

Continuous Cover Forestry: opinion and evidence

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In Wales, 2007:

- 86% said a lot more trees should be planted
- 73% said different types of trees should be planted that will be more suited to future climates
- 52% believed cutting down forests and woodland makes climate change worse, even if they are replanted

[Public Opinion of Forestry survey]

More widely:

- People prefer older trees, bigger trees
- People in UK prefer broadleaves (and generally across Europe people prefer the 'right' trees)
- People prefer diversity at stand and landscape level
- Comparisons between different social groups (urban, rural, foresters, environmentalists, etc.) show all prefer less intense harvests
- Foresters show significantly greater preference than most other groups for clearfells.

[Marzano et al., Forest Research]

[Bradley and Kearney]



- ‘that is what drove us to really bad forestry’
- ‘that was a disastrous period in British forestry and our friends across the water just thought we were mad’
- “[change of philosophy] was dormant in a sense ... it’s not been a big deal to kindle their interest [in CCF]”

“Continuous-cover (where low-impact silviculture protects the soil and retains a woodland appearance) is not possible in all circumstances, but our favourable site conditions in Wales allow this type of management to be used in most sheltered woodlands. ...

- We will aim to convert at least half of the National Assembly woodlands to continuous cover over the next 20 years, where practical, and encourage conversion in similar private sector woodlands.
- We will continue to gather information about continuous cover systems and how best to manage these systems for the range of benefits that society demands.”



- Input legitimacy – i.e. the policy process is
 - fair
 - transparent
 - accountable
- Output legitimacy – i.e. the results are
 - the forest produces the goods and services we want
 - people like it
- “Evidence based policy”



- **Response to public opinion:** reduced clearfelling (but note other alternatives would also achieve this)
- **Varying perceptions of process:** ‘fantastic public consultation process’; ‘excellent consultation’; ‘limited consultation’; ‘influence of one adviser’; ‘parachuted in’ by ministers; ‘no ownership’ by FC Wales
- **Evidence based?**

- “In many countries CCF management has been politically driven and there is a lack of research looking into the many consequences of this new management type” [Pommerening and Murphy, 2004]
- “Wales’s CCF policy arrived before the emergence of any firm evidence on which it could reasonably have been based” [Colin Price]
- “[The Welsh CCF target] represents a marked shift in policy and practice and requires an assessment to ensure there will be no detrimental effects on forest soils or water’ [Environment Agency]
- “there’s not a good evidence base in Britain. A lot of the evidence base is abroad but it is not necessarily directly transferable.” [FDM, Scotland]

Results: see Clive's talk

- 37 000 ha designated and in some stage of transformation
- 3 trial sites

Public preference?

- 'we sorted that with the landscaping changes in the 1980s') [FC Wales; district forester]

Issues:

- How to measure progress and impact?
- E.g. reduced timber output caused by range of factors?
- Range of opinions over forecasts
- Debate over terminology
- Lack of data
- Lack of skilled workers

From outside Wales

- “we were in here going *what?!*”
- “It is exceptionally difficult in a wet boggy windy country”
- “It’s not necessarily a bad decision it’s just not well founded”

Within Wales:

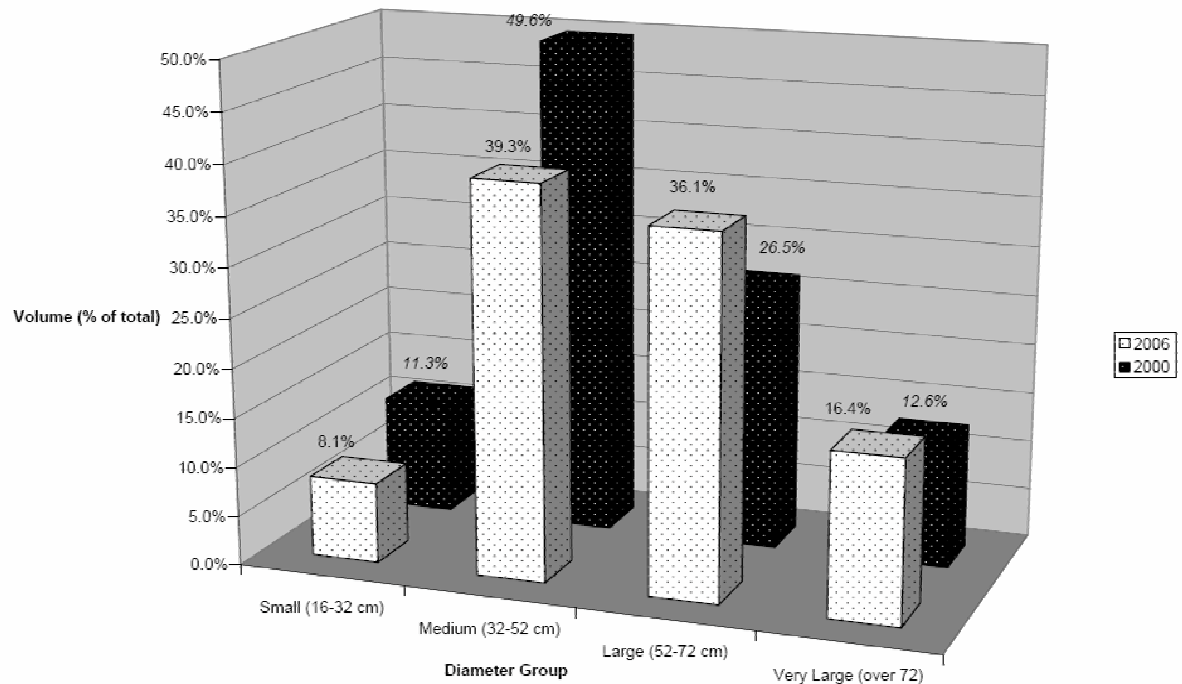
- “Nobody knows what CCF is”
- “People make comment but it’s based on what they hear and what they think rather than what they see.”



Evidence doesn't always come before policy.

Evidence includes data collected at many scales and with many purposes.

By recognising this we can open up better policy implementation and technology development processes.



- ‘It’s not that we actually believe this definition ... by embracing this wonderful expression we are not saying that we are necessarily going to go in for group selection or single tree selection’
[CCFG member, private, Scotland]
- ‘it’s all in the marking’ [private, England]
- ‘It’s much easier to talk to non-foresters about this’ [private, England]
- ‘It’s a moving target – it’s all about the journey’ [private, Wales]
- ‘FDs have been left to their own devices’ [FCW position statement]
- ‘it’s not rocket science, it’s art. You’ve got to make a judgement’
[FC FDM, Scotland]
- ‘I explained the idea to the harvester operator then left it to his judgement’ [former FDM, Wales]

Sharing experience:

- Private and state sectors
- UK trial sites
- Horizontal (between districts / countries)
- Longitudinal (institutional memory)

Data collection and monitoring

- AFI network

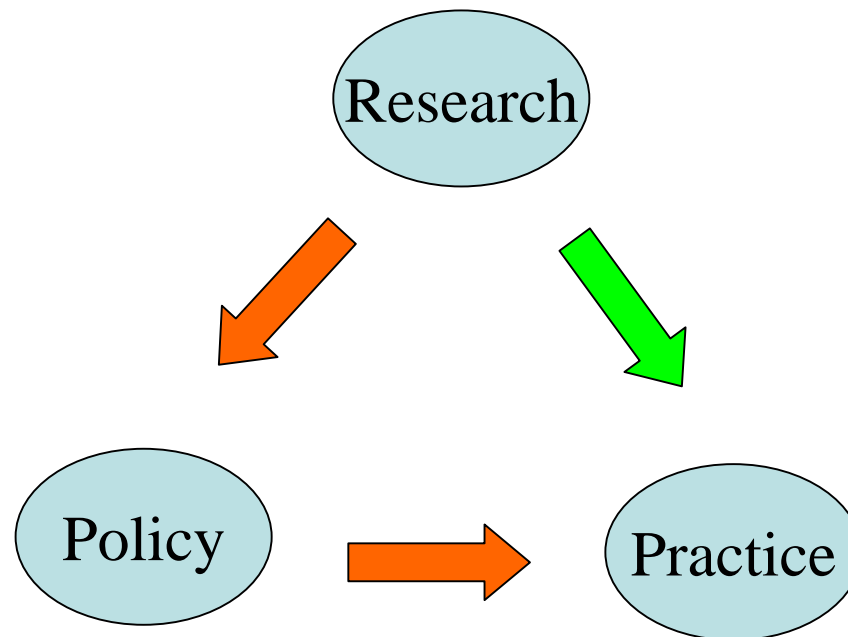


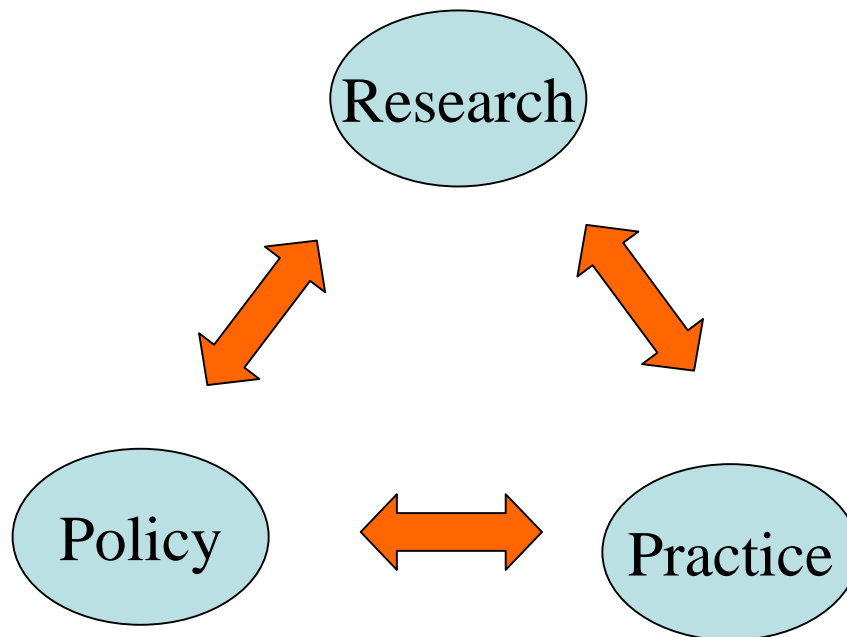
- Training
- Planning (FDPs, MPs)
- Operational guidance
- Decision support tools
- Resources to record and disseminate experience
- Forestry culture?

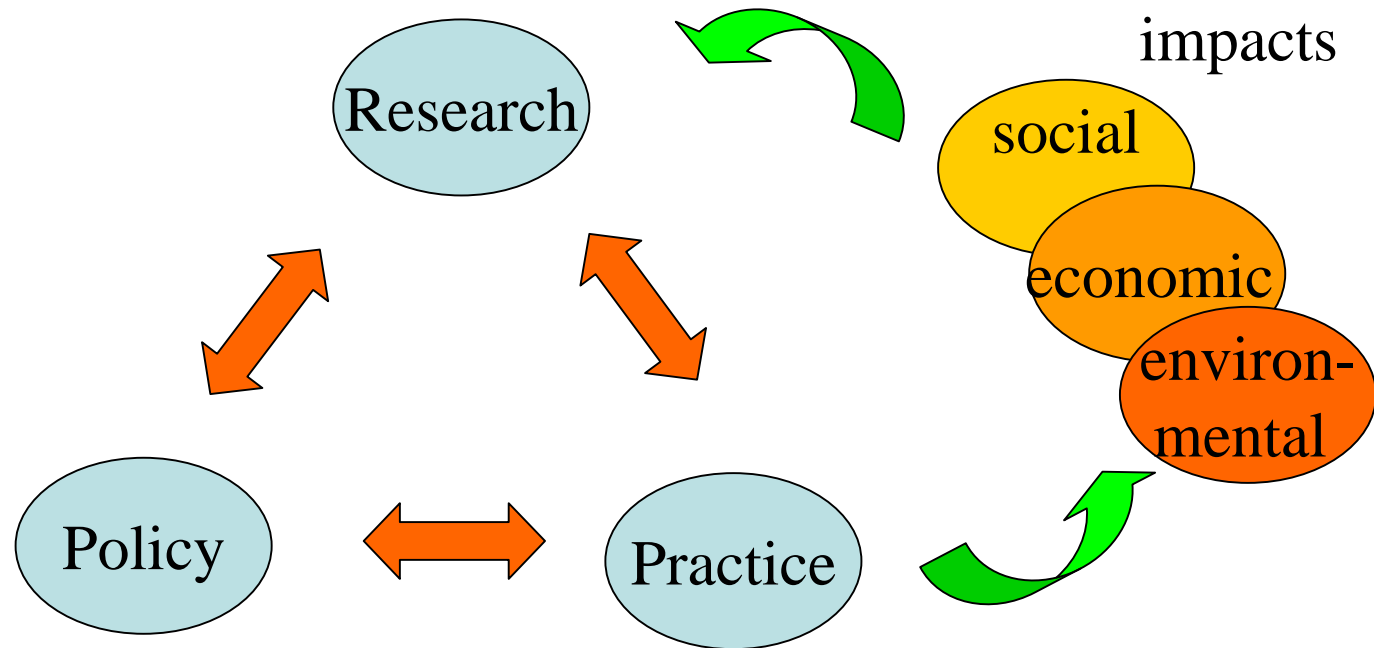


A “top 10 forestry questions” question ...

- What are the barriers to knowledge transfer in forestry from research to practice and how can they be removed?







- **Requirements of state sector:** What processes, procedures, targets, indicators etc. does state adoption of CCF require, that the private sector does not?
- **Definitions:** How can policy, definitions and indicators be more clearly linked?
- **Process:** How can innovation and experience feed into policy and management?
- **Procedure:** How to standardise and train others in the personalised / intuitive / spontaneous decision-making that CCF practitioners use?
- **Outcomes:** is the public happier? How can we know?