



“And here we are as farmers, trying to make ends meet...”

- A comparative study of the experience of changed agricultural support in Scotland and England in a post-Brexit Britain
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Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SLU
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“Och här finns vi lantbrukare och försöker få ihop tillvaron...” – En jämförelsestudie kring ekonomiskt lantbruksstöd i Skottland och England i ett post-Brexit Storbritannien

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Abstract

The United Kingdom left the European Union in January 2020, resulting in the British farming sector losing the economic farming support previously available through the Common Agricultural Policy. Consequently, new agricultural subsidy schemes have been implemented in Scotland and England. The aim of this thesis is to compare how the farmers experience these new schemes in post-Brexit Britain, the challenges they face and how they adapt to this transition. The study is based on semi-structured interviews with farmers and advisers in both countries, and the empirical data is analysed through the theoretical lenses of social capital, diversification and biopower. The key findings reveal significant differences between the experiences in Scotland and England. In Scotland, biopower functions more cohesively, as agricultural organisations act as an effective bridge of knowledge to the state. Conversely, the English context visualises the instability that arises when state power is exerted with lack of understanding of localized agricultural knowledge. While farmers in both nations face challenges such as bureaucracy, increased technology complexity, income uncertainty and trade difficulties, their coping mechanisms differ. In England diversification has emerged as a crucial strategy for financial survival, whereas across both countries, informal and formal networks function as a critical safety net to mitigate emotional and economic pressure, preventing structural collapse within the British farming community.

Keywords: Post-Brexit agriculture, Economic support, Agricultural policy, Scotland, England

Preface

A brief note on terminology, this study explores a British context, and British perspectives are explored throughout the text. However, the American English term, “thesis” referring to “bachelor’s thesis” is employed to adhere to the standard institutional terminology of SLU rather than the British English terminology “undergraduate dissertation”.

Thank you

I want to take the opportunity to thank all my informants in Scotland and England for inviting me to your homes, participating and offering me endless cups of breakfast tea. And of course, a big thank you to James and your family. Without your efforts, this thesis would not have been possible.

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1. Introduction

On the 31st of January 2020 the United Kingdom (UK) officially left the European Union (EU) (European Council 2025). This meant that British farmers no longer could participate in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the economic support that was available. Before Brexit the economic support from the EU to the UK reached three billion British pounds annually (Helm 2017). Many of the arguments for Brexit referred to farming. There was a strong emphasis on higher self-sufficiency, more effective systems, stable food prices less affected by the European market and a concentrated focus on food security (Helm 2017). When Brexit became official, new national support systems for farming were implemented in the UK, a so called “UK Agricultural policy” (Arnott et al 2021). Since agriculture is a devolved issue, the implementations for new economic subsidy systems were up to each government in the UK, resulting in a distinctive difference in Scotland and England where the Scottish farmers still receive a direct payment (Scottish Government 2025) and England does not (UK Government 2026)

The experience of these new support systems is highly in question for the moment since it is first now, six years after the implementation, that we can start to see the short-termed results and consequences. The consequences of the transition are now becoming visible since the implementation has been a multi-year process with evolving schemes in England that required a substantial timeline for farms to adapt to the new changes.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

This thesis is going to focus on Scotland’s and England’s implementation of the new schemes. The visions for the new policies were ambitious, but the question remains on what happened with the individual farmers when the three billion pounds in direct support were lost and what socioeconomic effects this might have had six years after Brexit. With this as a starting point, this thesis aims to create a deeper understanding of the role and significance of the new agricultural support systems, and how British farmers experience them:

- How does the experience of the implementation of the new economic support systems differ between England and Scotland after Brexit?
- What challenges do farmers face in this changeover?
- How have they responded and adapted to the changes?

2. Background

To better understand the subject of this study, an introduction to it follows in this section. Here the different schemes mentioned throughout the thesis are explained, together with how the system looked when acting under CAP before the UK left the EU, how Scotland and England each has adapted to the new economic support systems and lastly, a brief introduction to the separate governments in England and Scotland is presented.

2.1 CAP and economic support for farming before Brexit

In the even referendum taking place 2016 on the 23rd of June 52% of the population in the UK voted to leave the EU, also resulting in a departure from the CAP, the Common Agricultural Policy, ultimately removing the direct payment for farming in England (Arnott et al. 2021). CAP, that was established 1962 and then further built on throughout the years, set their main goals to among other things include support for farmers and improve productivity to secure consumer access to food with fair prices, making sure farmers can make a living of their business and work for preserving the rural landscape (European Council 2026). To act according to this a direct payment is paid out inter alia to farmers within EU (European Council 2026). As mentioned before, this also came with a yearly cost of around 3 billion pounds for the British people (Helm 2017). The cost of being a member made the British people feel like they did not get value for their money and was one of many arguments for leaving the EU (BBC n.d.). The single farm payment (direct support) was introduced in 2005 (HM Revenue & Customs 2013).

2.2 The economic support systems today

England and Scotland have chosen to go separate ways in their approach to economic support after Brexit. In Scotland they now receive a BPS payment (Basic Payment Scheme), together with additional greening funds. The BPS payment is a direct support for farming land. The Scottish Government (2025) describes the two main support mechanisms, the BPS is for supplementing agricultural income and the greening payments are meant to encourage beneficial action for environment and climate within agricultural practices. Scotland has chosen to keep the direct payments, stating that this is because the importance for stability and ability to plan within the agricultural sector to ensure food security

(Scottish Government 2025). 2025 14,000 business in Scotland received the BPS payment and the cost reached approximate numbers of 322 million pounds (Scottish Government 2025).

In England, on the other hand, there are several schemes that have been implemented after the removal of direct payment from EU after Brexit (UK Government 2026). The main schemes are available through an environmental land management scheme. These are Single Farm Incentive (SFI), Countryside Stewardships Higher Teir (CSHT), landscape recovery and other fundings through capital items (UK Government 2026). The focus of these schemes lays on the environmental work. The descriptions of these schemes can be summarised as protection of the environment, improve productivity, food production, mitigate climate change effects, woodland work, commons, wild-life rich habitats and net-zero carbon emissions (UK Government 2026).

2.2.1 Summary of the schemes

Presented below is a summary of the schemes described above to create a better overview of the available options in each of the countries.

Table 1. Summary of available economic support schemes for farming in Scotland and England. Source: own compilation of information from the Scottish Government (2025) and the UK government (2026).

Abbreviations	Term	Explanation	Available in
BPS	Basic payment scheme	A direct payment for farming. The same basis as during CAP.	Scotland
	Greening schemes	Payments to encourage Scottish farmers to agricultural practises that benefit the climate and environment.	Scotland
SFI	Sustainable farming Incentive	Paying farmers and land managers for working with sustainable land management.	England
CSHT	Countryside stewardships scheme	Can be received if working to protect, restore and enhance the environment and mitigate climate change. Can be applied for	England

		farmland, woodland and land that is managed for the sake of nature.	
	Landscape recovery	Schemes for long-term and large-scale projects that supports net zero carbon emissions, based in wildlife-rich habitats or in protected sites.	England
	Capital items	Not a scheme itself. Can be applied for to seek capital investments for management measures and to increase environmental outcomes.	England
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	The agricultural policy within the EU. Was the main source of economic support for farming before Brexit.	EU & pre-Brexit

2.3 The governments in Scotland and England

There is an important fact to consider when speaking of this topic and that is the devolution that exists within the political field in the UK. Within the UK there are four countries, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and each of the three that are not England has their own parliament (UK Parliament n.d.). The UK parliament still acts as a head of all these parliaments, but many responsibilities has been delegated. The devolution of the parliaments was agreed to 1990 after a referendum, but the UK parliament still could legislate on devolved matters, even though this power is rarely used (UK Parliament n.d.). The devolved parliament in Scotland is called the Scottish government and they inter alia, handles the rural affairs within Scotland and thus the BPS payments for farmers (Scottish Government n.d.). In England however there are a few main organisations connected to the economic schemes, these are Natural England and DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs). Natural England act as a governmental adviser for environment in England and work to protect and restore the natural landscapes. They are a non-departmental public body with executive rights. They are however sponsored by DEFRA (UK Government n.d.2). DEFRA on the other hand, work directly under the government and work for sustainability. Even though these two that are mentioned throughout this thesis, there are also others that DEFRA and Natural England cooperates with such as Rural payment agency, Environment agency and JNCC (UK Government n.d.)

3. Method

3.1 Interviews

To collect the correct data for the thesis I needed to talk to farmers living and working with these new schemes. The study was carried through a qualitative study where the empirical data is based on semi-structured interviews. By this method the respondents got the chance to present their reasoning, which gives a good basis to understand the real experiences of the situation and the new premises by farmers (Alvehus et al. 2025). The semi-structured interviews also gave an opportunity for me, as the person interviewing, to guide the interview with pre-prepared questions but also offer the openness to other perspectives and experiences that came up during the interview. This gave the opportunity to get to know perspectives that were not known before to combine with the pre-prepared material, which was mentioned by Alvehus et al (2025) to be an advantage of interviews.

Alvehus et al (2025) mention that semi-structured interviews are a winning concept if someone seeks deepness and reflection in the answers. The interview questions were therefore structured with themes rather than specific questions. This approach provided a solid framework for the interviews where the respondents were less talkative, conversely allowing the openness to let more expressive respondents speak freely based on the overarching themes. Based on Alvehus et al's (2025) statement, that finishing the interviews by asking if the respondents had something that they would like to add that they felt that was missed out on was important for taking part of important perspectives, and every interview was finished with this question.

The contact with the respondents was established through a contact with an English landowner and Lord. This connection was initiated through a field trip with Newcastle University in September 2025, which aimed to introduce first-year students to diversified estates and agricultural businesses. Having grown up on the estate, which he now manages, he has accumulated an extensive network of contacts within the agricultural sector, both like-minded and with differing perspectives. He reached out to his contacts on behalf of this thesis and the details of those who expressed interest were then forwarded to me to schedule the interviews. Even though he aimed to get as many perspectives included as possible, it is still possible that his specific network influenced the selection for who got their voices heard, and thereby introducing a risk that certain perspectives are not a part of this thesis. It was hard to get hold of people to interview, as most did not reply when I reached, making the contacts of the lord my only option. It is

also important to reflect on my role as a non-British person. My understanding of the subject might have had possible effects on how the respondents answered to the questions and what they choose to add and what they choose to avoid.

The interviews were conducted in the UK onsite of the farms and took between 45 minutes to 2 hours. All the interviews were recorded to then be transcribed. The transcribing was used together with the AI service Vibe and afterwards thoroughly gone through to correct mishearing's by the AI. Then a thematic coding was used to analyse the material. Coding works as a tool to identify themes in the transcription and one of the most common methods of thematic coding is referred to Braun and Clarke (Hiltunen & Marekovic 2025). The advantages of this method lays in the freedom to choose the applicable theories on the collected empirical data. According to Hiltunen and Marekovic (2025) the course of action of the coding can be concluded into transcription of the material, find potential codes, grouping and naming them and lastly, connect the themes with the empirical data. My own coding resulted in 14 main themes that was worked down to six that are presented under "Results". Based on the size of the thesis several themes where to be opted out, possibly excluding themes that were important for the informants.

The results of the thesis will not be generalizable for the whole of UK and will not represent the general view for all farmers on how Brexit has affected everyone since only a small number of respondents could be included in the study. However, the aspiration is to illustrate perspectives that exists in the British farming community within Scotland and England. The goal is not to have statistical generalizable data for the whole country, but as Alvehus et al (2025) state, a study's results are generalizable depending on how they can give a general picture on the perspectives on the subject.

3.2 Material

To answer the research question, nine farmers with different production types and in addition to these, three agricultural advisers where interviewed. As mentioned before, it was a struggle to find informants and the criterion the lord received when reaching out to his contacts was "as many as possible" to minimize the risk of having too few if several declined. Six of the interviewed farmers were based in Scotland and three in England. One adviser worked specifically with an estate based in England, and the other two worked with both English and Scottish farmers. The uneven distribution of the country of origin of the respondents might have had effects on who's perspectives are more present. The table below shows

the respondents, their type of production and which country they live and work within.

Table 2. Informants participating in the study, their production and where they are based.

Informants	Production	Country
Farmer 1	Livestock with inhouse butchery (certified organic)	Scotland
Farmer 2	Arable & poultry	England
Farmer 3	Arable (Large scale)	Scotland
Farmer 4	Arable	Scotland
Farmer 5	Beef & arable	Scotland
Farmer 6	Livestock & arable	Scotland
Farmer 7	Arable & sheep	England
Farmer 8	Arable & sheep	England
Farmer 9	Beef & arable	Scotland
Adviser 1	Estate director, 15 tenant farms	England
Adviser 2	Owned business, farming advising	England & Scotland
Adviser 3	Employed adviser with around 90 clients	England & Scotland

4. Theories and earlier studies

To create a better understanding on the experience of the implementation of the new economic subsidy systems after Brexit, what challenges farmers face in this changeover and how they adapt to it a theoretical framework based on three concepts are used. These three concepts are social capital, diversification and Foucault's biopower.

4.1 Social capital

The concept of social capital originates from the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He attributed the meaning of social capital as the sum of the benefits or potential benefits that one's durable relations and networks can generate (Broady 1998). According to Bourdieu the different types of capital, social, cultural and economic, are not static and can therefore be converted into other forms. So, by having a high social capital, such as influential contacts or being part of a bigger network, there are greater possibilities to succeed. With other words, a high social capital can more easily result in great economic capital and educational capital (Broady 1998), and by that act as a safety net during uncertain times.

To fully understand the collective dynamics in the social networks Bourdieu's understanding of social capital is combined with the theories of Robert Putnam, rendered by Giddens (2007). During Putnam's work he discovered two types of social capital, bonding and bridging social capital. Putnam also describes social capital as trust, reciprocity and engagement with the society (Giddens 2007). With the bridging social capital, a better understanding of how one's network, scilicet, one's social capital connects groups and organisations with a broader political and economic resources. This while the bonding social capital strengthens the inner loyalty to one's homogeneous group, which in turn eventually can result in exclusion of individuals that do not fit into the dominating norm of the group. Bourdieu's focus on the social capital as one's individual capital (Broady 1998), combined with Putnam's focus on the social capital of groups, presents a valuable point of discussion for this thesis.

Further, the concept of social capital is not only a tool for political lobbying or economic profit, as mentioned before. In this thesis it is also discussed how social capital can act as a stabilising factor emotionally during times of difficulties. Giddens (2007) discusses on that sociologists are concerned that a decrease in peoples social capital creates social worry and instability. Social capital can offer emotional safety when formal government structures and markets go up and

down. Acting within an uncertain situation such as with the new schemes it can be imagined that a high social capital is important to navigate the increased bureaucracy, technological complexity and uncertainty of income. It does not only decide who has the capacity to manage complex information and reach decision makers, but also who gets the social support and generational collaboration that is needed during more difficult times.

The concept of social capital is operationalized as an analytical lens to understand the experiences that the British farmers talk about, specifically Bourdieu's framework (Giddens 2007) is used to identify how farmers used their individual networks as resources and how their social capital can turn into economic capital and emotional support. Putnam's terms bonding and bridging social capital (Broady 1998) helps to elaborate the dynamics within these networks. By combining these, we can identify the practical and emotional functions of social capital under uncertain times.

4.2 Diversification

Earlier studies have described diversification, according to Hansson et al. (2010), as focused on increasing the business's income by developing more different kinds of products and financial activities as a means to reduce risks and increase economic profit. Hansson et al (2010) highlight that this definition is still valid today, but has widened to include a perspective of entrepreneurship to better fit the modern view on society. Diversification can therefore be viewed as an innovative process to reallocate the farms resources such as land, buildings and machinery. Hansson et al (2010) make a separation between two main strategies for diversifying a farm business, as farm-related diversification, where new products or new types of livestock are added into the production, as distinct from a non-farm-related diversification, where, for example, tourism, contracting, renewable energy or external services outside of the primary production are included.

To create a better understanding why farmers feel the need for diversification of their business, theories of the driving forces mentioned by Hansson et al (2010) are discussed. A central thought in theories of diversification according to Hansson et al (2010) is the difference between "opportunity pull" and "necessity-push". Diversification driven by opportunity is created when a business owner identifies opportunities for profitable markets or has a personal entrepreneurial interest. On the other hand, we have diversification driven by the necessity of it. It can be triggered by uncertainty of income, structural chocks and political changes that challenges the main business and its profitability and possibly threatening

survival of the business. During unfavourable economic times, Hansson et al (2010), describes a drive for farmers to structural rationalisation and reach technical efficiency rather than diversify their business. While efficiency and diversification do not share the same definition, based on Hansson et al (2010) they can still be viewed as related in the sense that they affect and overlap one another. At the same time, a farm's room for strategic action often correlates with demographic and individual factors. Factors such as the age of the business owners and level of education do have impact on the level of diversification observed within farms. A higher level of education increases the possibilities of diversifying a business (Hansson et al 2010). The structural and geographical factors also have an impact on diversification. A farms size and local market access has impacts on the farm's willingness to diversify, where Hansson et al (2010) concluded in their study that bigger farms often tend to have a greater degree of diversification.

Diversification and social capital both help to describe and understand the actions that farmers take to tackle the new premises that they act under. Both concepts visualise the methods that farmers use in a time when the new economic support systems are perceived as an uncertain source of income. The concept of diversification can also show and clarify how British farmers work to establish long-term stability after a big change.

4.3 Biopower

Foucault's suggestion of the second form of the modern versions of power is biopower. While the panoptic form of power create local order in individual institutions, biopower helps to describe the bigger picture and how the modern societies are integrated nationally (Aakvaag 2011). Foucault expresses criticism of the state-based theories about power. However, in his theories regarding biopower he states that the liberal contract theory and the Marxists understanding of power as something judicial, negative and limiting that only the state possess does not fit into the modern version of power. He describes the modern power as decentralized, non-judicial, productive and acts within a spectrum of the panoptic institutions (institutions where knowledge is produced). There the power enables, produces and re-produces different versions of social practices. Even though Foucault is fairly negative to the power of the state, he proposes the that the state has the main responsibility to solve the national organisational problems. Aakvaag (2011) defines Foucault's concept of biopower as:

“The modern states regulation of its population that is located on its territory” (Aakvaag 2011 p.344)

To act out this power efficiently, the state does need two significant things, knowledge and power. These things are collected through the panoptic institutions that exist under the state, where knowledge is created by professions, people of knowledge and scientists within the panoptic institutions that collect information about flaws and errors in the system. It is then reported back to the state that turns it into solutions (power), ultimately creating a cycle of state steering with power and knowledge (Aakvaag 2011).

This concept is used to contextualize the power relations of the actors that play within the field of economic support for farming, scilicet, how the farmers, the states, the agricultural organisations and the advisers relate to each other in the experience of the implementation of the new economic support systems. By applying the concept of biopower, we can identify the changed role of the state in relation to farming and food production. It offers a direct lens to understand the central differences in how Scottish and English farmers experiences the changeover since Brexit.

5. Results

The following section is a presentation of the empirical data collected from the interviews with farmers and advisers in Scotland and England. To anonymise but clarify their country of origin the respondents are named by their profession, a number and S for Scotland or E for England. The chapter begins with an overview of their initial reactions to Brexit, followed by a presentation of identified challenges and lastly, possible adaptation strategies to these.

5.1 Reaction to Brexit

Many of the respondents express sadness and worry when speaking of Brexit. A majority of them voted to remain to preserve the community. Farmer 2E voted to remain because of the need for the direct payment, despite reservations about other EU terms. Today farmer 2E feels that what is done is done, but a feeling of betrayal is still present because of what he perceives as false political promises. While farmer 3S voted for Brexit, he agrees that the government has done a poor job before and afterwards, arguing that the government tries to realign with EU again, creating a worst-case scenario.

Conversely, adviser 2 voted against Brexit from an economic perspective, with the loss of subsidy and the effects of trading in mind. He also notes the government's attempts to align with EU again.

“The government over here, are realising that [...] they wish to try to align more closely with them again. [...] It will be a benefit to agriculture.” (Adviser 2)

Adviser 2 also adds that the people that voted for Brexit will blame the government for mismanaging Brexit leading to the negative outcomes, instead of in his opinion, realizing that it was a mistake to leave the EU.

Adviser 3 however, argues that the impact on Brexit for farmers is minimal, they must just adapt to the new schemes. A view that is not agreed upon by farmer 7E, citing a negative impact on the British economy. Farmer 4S and 8E highlighted a public ignorance and political misinformation regarding Brexit. Farmer 8E describes Brexit as a short-sighted decision, where he struggles to find any advantages. Farmer 4S describes Brexit as a stupid thing, that has resulted in a disconnection to Europe and a closer connection, but strained relationship, to the

US. The government has realised the need to be close to the EU, but they struggle to find their way back.

“And since we voted for Brexit, they’ve just treated us like something on the bottom of their shoe.” (Farmer 4S)

While farmer 5S abstained from voting, he appreciates the economic freedom believing that the UK economy is big enough to support itself. In the end he mentions that he was not happy with the deal that was done resulting in less money.

“But the deal that was done was, was a bloody bad one. Because the EU didn't want us to go.” (Farmer 5S)

Farmer 6S was blunter:

“I felt it was an act of supreme idiocy. [...]and they basically told a load of porkies, they told a whole load of lies [...] And most of them knew it was rubbish, but they didn't care. So it was a supreme act of vandalism from our point of view.” (Farmer 6S)

Farmer 9S describes disappointment over the loss of market but can see advantages of Brexit for the wider economy.

“[...] I realised that we had some weight. The EU had clout and weight on the world market, you know, 27 countries with one vote. [...] We're more in control. We can tailor money support to sectors that need it.” (Farmer 9S)

5.2 Differences in politics around agricultural support in Scotland and England

Post-Brexit Britain reveals a distinctive divergence in agricultural support in England and Scotland. Scottish farmers still operate under the same system as CAP, and by that receives a non-competitive BPS payments complemented with some additional production linked subsidies. England replaced its system with “Public goods for public money”, by replacing CAP with prescribed and competitive environmental schemes. Farmer 1S is negative to the removal of direct support in England.

“I believe that is an illogical and entirely subjective, almost ideological change that has been founded, that has no foundation in reasonable logic.” (Farmer 1S)

Farmer 6S notes that the Scottish farmers feel lucky to farm in Scotland because of the direct payment, which is not the case in England.

“Yeah, it’s not fair, [...] Because it’s not a level playing field. Um as soon as you drive into Scotland, they’re still getting their equivalent of a single farm payment. No, it’s been reduced but they’re still getting significant quantities of money” (Farmer 8E)

Adviser 2 sums up the feelings of his clients by stating that the experience in England has been poor, whereas in Scotland it has been more positive. Adviser 2 and 3 agrees on the description that the English support system is targeted to environmental work. Farmer 8E highlights that he does more environmental work today, compared to before Brexit.

The importance of subsidies differs between the farmers. For many they remain a lifeline. Some English farmers describe themselves as “subsidy junkies”, forced to apply for everything that is available to ensure profitability and cash flow. Farmer 7E and 2E are trying to mix and match different schemes together to cover for the loss off the single farm payment. In Scotland, farmer 5S emphasizes the importance of support to avoid an overdraft at the bank.

“They’re still necessary for, well, to farm, as I say, for cashflow. You either have support [...] or you go to the bank and have an overdraft.” (Farmer 5S)

While Farmer 1S aims to reduce his dependency from 33% to 15-20% of total incomes, adviser 3 states that economic subsidies are not a choice, it is a necessity that farmers need to sustain profitability. However, several of the respondents in England does mention on a positive note that they feel that they now, compared to the old system, can seek support for things that they would already be doing.

The trust in government institutions differs between the nations. In England, informants express deep frustration. Adviser 1E describes major efficiency diffuse and poor communication within DEFRA, while farmer 8E describes it as lack on knowledge of farming. On the question if he feels like he can trust DEFRA, he answers:

“No, no, not one way.” (Farmer 8E)

Farmer 2E also adds to the theme that they in the beginning trusted the government to take Brexit as an opportunity to push for growth in the national economy. They do not feel like this has been the case since Brexit became official.

“We’ve got a poor government [...] agriculture is not very high. They’ve got NHS, education, we’re too far down the agenda” (Farmer 2E)

In contrast, the Scottish government commands greater trust because of its relationship with the agricultural sector. Farmer 5S has a positive view on the Scottish government, but is sceptical to DEFRA.

“The Scottish government recognises the role that the agricultural community plays. Whereas in England, they have no idea. [...] In Scotland, we are a small country, a small population. We’re basically all on first name terms. Our people that work for the Scottish government Rural payments Division, to be employed by them, they need some form of agricultural experience. [...] Whereas in England, to work for DEFRA, all you need is a clean driving license.” (Farmer 5S)

Farmer 4S sticks out in his view on the Scottish government, he stated that the government is wasting tax money. He does feel lucky to be in Scotland because of the power of agriculture but does add that this is purely based on incompetence by the Scottish government. This is not something that farmer 9S agrees upon. He describes that his organisation in Scotland has put in hard work lobbying for the Scottish agriculture and therefore the government has knowledge about the need of economic support for Scottish farmers. The same organisation in England, is jealous of this achievement, because of the lack of attention from the English government.

The devolved government in the UK causes concerns about the internal market in the UK and the informants discuss whether it is a good system or not. Farmer 4S points out that it is good to be close to the decision makers, but on the other hand the UK is supposed to be united and therefore should have one government. Adviser 3 and farmer 7E emphasise that this could have effects on the internal market of the UK. The Internal market act, according to adviser 3, is based on the idea that the four countries should not be competing against each other. He raises concerns that separate subsidy systems, are risking creating disturbance, where Scotland is favoured against the other countries.

“I think it’s an ununited kingdom at the moment.” (Adviser 3)

Farmer 6S, however, sees an opportunity in a divided administration, where the politics can be tailored to the region, specifically highlighting the less favoured upland farms and the disadvantage of Scottish weather, but is very clear that he is not pro Scottish independence.

5.3 Differences in politics around agricultural support in Scotland and England

The farmers present a view on economic support as an important initiative for national food security. Respondents generally prefer profitability without subsidies, as exemplified by farmer 5S's bench-marketing group (a group of organisations that get together to compare results and processes). However, many of the respondents describe a feeling of disconnection between society and agriculture, creating lack of understanding that leads to unrealistic expectation regarding prices.

Adviser 1E raises concern that removing that direct support will influence availability on food. When prices rises and people can't pay for it, it will eventually affect food production, an in the end risking food shortages.

“We have taking away the direct support, which means that we're “happy” as a nation to pay more for our food.” (Adviser 1E)

This, while farmer 4S sees a risk that supermarkets try to take advantage of the high food prices.

“They're going on about food inflation today [...] I don't know where that food inflation stuff is but it's on the news and you think well somebody like Mr Tesco or Mr Sainsbury [...] they're having a great time.” (Farmer 4)

Several respondents, Farmer 1S, 5S, 6S and 8E, redefine subsidies as a “food security payment”. Farmer 1S elaborates that the BPS payment in Scotland filter through society and support all the subsidiary industries. Farmer 5S highlights that every pound invested in Scottish agriculture returns six to the economy, while farmer 6S argues that support makes food cheaper for the public. Farmers 5S, 6S, 7E, 8E also mention something similar.

“Everybody calls it a farm subsidy, it was probably actually a subsidy on food. It made food cheaper.” (Farmer 8E)

Adviser 1E thinks that the government ultimately must decide what they want. If they want cheap food for the public, he thinks that farming needs to be subsidised. Farmer 2E means that agriculture, food security, fuel and energy should not be a part of a political party, it should be written as a national issue to minimize the back and forth.

“I think it’s really important that somebody somewhere takes a real hard look at UK food and agriculture policy and stop playing political footballs with it because it is too important. [...] It will never be the most profitable industry, but we are the food producers.” (Farmer 2E)

A major concern is the political nature of agricultural policy. Farmer 2E argues that food security and energy should be treated as a national issue rather than treated as “political footballs”. While adviser 2 believes consumers remain price driven, making them unable to prioritize high animal welfare and environmental standards, adviser 3 worries that England’s new environmental schemes overlook the purpose of producing food.

In contrast, farmer 5S believes the Scottish government has recognised the economic importance of food production, while mentioning that economic support encourages food production. Farmer 6S adds that the red meat industry is significant for Scotland’s GDP (20%), whereas in England it is low (2%), because the Scottish government has understood the importance of investing in food production, while the English government lacks this understanding of food security. Also crediting a stronger cultural connection to produce in Scotland.

Farmer 8E concludes that most developed countries must subsidize agriculture to balance high production standards with a low profit market.

5.4 The bureaucracy and need for advisers

Opinions on bureaucracy vary with region and generation, but a consistent theme is that the bureaucracy has increased massively in both countries, but especially in England. Farmer 1S and 3S find the current system in Scotland manageable, as it mirrors CAP. However, advisers 1 and 3 note that paperwork is increasingly onerous and more complex, especially for mixed farmers. Farmer 9S states that younger generation has a great advantage of growing up with technology, making it easier to navigate through information and how the bureaucracy works and by this has an easier time dealing with the new systems compared to the older generation.

The complexity has created a growing demand for external advisers. Many seek external help to mitigate financial risks, as mistakes can lead to loss of income. Farmer 8E and 4S views advisers as a necessity for insurance reasons, others as farmer 2E and 3S highlights the irritation with a thriving business for consultants who profit from the complexity. Something that farmer 9S and 3S avoids by handling applications themselves to maintain “control” and save on the cost.

Farmer 8E also adds to his descriptions of the need of advisers the importance of them having local connections and knowledge.

Brexit promised a reduction in bureaucracy, which the informants feel has not been fulfilled. Respondents 6S, 9S and adviser 2 can agree that the red tapes (regulations) has increased. Farmer 6S describes it as a “bureaucratic mess” where new rules are constantly added on top of the old ones from the EU. Though Scotland still acts under the legacy of CAP, many Scottish farmers still express unhappiness with new increased bureaucracy with new regulations. Likewise, the English farmers are unhappy with both the increased regulations and the complexity to understand and apply for the new established schemes.

5.5 Instability and global trade challenges

A major theme among the informants is the instability of the English schemes. Adviser 1E describes a big frustration with Natural England and DEFRA after a project was cancelled last minute following two years of planning, potentially causing a 100,000-pound loss. Similarly, farmer 2E and adviser 2 points out the chaotic implementation of SFI, where budgets ran out quickly and application deadlines caused website crashes because the Minister of Agriculture told at 12:00 that they were to close applications at 17:00. Farmer 9S adds, noting that funding distribution feels random and unfair.

The shortness of the schemes makes it impossible to plan long-term. Farmer 7E argues for agriculture needing a 10–20-year horizon, while current schemes change after every few years creating a hard time to plan for English farmers. Similarly, farmer 4S states that he is happy to still receive the BPS payment because of this.

“It is not fair that we still got a basic payment, so I rather have a steady crappy amount than something that’s up and down and in and out and nobody knows where they’re going.” (Farmer 4S)

Even though most of the worries are within England, adviser 3 describes uncertainty regarding the new schemes that will be implemented in Scotland 2030 and the risk of losing the direct payment.

There is a concern regarding unfair competition because of the new systems, where Scotland receives direct support and England does not, causing imbalance with trade. Farmer 2E and 3S argue that the UK’s environmental and animal welfare focus makes it difficult to compete with countries such as Australia or

Ukraine, where production costs are lower. Leaving the EU resulted in UK's losing its main trading partner, and farmer 2E and 3S expresses worry about the threats of tariffs.

“It's worse. We're getting tariffs from America, China, all around the world. And that is costing us as an industry. Tariffs, crucifying the industry just now form all around the world. [...]” (Farmer 2E)

By aligning with the EU again some of the trading problems can be fixed, according to adviser 2. Also mentioning that Scotland might have an advantaged on the global market compared to England, by having specific national food, such as Scottish whiskey, fish and meat with their own specific food labelling potentially causing smaller damage to Scotland than England by having a great opportunity for marketing.

5.6 Adaptations, diversification and the importance of social networks

To cope with economic pressure and uncertainty or loss of direct support, many turn to efficiency and diversification. Adviser 2 states that the level of support available before facilitated inefficiency, and the important thing now is to become efficient. Adviser 1E points out the challenges with diversification, noting that external factors like local population or weather can hold back new income streams. As a response, farmers are trying to streamline their businesses. Farmer 2E is working with technical machinery to reduce fuel cost and farmer 8E and 2E has sold land to focus on high efficiency production. Farmer 7E introduced a holiday business 2012 to have a more secure income, today that is more profitable than the farm itself. Farmer 9S underscores that as long funding remains “it'd be silly not to apply”, despite the heavy administrative burden. Farmer 7E understands the reason for bureaucracy, referring to the amount of money that is handed out.

The informants underscores that communities and connections, such as family, friends and organisations, are vital. Farmer 1S relies on family connection and an international community to support his ideas on regenerative farming, which he feels he doesn't find in the British community. Adviser 1E highlights the importance of a local community to create a diversified farm environment that attract visitors to secure income.

Professional organisations and networking groups not only serve as sending out informative emails, but also, important hubs for connections. Farmer 2E uses

national organisations like NFUE for networking, while farmer 3S finds inspiration through discussions with his staff, family and friends.

“[...] I would say my [organisation] is very good for networking with other individual business all around the UK.” (Farmer 2E)

Farmer 4S describes the practical benefits of these connections, noting that participating in local organisations allow him to stay updated, while cooperation with family and neighbours allow them to buy inputs in bulk.

Farmer 5S is an active member of NFUS and view their roles as bridges to the government. He describes his close networks as important when times are difficult for having people to talk to, but also because of his connection to international machinery rings, he advocates for a global perspective, encouraging farmers to go abroad.

“Get out of the country and go and see what the hell’s happening elsewhere.” (Farmer 5S)

In his benchmarking groups, cooperating is important and the general view is that they can learn from and help each other, a view shared by farmer 6S. Him and his brother shares machinery together with neighbours to minimize the cost of modern farming technology.

Larger agricultural organizations play a key role in policy making. Farmer 7E, former president for a major organisation, uses his network to share experiences and lobbying, without the sense of local competition between neighbours. Similarly, farmer 9S acts as a representative in government lobbying in his role as vice president of a large organisation. His leadership role allow him first-hand information, resulting in many people seeking his expertise. By participating in “Monitor farms” he also has and give the opportunity to learn from others.

6. Discussion and analysis

In this chapter the empirical data is analysed together with the theoretical concepts of social capital, diversification and Foucault's theories about biopower to answer the question of how British farmers has experienced the implementation of national economic support systems after Brexit, what challenges they face after the changeover and how they are adapting.

6.1 Social capital

One of the major reasons for joining a group or an organisation is the contacts collected. The benefits of having contacts in different constellations adds to a person's social capital, where it can be used for influence and achieve goals (Giddens 2007). This description can be compared to the importance of social networks that the farmers in Scotland and England describe. The struggles that they are facing with the bureaucracy, uncertainty and problems with trade all be ameliorated by having organisations, friends and neighbours that can help ease the burden. As Putnam (Giddens 2007) identifies there may however be possibilities that social capital turns in two different directions, one inviting, where people are welcomed inside the community and one homogeneous and excluding. Both tendencies could be seen within the descriptions by the farmers. One example of Putnam's excluding social capital is the situation that farmer 1S describes regarding why he is not part of the biggest agricultural organisation in Scotland. He describes that his community is more connected to the US than the UK because his ideas that he describes as re-generative are not shared within the national community, but he finds equals within the community in the US. This organisation, as mentioned in the results, plays a major role in lobbying for agricultural interests within the Scottish government, but from what it looks like, not if the interests differ from the mainstream view on agriculture. This does not take away its importance of having an agricultural society, as many others describe this as an important organisation for networking, information, connection to the authorities and helping each other. It is possible to question if everyone that is farming within Scotland is welcome or not, if their ideas differ from the general view.

The exclusion and inclusion within social capital as discussed by Giddens (2007) in relation to Putnam, can also relate to the generational gap connected to the new schemes. The respondents emphasize the massive increase in bureaucracy after Brexit, alongside a rapid shift in new technology in agriculture happening, noting how hard it is to navigate through them. Consequently, many seek help from

advisers, hired staff and but also from their relatives who also work within the sector. While paid advisers and staff formally do not count as social capital, several of the respondents describe how they practically integrate within their community. As farmer 8E describes, there is a lack of trust towards authorities, and they do not trust just any random adviser. Instead, trust is reserved for them with local knowledge and those with long-standing community ties, which can be referred back to Putnam's description of social capital as something based on trust and engagement with the society (Giddens 2007). This indicates that the advisers' roles are not only determined by their profession, but also on how they fits into the farming community with additional knowledge and an umbrella perspective. Furthermore, the communal support extends intergenerationally, with younger famers in the family helping others with complex applications. Ultimately, these relationships form a safety net. Without these connections it is possible that several farmers would fall through the cracks, face bankruptcy and ending generations of agricultural knowledge.

Based on the data collected, there is a distinctive difference in how the social capital has converted to political influence in Scotland compared to England. Farmer 9S, a vice president in a big agricultural organisation, and 5S, a member of NFUS, both reflect on how Scottish farmers lobby together to influence local politicians and by this succeeding to build a bridge between farmers and politicians, resulting in still having a direct support on farming. Farmer 9S also mentions his role as vice president having his neighbours, friends and family turning to him asking for help and advice when they are in need, and him participating in "monitor farms" to expand his own knowledge. By doing so, they have created a community based on trust with great opportunity to help each other, something that can be connected to Broady's (1998) reflection on social capital as "connections" and their benefits. In England on the other hand, corresponding organisations to NFUS are not described as successful with lobbying for their cause by neither English nor Scottish farmers. The English farmers also tend to have low trust in government and in authorities, especially in DEFRA. Farmer 5S's comparison with the two government's requirements for employment, farmer 8E and Adviser 1E really indicate how the social capital between farmers and authorities has collapsed in England post Brexit, creating a feeling of exclusion and decisions made over one's heads not based on a farmer's everyday experience.

Different capital forms can turn into another form according to Bourdieu's theories. Social capital can be converted into economic capital (Broady 1998). By looking into the data collected some examples of this can be seen. The need for advisers has today increased and the work of consultants has become an important part of streamlining the businesses to profitability. As mentioned before advisers

and hired staff does not formally count as social capital, but the level of trust seems to determine who the farmers turn to for help. Especially connected to advisers with lots of local connections and community where their expertise is trusted upon, like in the case with farmer 8E. Here the accessibility of contacts (social capital) can turn into economic capital, possibly helping during difficult times. A great network can also create an opportunity to save money when buying inputs in bulk together and sharing machinery with neighbours, as in the case for farmer 4S and 6S, a direct use of social capital to lower costs of inputs since the probability of lending someone your expensive machinery needs a stable foundation of trust. The correlation between social capital and economic capital must also be mentioned in the way that English farmers feel the absolute need for external advisers. Even though it can add up one's social capital, it is also a cost itself to hire them. Which then turn economic capital into social capital, creating a loop between seeking help for economic uncertainty, insurance and bureaucracy struggles by spending more money. By this, advisers, who might already have a closer relationship with politicians and decision makers, have received good market opportunities for providing advice compared to farmers within the agricultural market.

Lastly, and possibly the most important connection to social capital, the need for emotional support during difficult times. The new schemes have disrupted a well imbedded system that has followed British farmers since the entry in the EU 1973 (SVT Nyheter 2017). The uncertainty and the loss of security that they describe are hard for anyone to handle by themselves, and for farmers, already being in a lonely career choice, one's social capital can act as a stabilising factor when you feel like the political world are "playing football" with your life.

6.2 Diversification

Hansson et al (2010) describe diversification as a focus on minimising risks, by having multiple income generating activities within the business. As mentioned in the results, some of the respondents felt the need for diversification as an adaptation to more difficult times. Adviser 1E wants to build an estate that attract visitors to the not so well visited Northumberland and farmer 7E secured income with a holiday business when farming income fluctuated too much. These are examples of something that can be identified as one of the seven types of diversification identified by Barberi and Mahoney (Hansson et al 2010). Hansson et al (2010) also adds the significance of demography referring to number of residents and the availability of customers, just as adviser 1E mentions that they struggle with. Even though they both speak well of diversification, especially adviser 1E describes the difficulties with diversification, both in the way of finding

something the farmers are interested in and willing to spend time and money on to learn, but also in terms of market access. Two tenant farmers on the estate that adviser 1E works for has been interested in diversification and therefore gone through with it, but other business struggles. Factors, such as bad weather has decreased the need of fencing material for local farmers, resulting in a decrease in sold material from their sawmill on the estate. By this they have tried to diversify to more gardening materials for the public, but the low residential numbers impact the possible number of customers. This makes diversification hard, even though the will for it is there. Another important thing is knowledge. Without knowledge it is much harder to be more efficient or diversify, which again creates a need for advisers. This underscores adviser 1E's statement about the importance of having a genuine interest and, consequently, a willingness to put in the work to learn something new and unfamiliar. Hansson et al (2010) state that level of education has had an impact on the probability on diversifying one's business.

Diversification can be seen as a reaction against specialisation. There are advantages with specialisation, but as Hansson et al (2010) point out, it is also a risk for the business. Having only one source of income can result in a complete loss of income during years when the yield or output is bad. Which, combined with the loss of the single farm payment, can result in disastrous numbers for the business. Therefore, it is possible that we see a bigger need for diversification for the moment in England rather than in Scotland. Which can also be connected to Hansson et al's (2010) mentioning of "opportunity-pull" or "necessity-push". In England we can clearly see the "necessity-push", where English farmers are driven by the need to seek economic stability after Brexit, describing themselves as "subsidy junkies", while trying to apply for as many environmental schemes and alternative incomes as possible to diversify income streams. We can't see the same absolute need for diversification by farmers in Scotland, possibly a direct effect on still having access to direct support from the Scottish government. The general view in Scotland seems to be that diversification is optional, stating that they can survive on the output of their food production, in combination with BPS, while English farmers can't do the same. We can see examples with farmer 3S and 5S mentioning that they are probably big enough to not need diversifying their businesses but still mentioning the need for efficiency. This does not at all correlate with Hansson et al's (2010) conclusion that bigger farms often tend to have a higher degree of diversification. The question is if they view the size of their farming business as a kind of internal diversification or if they might not have seen the economic risks since Scotland still receives the BPS.

Adviser 2 emphasised the importance of becoming more efficient today, because of the inefficiency that he states was created by economic subsidies. The need for efficiency is mentioned by several of the responded as an alternative way, instead

of diversification. Based on Hansson et al (2010), diversification and efficiency can be correlated as one affecting the other. But the respondents speak of them as two different options, whereas if they are efficient, they do not have to be diversified. However, as Hansson et al (2010) discusses, they overlap in many cases. The respondents that were not very interested in diversification, was big on efficiency, having machinery rings, sold land to save fuel, and precision farming to save on inputs when money is getting tighter. Something that correlates with Hansson et al's (2010) discussion on "unfavourable economic conditions" triggering the need of diversification and increased efficiency. The structural changes within the agricultural society in England are getting a harder push for efficiency and diversification than the farmers in Scotland. This might, however, change when the new systems are to be presented in Scotland 2030. Here England might have an advantage, they have already gone through the structural change and built an efficient and diversified enterprise with airbags for economic fluctuations, compared to the farmers in Scotland, especially for them stating that they are "big enough" to not have to diversify. As Hansson et al (2010) discuss regarding that when financial conditions are less favourable, diversification increases, is it possible that Scotland finds itself in an "artificially" good economy, which inhibits drive for diversification? This raises concern regarding adviser 2's warning that the direct support in Scotland might eventually be phased out. The lack of diversification in Scotland today is not a problem for the moment, but it suggests that they might be less prepared than England for future policy shifts, since England has already created a steadier ground.

6.3 Biopower

When analysing the collected empirical data, questions about power arises. The English farmers describe how they feel like decisions are being made without their involvement and how their perspectives are not included in the decision-making process. Aakvaag (2011) describes Foucault's theories about biopower as the enforced power of the state. Foucault states that biopower can be defined as the modern state's regulation of the population within its territory. However, to exert this, the state needs two things, knowledge and power (Aakvaag 2011). From the respondents' stories, we can see widely different views on this power, one where the government is viewed to possess knowledge, and one where they do not. This raises questions as whether to the state actually possesses the necessary knowledge to exercise its power regarding the economic subsidy systems.

The core of the state's biopower is its coordination of panoptic institutions for collecting knowledge and power (Aakvaag 2011). This possibly means that the

agricultural organisations, such as the unions, are part of the creation of power because of the knowledge they possess. The large organisational groups act as sensors, collecting information on what the population needs and seeks, and then serving as a bridge to the state, by expressing these needs. In Scotland, this biopower seems to work and create stability between those “with the knowledge” and the state, if we take the word of farmer 9S’s expressions regarding his role as vice president of one of these larger agricultural groups and how they are lobbying for agriculture, possibly giving them important influence on decision makers.

Conversely, in England this bridge between knowledge and power is unstable, which possibly creates the insecurity and structural challenges that the English farmers and advisers describe. DEFRA, according to farmer 5S, does not require any agricultural experience to be hired. This instability is not aligned with the purpose of the state to secure a future for its population (Aakvaag 2011), risking a crisis for biopower when the state tries to exert its power with lacking knowledge. This crisis lies in the respondents’ conceptualisation of what constitutes legitimate knowledge in this case. From the farmers and advisers’ perspectives, the state’s biopower should be grounded in agricultural experience and expertise. On the other hand, the state might argue that they are attempting to ground their biopower into the knowledge of the environment and climate instead. Nonetheless, the individual farmers’ experience of this failure risks resulting in economic and operational stress. Something that can already be seen from what the respondents are describing when farmer 7E speaks about the need for a 10–20-year horizon for planning and adviser 1E warns about the risks of food shortages. If the state cannot fulfil its assigned power due to these clashing expectations of knowledge, the very core of biopower is threatened. Then, according to the respondents, chaotic implementation of the new schemes in England are not only going to be an administrative problem, but risks creating an existential uncertainty for English farmers who are left to navigate through a dysfunctional system without clear guidance.

The economic support provided by the state could be classified as an important tool for the state to regulate the population’s needs, as mentioned by Aakvaag (2011). By regulating where the money goes, the state can take control over what the population consumes, which correlates with what the respondents mention about the positive impacts on food prices that direct support can have. On the other hand, these challenges, referring back to adviser 3’s worries about the English government’s focus on environmental work for farmers rather than food production with the new economic schemes, risk having effects on how British farmers adapt. In other words, the choice they face whether to continue farming but with the risk of less income or to do more environmental work but less food

production. This illustrates an example of the biopower that the state possesses, by redefining the rules for economic survival, the government forces English farmers to alter their farming practices in their shift from food production to “Public goods for public money”.

7. Conclusion

This thesis purpose has been to visualize the experiences and the socioeconomic challenges that has come out as the result of the new schemes that have been implemented after Brexit. To refer back to the research questions:

- How does the experience of the implementation of the new economic subsidy systems differ between England and Scotland after Brexit?
- What challenges do farmers face in this changeover?
- How have they responded and adapted to the changes?

After a comparison of the collected empirical data between Scotland and England, we can identify that the different paths that Scotland and England have chosen with the schemes have created two distinctive realities for the farming sector. According to the respondents, this have resulted in a fragmented United Kingdom. While Scotland decided to keep the direct support to prioritize economic stability and food security, England has with their shift to “Public goods for public money” chosen a more uncertain, environmental and market driven way for farming.

The comparison shows that the English farmers experiences are characterized by a necessity to diversify and optimize their business. The loss of direct payment (SFI) has put the English farmers into what can be viewed as an unfavourable economic situation. This has acted as a triggering factor causing diversification based on “necessity-push” and technical efficiency to secure their business’s survival (Hansson et al 2010). In contrast to this, within the Scottish farmers we can sense a strong feeling to be “lucky” to farm in Scotland, indicating that they are happy that they are still receiving their BPS. The Scottish government’s decision to keep the BPS could be compared to a financial airbag, resulting in potentially a diversification based on want instead of necessity, but risking a sense of false economic safety if the direct payments were to disappear.

The main challenges in this changeover can be found in the increasing amount of administrative and digital bureaucracy together with an increasing dependency on external advisers. Based on the empirical data and the theoretical framework four main conclusions can be made. Firstly, the schemes that has been introduced in England are being described as uncertain and difficult. The constant change makes it hard to plan, and many farmers fear the loss of income when SFI was removed. Secondly, the increased complexity of the economic schemes and Scotland’s lobbying for direct payment shows the importance of the farmers social capital. The results indicate that the social networks and connection that the respondents have are necessary for them to manage the challenges with the

economic support that they are facing today, something that is discussed by Giddens (2007). In Scotland, the social capital has successfully been translated into political influence that can be correlated to Putnam's view on bridging forms of social capital (Broady 1998), while in England they feel non-included in the decision making, something that has been discussed from a perspective of biopower. Thirdly, an uneven playing field on the internal market in the UK has been created based on the view of the respondents. That the Scottish government essentially has decided to keep the direct payment, has resulted in a more favourable economic state than England and this will possibly cause disruption to the internal market when the English farmers struggle with uncertainty regarding their income. This political decision challenges the idea of an even market between the four countries in the UK. Fourthly, an important perspective for the respondents were the lack of connection to their consumers and a perceived lack of understanding of food production among consumers. Instead of the mainstream view of economic support as a business income, the study shows that the subsidies might have had an impact on the availability of cheaper food. When the English government now shifted to "Public goods for public money" it risks reducing the food production and causing increased food prices. This creates queries regarding what long-term effects this might have on the UK's national food production.

In summary, the study shows that the new economic support schemes after Brexit have caused a lot of irritation, uncertainty and possible effects on trade and the national market. Scotland has had a more positive experience than England, causing many farmers in England to turn to diversification, efficiency and their network to cope with the new premises. Their response highlights an adaptive shift, where structural challenges are managed by seeking alternative incomes and external advice. The challenge going forward is for the UK to decide on how they want the economic future of farming to look like.

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Appendix 1

Below follows the interview guides for the 12 interviews that was conducted.

For farmers

1. Background

- Tell me about yourself and those who live and work here on the farm?
- What type of production do you run?
- What is your own professional background?
- Are you from this area?
- Did you inherit the farm? Has it been in the family for a long time or did you recently take it over?
- What did the farm look like 10 years ago?

2. Support Systems in Practice

- Does the farm apply for financial agricultural support through the new systems?
- Did you apply for financial agricultural support through the CAP when that option existed?
- Are financial supports significant for your business? How did this look before Brexit?
- What was your reaction when Brexit became official?

3. Application Process / Administrative Work

- What is your experience of the administrative work?
- How do you perceive the clarity of the rules regarding the criteria for applying?
- Is it easy to obtain correct information?
- Can you tell me about an occasion when you felt frustrated or pleasantly surprised in contact with the new support systems?

4. Differences from Before

- Have you implemented any changes in your business following Brexit?
- What is the biggest difference?
- Why did you implement these changes?
- How fair do the new systems feel? For example, regarding the differences between Scotland, England, and Wales—do you feel someone has it better?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the new systems?
- Do you feel you have more or less "room for manoeuvre" (agency) as an entrepreneur today compared to during the CAP era?

- When you implement changes on the farm, what are the most important factors/resources that made it possible?
- Have there been times you chose not to apply for support in order to maintain your freedom of action or independence?

5. Information & Networks

- When new rules or guidelines are introduced, how do you receive information about this?
- Do you use an external agent or adviser to handle applications?
 - o If yes: Why does it feel necessary?
 - o If no: How is the experience of navigating this on your own?
- Did you have an adviser even before Brexit?
- What specifically does the agent help with?
- Do you feel that agents have more power or influence today compared to before Brexit?
- How do farmers discuss the new rules and Brexit among themselves?
- How has the relationship with your neighbours or local agricultural organizations changed since Brexit?
- Do you feel you receive support from authorities to understand the new systems?

6. Concluding Questions

- How do you view the future of your profession? Do you think Brexit and the changes in access to financial agricultural support have had an impact?
- What do you think is the biggest misconception people outside of farming have about how Brexit has affected your daily economic life?
- Is there anything you would like to add that you think I have missed?

For agents/ advisers

1. Background

- What type of consultancy do you specialize in?
- What types of farms do you provide advice for?
- Are you employed by an organization or do you work independently/privately?
- How long have you been active as an adviser? Did you also work during the CAP era?
- In which part of the UK do you operate?
- How many clients do you currently work with?

2. Role

- How do you view your role—as an adviser, an administrator, or a strategic partner?
- How has your role changed since Brexit?

- What is the most significant difference?
- How would you describe the need for external advice today? Is there a difference in the number of farmers seeking external help compared to before Brexit?
- Do you feel that you act as a "translator" between the authorities and the farmers?
- How do farmers discuss the changed premises with you? Are they upset, satisfied, or generally positive/negative?
- In your experience, do farmers with extensive networks or previous experience in diversification find it easier to adopt the new systems?

3. Client Challenges

- What are the most common questions or concerns you encounter from your clients?
- Which types of support are available to apply for? Is any particular scheme more popular than others? Is there anything that is being avoided?
- Is this due to a high administrative burden, insufficient compensation, or requirements that do not fit the specific business?
- How do you view the profitability of the farms you work with? Are there certain types of production that are struggling more than others?
- How would you characterize farmers' general reactions following Brexit?

4. Administration

- What is your perception of the user-friendliness and clarity of the new systems for applying for financial support?
- Are there differences in response times and support from authorities today compared to previously?
- Do you see a pattern in which farmers "manage on their own" and which ones more frequently seek external assistance?
- Do you find the new systems to be predictable, or do they tend to change during application periods or similar timeframes?

5. Future Strategies

- What types of measures or actions do you advise your clients to take to handle more difficult times?
- Has there been a decrease or increase in interest for certain activities since the new support systems were established?
- What do you think the future looks like for British farmers? Do you expect major changes to occur?

Is there anything else you would like to add that you feel I have missed?

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