

Global warming to boost Scots farmers

August 15 2005

Climate change could be good news for Scottish farmers, according to ESRC funded research at the University of Stirling. Rising temperatures and increased CO₂ levels could mean increased yields and a boost to local economies, according to Professor Nick Hanley, who led the project.

The research findings are based on a series of interlinked models, which analysed the effects of projected changes in Scotland's weather on land use, regional economies and biodiversity. The possible effects of reform to the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) were also taken into account.

'We were quite surprised to find that global warming is not necessarily a bad thing,' says Nick Hanley. 'Rising temperatures will permit farmers to grow more productive, faster developing crops and increase the intensity of livestock farming. At the same time, the extra CO₂ in the atmosphere will reduce the need for artificial fertilizers and this will offset any negative economic effects of climate change.'

Despite the predicted benefits of climate change, the prosperity of Scottish farmers will depend more on the extent to which the CAP is reformed, Nick Hanley warns. 'Yields may go up, but prices will depend on changes in the marketplace rather than the weather.'

The research also found significant regional variations in the effects of climate change. The knock-on effects of increased farm income would be felt most strongly in the lowland south-west region of Scotland, and

least in the hill farming areas of the North West. The only area which might experience poorer yields was the low-lying, low rainfall coastal south east, where irrigation might be needed in the long term, the report says.

The study found little evidence of changes to biodiversity as a result of shifting patterns of land use and management. ‘The indirect effects of climate change seem to be small, but there will also be direct effects which could not be predicted from our data,’ says Nick Hanley.

Source: Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

Citation: Global warming to boost Scots farmers (2005, August 15) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-08-global-boost-scots-farmers.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.