

PLANS FOR BLURRING THE BOUNDARIES ON THE NORTHOOR TRUST ESTATE: DELIVERING FOREST PRODUCTS AND FOREST HABITATS OUTSIDE THE WOODS

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The Northmoor Trust has a strong history of research in hardwood improvement, has been at the head of the field in the development of agri-environment techniques for arable land and has twenty five years' experience of the conservation management of a now internationally designated nature reserve. In common with other landowners we need to address the twin imperatives of combining biological conservation with the delivery of products from the land which will compete in increasingly global markets. In order to meet these challenges we cannot afford to be constrained by the arbitrary boundaries that we have drawn, by default, between our different land management systems.

As a land management organisation we need to match our crop production to a clear analysis of our social, environmental and economic objectives. In our case we wish to grow products with embedded conservation and cultural value, products which help people make sense of their place in the landscape, and ultimately products that people will choose over cheaper imports. Whether the product comes from a tree or not is a secondary consideration and we anticipate a blurring of the boundaries between woodland and non-woodland in the following ways:

- Placing high value timber crops alongside other high input crop and livestock units, in our in-bye land.
- Reducing functional fragmentation of habitats by managing and promoting 'woody habitats', such as veteran trees and scrub, across our whole estate.
- Integrating crops where it provides clear practical, economic or ecological benefits, for example, poultry under orchards or pigs in woods.
- Engaging everyday lives: demystifying production and conservation by showing people how to put 'forest gardening' into their domestic environment.