

AGROFORESTRY IN THE UK - 20 YEARS ON

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The Farm Woodland Forum began as the 'Agroforestry Research: UK Discussion Forum', meeting for the first time in 1986 primarily to provide an opportunity for the exchange of ideas of members of its first national research consortium, the Silvopastoral National Network Experiment. It has met every year since its foundation. As its interests and role evolved it progressively became the UK Agroforestry Research Forum, the UK Agroforestry Forum and most recently the Farm Woodland Forum in 2003. It successfully applied to become a registered charity in 2005. A second consortium, the UK Silvoarable Network was started in 1992. Members of both networks have been partners in Europe-wide EC-funded consortia.

A feature of the UK Agroforestry Forum was its Newsletter, "Agroforestry in the UK" which was founded in 1991 (later renamed 'Agroforestry Forum') and was generously sponsored by the University of Wales at Bangor. In 2000 it was partly subsumed into the peer-reviewed journal 'Agroforestry Systems' with its 'white pages' being continued as the on-line "UK Agroforestry Forum Newsletter". The Forum also has a web site and a JISCmail mailing list.

Another of its products was the 'Silvoarable Agroforestry Tool Box' - a guide on compact disc to prospective adopters. In 2000 the Forestry Commission published Bulletin 122 "Agroforestry in the UK". Many of the authors were members of the Agroforestry Forum. A number of researchers have been trained and post-doctoral scientists employed on research projects producing theses and many high quality peer-reviewed publications.

It had one very good demonstration site, now destroyed, at the Royal Agricultural Society's show grounds in Warwickshire.

The Forum has always tried to influence land use policy by responding to public consultations usually arranged by MAFF/Defra or the Forestry Commission. Despite this activity it is difficult to see its influence being effective.

Despite the long term nature of agroforestry plantings, there has been no continuous funding that would allow a complete single cycle to final harvest of trees. Indeed funding has been low overall. Very few experiments and trials are now in more than a maintenance phase with limited measurements. Furthermore in the face of official attitudes, the future for agroforestry *per se* in the UK, in my opinion looks bleak.

