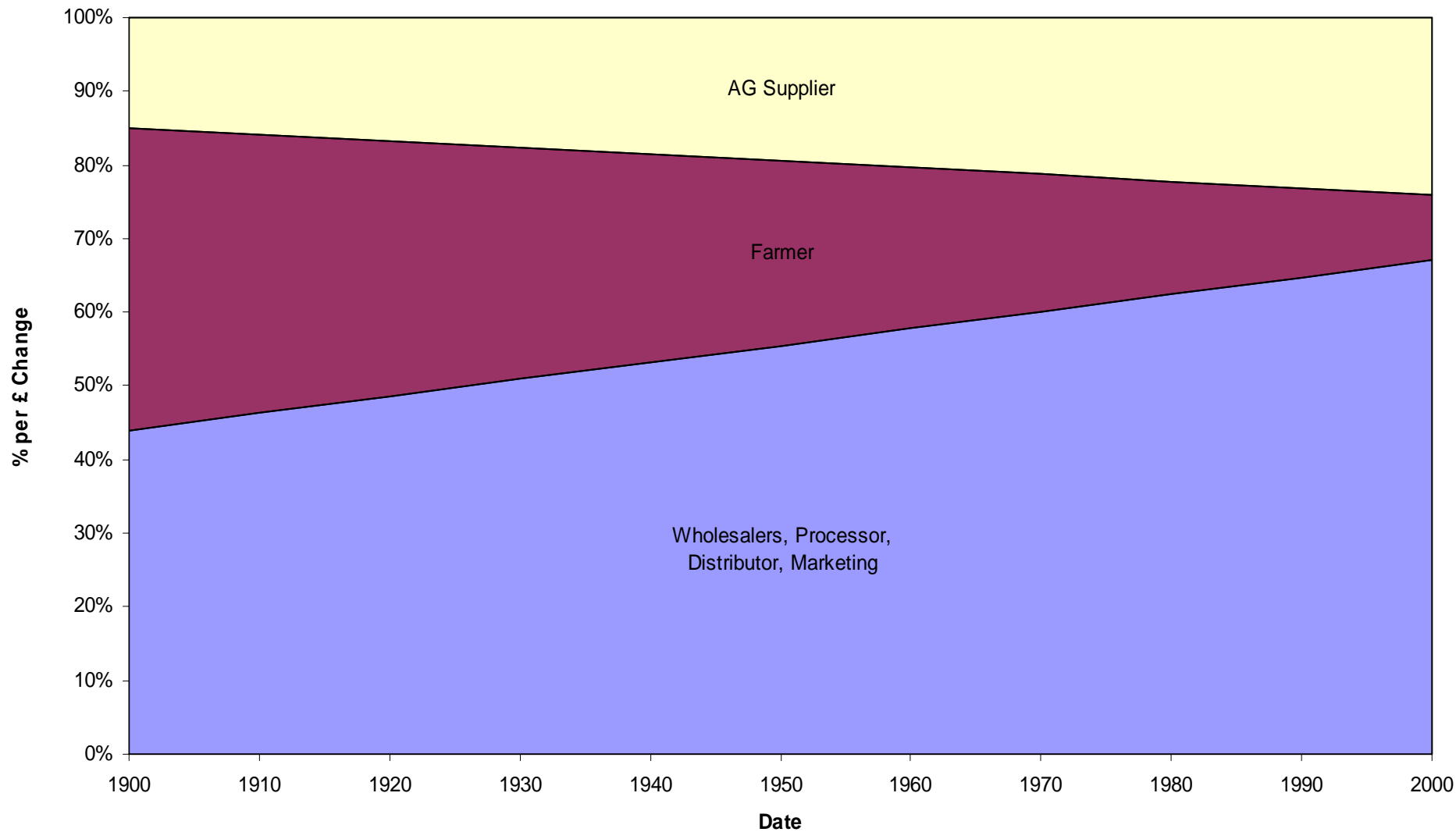


Decline in biodiversity



Source: RSPB, BTO, DETR

Where the food pound goes



Alternative Agriculture

- What is farming?
 - Farming is a socio/cultural activity
 - Farmers use soil & Climate to create family survival
 - Long term plan to leave farm to next generation
- The problem of the “Rural” economy is an international affair.
- Fashion changes from generation to generation
 - Farming does not fit in the box of economic development
 - Economic development has to engage with the wealth of the environment

If not farming –what else?

- Mythical
 - 2% employment
 - 1.5% GDP
- Farmers - who cares?
 - Why doesn't the tourist sector pay for the landscape?
 - It's OK to import GM free Soya from Brazil rain forest





An apparently ordinary farm in the high Suffolk Claylands that was in fact a small mediaeval deer park - the moated lodge, the fishpond with a wildfowl island and the moated dovecote are the key indicators. There may even have been a platform on the roof of the house near the southern fishponds from which herons could be taken for the table!







Conflict Management

- Reconcile political process
- Lowest common denominator
- What is political acceptable
- Why should farmers co-operate
 - They were told to take hedges out
 - To use chemicals
 - To shed labour
 - To compete with each other

Barriers to farmer change

- Fragmented government support
- Knowledge - NO RESEARCH
- Risk – No applied science
- Labour – no labour on farms now
- Infra-structure
 - Market and transport
- Mental capacity to change

What the Greenprint forum can do

- Understand how farming takes on new knowledge
- Accept that farming is not a simplistic “rational” economic activity
- Is farming the “dead duck” of media projection?
- Why is farming not seen in the whole?
- Is economic development only about jobs?
- What is the value of the environment?
 - The price of every thing and the value of nothing”



Thank
you