

Go Falkland 2024 Survey



Final Report

Abstract

GO Falkland Regenerative Agriculture Gathering, organised by Falkland Stewardship Trust (FST), brings together hands-on farmers, growers, foresters and people with an interest in, or concerns about, food and farming. The aims are to encourage and support positive actions across Regenerative Agriculture (RegenAg) and Sustainable Local Food Systems (SLFS) and to help develop a Community of Practice (CoP) in Scotland. At this year's 2-day Gathering, there were 60 presentations/ workshops/ demonstrations across 8 venues. Presentation materials have been gathered and some of the sessions were captured by a team of videographers and an artist. A survey was conducted by FST to assess attendees' interest and capacity to engage in meeting the above aims. Herein, we report on that survey.

Following the award of a contract with funding from AFN Network+ (AFN), a project manager was assigned and the survey was greatly expanded compared to the previous year. Designed to gather insights into attendees' levels of Awareness, Attitudes and Actions, as well as barriers, needs and solutions, the format was a combination of multiple choice questions and open comments to capture the voice of attendees. A prize draw of a ticket refund was included to encourage prompt responses.

Developed in two parts for before and after the event, the survey was drafted and reviewed by the FST team and personnel from AFN prior to release. A combined survey was subsequently prepared to be answered post-event only. Links to the survey were posted on the FST website and in a series of emails to participants after the event. The existing FST team was stretched to deliver the event itself and the funding for the survey and appointment of a project manager was essential to its successful implementation with a high response rate and this analytical report.

The findings of the survey are presented with commentary on the variability in responses, and a comparison of the barriers / needs with the solutions offered. Relevant statistics were researched relating to the questions on awareness, and an assessment of the accuracy of responses is provided.

An analysis was undertaken to identify Innovators and supporters of Innovation, the Innovation Cohort (IC). This cohort was identified as having high awareness of best practices, strong aspirations for systemic change, and commitment to increasing personal action. A better understanding of members of the IC was gained by investigating any major differences to other responders. The commentaries they provided were extracted, which illuminated their positive approach. It is recognised that the IC would likely extend beyond those identified within the survey responders.

There are many positive indicators for developing a CoP with the emergent IC, across their demographics, activities or areas of interest, progressive outlook and intended actions. Adopting a holistic approach to wide implementation of both SLFS and RegenAg, with engagement of the consumer, is supported by attitudes expressed and multiple strands of mutual benefits.

The gathering has offered a step forward and given a clear call for change with more learning & skills, funding and policy change, supported by a national network / community of practice and local peer-to-peer support / learning. The survey has helped to provide insights and identify specific opportunities to help build a CoP at national level. There are a number of organisations well-positioned to elicit support and action across the IC, the presenters and the wider community in the landscape of farming, local food systems, academia and government.

To move forward and help this call for change to be met, there is a recommendation for a pathfinder program to develop a framework and budgeted workplan for a Scotland-wide CoP for Regenerative Agriculture, and a further recommendation for FST to develop effectively as a regional hub. Both recommendations are supported by a series of opportunities identified and developed within the report.

Author

Séamas Stout, Scree Limited, Survey Project Manager. Falkland Stewardship Trust. December 2024

Grateful to Ninian Stuart for deep wisdom, clarifying the role of FST, and, with Adele Clarke, review of draft report.

Background and Introduction

Go Falkland Regenerative Agriculture 2024 was the second such gathering on the Falkland Estate in Fife, Scotland, both hosted by Falkland Stewardship Trust (FST). The event brings together hands-on farmers, growers, foresters and people with an interest in, or concerns about, food and farming. The gatherings provide the opportunity for engagement, transfer of knowledge, and promotion of positive actions related to Regenerative Land Use and Sustainable Local Food Systems (SLFS) in Scotland. Led by farmers and those who work the land, the aim is to help develop a CoP in Scotland in order to co-design and collaborate on creating a healthier and fairer future for Scotland's land use and food system.

At this year's 2-day Gathering, there were 60 presentations / workshops / demonstrations across 8 venues. Presentation materials have been gathered and some of the sessions were captured by a team of videographers and a storytelling artist. A survey was conducted by FST to assess attendees' interest and capacity to engage in meeting the above aim. This report aims to present the design, operation and findings on that survey, including recommendations for further work in support of developing a CoP.

The survey was designed to gain a deeper understanding of all attendees as a starting point for work to follow on. Considerable effort went into developing and delivering the survey to meet these requirements within some constraints of capacity and capabilities of the team and event infrastructure.

The base data are presented with commentary. Through analysis, key responses were used to distinguish the Innovators and supporters of Innovation, the Innovation Cohort (IC), as those most likely to engage in developing a CoP. By assessing gaps between barriers / needs and solutions offered, deeper insights have been gained to inform the discussion and conclusions, and to develop recommendations for future work in support of developing a CoP.

We are grateful for funding support from AFN Network+ (AFN) that enabled FST to design, promote and undertake the survey with subsequent analysis and this report.

Methods

Following the award of a contract with funding from AFN, a project manager was assigned and the survey was greatly expanded compared to the previous year. Designed to gather insights into attendees' demographics, levels of Awareness, Attitudes and Actions (3As), as well as barriers, needs and solutions, the format was a combination of multiple choice questions and open comments to capture the voice of attendees.

The survey was developed using Google Forms and split into two parts to initially gather demographics and 3As before the events, then 3As afterward. This was intended to help understand the impact of the event itself as well as gather the information related to the attendees. A draft was reviewed by the GO Falkland team and staff of AFN network. Suggestions for improvement were generally adopted. Discussions were held within the team regarding the use of Slido to gather information and share it live. However, it was determined that poor mobile data access in the event field and the available WIFI would not support that. In moving to an online survey, to encourage responses, it was decided to offer a prize draw of a refund of ticket price with a cut-off date for entries.

A publicity notice with a link to the pre-event survey was provided to the FST event team. It was envisaged that this would be placed within the ticketing information. However, this proved not to be feasible as ticketing was embedded in the website, and there wasn't any capacity available to amend it in time, so the link was sent to prospective attendees after booking. Responses were monitored, and it became evident the day before the event that there was a very low response. Consequently, a modified survey was prepared to allow for the impact of the event to be included, assuming all the information was gathered after the event.

To further promote the survey, a poster was created with a QR code and posted around the event and in venue tents. This included two snippets from the initial entries. Further to that, it was arranged for the opening keynote speaker to draw attention to the survey and the venue tents were visited by the project manager throughout, who read the poster directly to attendees or enlisted the help of the workshop host.

Following the event, the survey was mentioned and linked in a post-event email from the Team, and follow-up emails from the team specifically for the survey. There was some concern that the main email address was being blocked by spam filters, which would impact future contacts, so this activity was limited to 3 emails, including an extension to the prize draw date. Shortly after the deadline, a winner was selected at random then notified with a ticket refund arranged.

With all the expected survey responses and the prize draw completed, the responses across all three surveys were combined into a single file for analysis. The accuracy of awareness and the variability in responses was assessed and presented in a textual summary and also presented graphically where appropriate.

To assess the level of Innovators and supporters of Innovation, the IC, among the survey responders, these were identified as having a high awareness of best practice, strong aspirations for systemic change, and being committed to increasing personal action. A better understanding of members of the IC was gained by investigating the extent to which they differed from the remainder or responders.

The barriers / needs and solutions were compiled and compared to find matches available or otherwise, then . This comparison, combined with the commentaries provided, and further discussion was used to help inform the conclusions and recommendations for future work. The aims of some responder organisations were researched.

Prior to this final report, an interim / preview report was provided to FST and AFN Network+ and a further, 1-page, report was created for publishing on FST website. A draft of the final report was offered to FST for review prior to completion and release.

There were challenges due to the project manager having limited prior knowledge of FST, the high burden on the team in delivering a large event. and constraints in capacity and capability of team and infrastructure. However, the project progressed successfully as the team responded positively and the work was adapted as required.

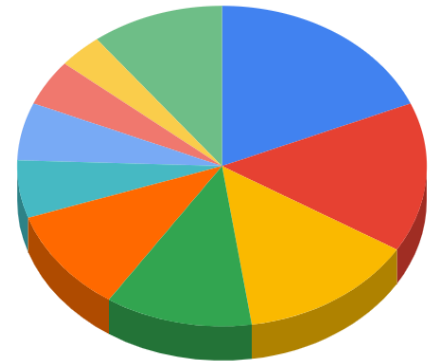
Results and discussion

Respondents' demographics, roles and interests.

While 51% came from Fife and adjacent regions of Stirling, Angus, Perth and Kinross, Edinburgh and Dundee, 39% were from across wider Scotland, with 10% further afield, mostly England. Age distribution was broad with 42% under 45 years and 44% over 56. A narrow ethnic mix of 96% white, and just over half female at 54%.

Chart a) Position or Role

Chart a) shows a breakdown of Position or Role. A combined total of 45% were found to be directly involved in land ownership, farming, smallholding or other growing.



b) How much your main activity relates to ..

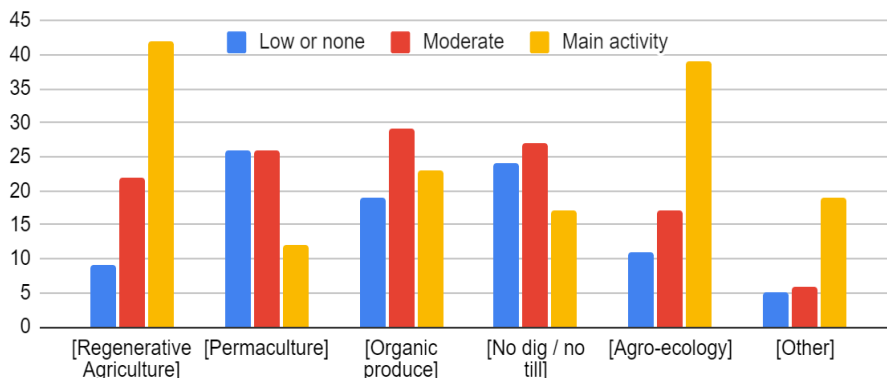
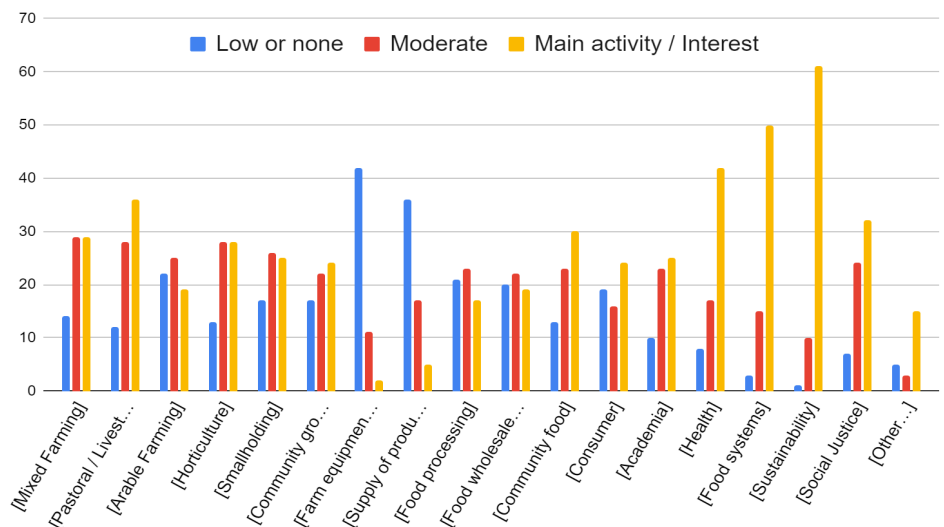


Chart b) shows the relationship of responder activity to farming practices.

Areas of activity / Interest

To the left of Chart c) is shown a broad balance across categories of farming / food growing. Supporting activities are present in the centre, although to a lesser extent. Downstream activities are also broadly represented to the right of the chart. Food Systems stands out among Community Food and the Consumer. There is a robust moderate / main (MM) presence of Academia, while outstanding MM levels for Health, Sustainability and Social Justice suggest these are areas of activity / interest across the food chain.

c) Areas of activity / Interest

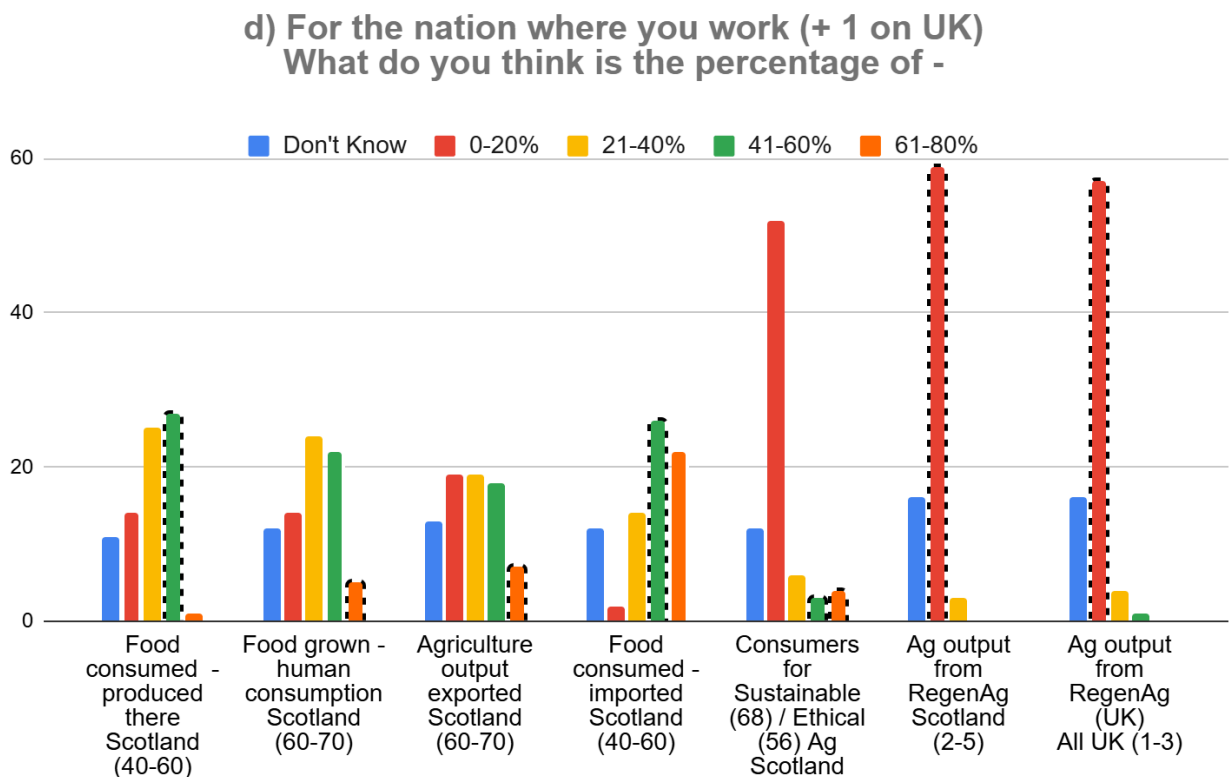


Comparing Post-event to Pre-Event, there was an increase in interest recorded across most areas with the most significant in Food Systems and Sustainability.

Awareness

Turning to Knowledge and Opinions, around 50% agreed or strongly agreed with professing an understanding of RegenAg and Food Systems Best Practice, while 57% to 69% concurred with the importance of Soil Health for Human Health, RegenAg for Net Zero and maintaining soil, and Food Systems for Food Security.

More generally, on awareness of food statistics, in Chart d) we can see a range of answers across food growing and international trade. This graph is for responders from Scotland only (90% of total). The agriculture statistics are for Scotland, and difficult to ascertain as they are distorted by value add in food processing. The correct columns have dotted outlines, with the correct value in brackets in the item description.



It's clear that the majority were off the mark regarding food production and export, with only around 10% aware that 60-70% of food is for human consumption and 60-70% of agriculture output is exported. Further, 2/3rds had a view of 0-20% consumer support compared to the actual 68% for Sustainable and 55% for Ethical Agriculture in Scotland.

The view on very low RegenAg output bears out. The data suggest, however, that Scotland has a slightly higher relative output of RegenAg than the whole of the UK.

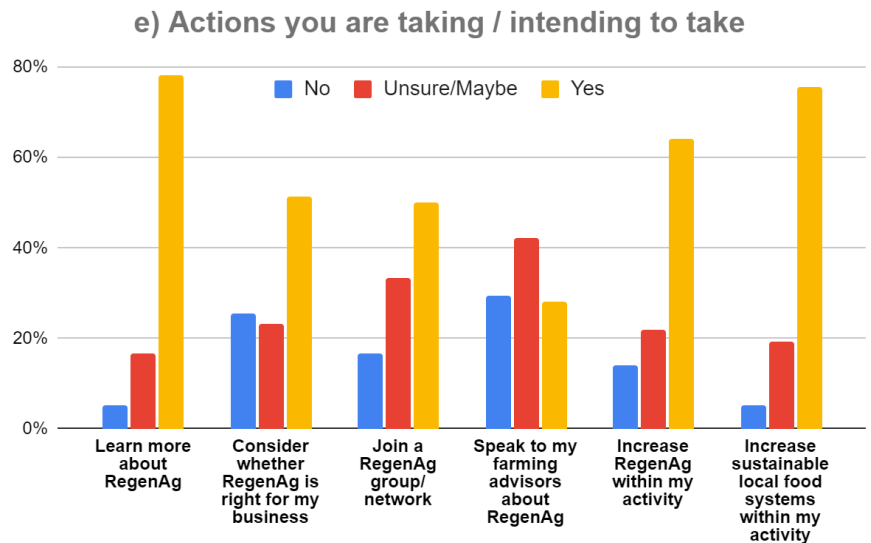
Attitudes

Across opinions around RegenAg and wider farming practices, Wellbeing, Education, Sustainability and Ethics, the standout positive response is that "Nature connection is essential for well-being". Responses indicate a lot of improvement is needed in Agriculture Education for RegenAg and sustainability of farming.

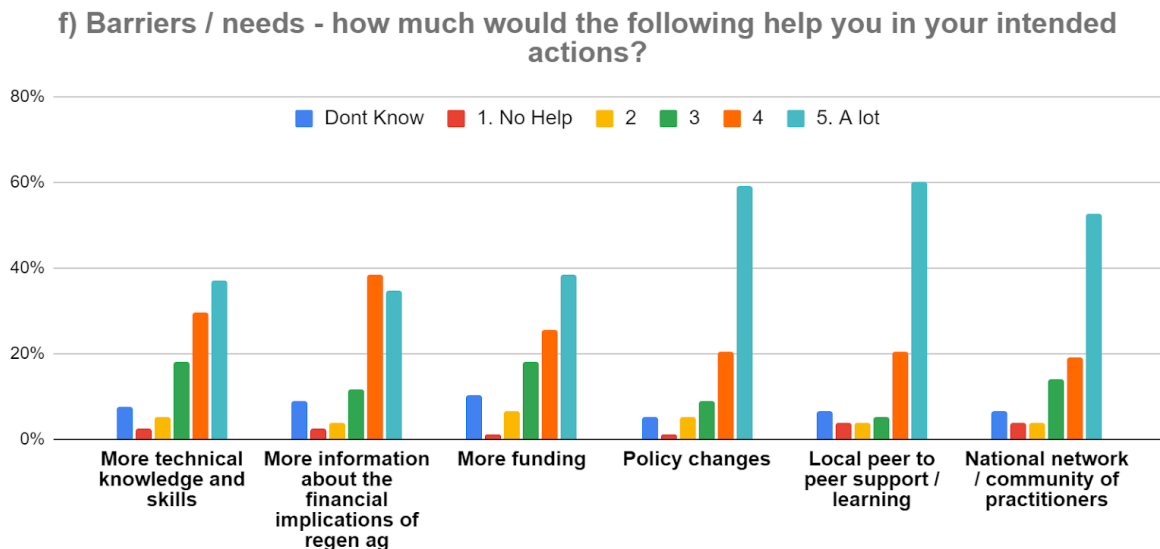
There is broad support for RegenAg and sustainable food systems, with strongest support for sustainable local food systems nationally (91%), Government support for that (87%), and the view that Consumer Support is Essential for RegenAg Growth (86%).

Actions, Barriers/Needs and Solutions

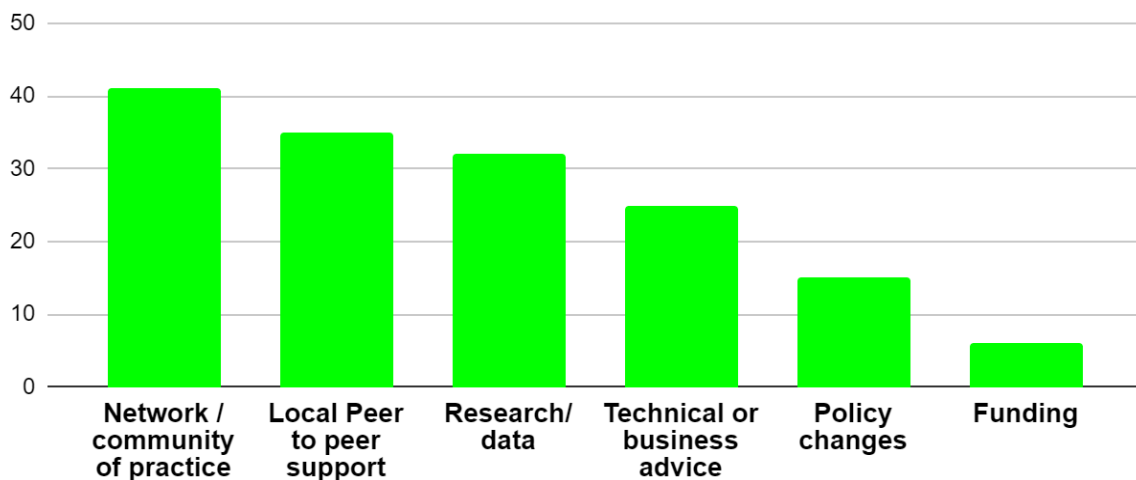
In chart e) we can see actions directed towards RegenAg and Food Systems, with underlying learning and networking.



The actions are reflected in the barriers / needs in chart f), with encouragingly matching support as shown in chart g). There are also strong calls for more funding and policy change, with some support available.



g) Solutions Offered



While there is a high level of cohesion across these areas, the challenge and opportunity now is to bring them together effectively as we move forward.

Event Feedback

This feedback section gave useful insights into the organisation and delivery of the gathering. There was very positive feedback on the content and quality of the speakers, the learning and opportunity to network. There were many useful suggestions, in particular on improved and earlier marketing, timetabling to avoid overlaps across venues, and the organisation and quality of the food offering. 78% would come again, with only one no and the rest maybe. There was also an offer of support from an experienced event manager.

Innovation Cohort

Of a total of 78 responders, 38 Innovators have been identified as those having a high awareness of best practice, strong aspirations for systemic change, and being committed to increasing personal action. From their demographics, the majority are active across both RegenAg and SLFS, with some directly engaged, and more who can provide support in research, expertise, policy and social change. The breakdown is shown in Table 1 opposite. Of these, 21 are in Fife or adjacent regions, 14 across Scotland and 3 beyond.

Role	No.	Cum
Direct - Both	10	10
Direct - RegenAg Only	1	11
Direct - LFS Only	4	15
Support - Both	15	30
Support - LFS Only	8	38

Table 1 - Innovator Cohort Breakdown

The survey revealed some common distinct characteristics across Innovators, compared to all responders. There is a higher level of awareness that soil health is essential to human health, RegenAg builds and retains soil, and local food systems help food security. There is greater belief that their practices are sustainable and ethical, and that the Govt should support systemic change. There is a stronger level of intention to join a RegenAg network and to increase technical knowledge and skills. The greatest need expressed is Peer-to-Peer Support / Learning, followed by Policy Change, a National Network / Community of Practitioners, then Technical Knowledge and Skills. Solutions offered helpfully reflect these from both those directly engaged and supporters. There are further offers of Research / data, Technical or business advice, education and community building.

Voices from the Innovators -

Went Well: *"The positivity, the "can do" attitude and the diversity of backgrounds within speakers and visitors. Inspiring speakers and good chats with other attendees. It's a good opportunity to network." "I've come away really inspired, learnt loads and made loads of useful contacts" "Many farmers were included as speakers and their stories were excellent"*

Could be Better: *"Too much going on at once, having to miss some things"* (also various comments / suggestions on logistics)

Support available: *" Founding Farmer of the European Alliance for Regenerative Agriculture and we intend to build a network of practitioners across the EU and UK" "MSP with the Rural Affairs remit I can help raise issues on funding and policy" "We're rotationally grazing cattle and sheep. Have reduced fertiliser use by 2/3. Use mixed herbal leys, produce the same numbers of lambs at same weights in same timeframe. Also cattle/ calves are doing better now than pre transition - all on a commercial farm." "Soil Assoc Scot co-develops & delivers farmer-led knowledge exchange, peer support & innovation, as well as policy support, industry collaboration and technical advice."*

Future Focus: *"More engagement with agriculture students." "Bioregional strategy." "Whole food systems change." "Regenerative economy." "I really hope this event continues. We need more attention and more publicity around the farmers and crofters that are leading the way on regenerative agriculture and food systems change."*

Attendee organisations

A selection of presenter and survey responder organisations was researched in order to better understand the solutions offered and overall pathway forward. This is presented below in Table 2. It is not a comprehensive analysis, yet serves to show those with aims that might mirror or support the aims of the gathering. AFN Network+ is added for comparison.

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Relevant Aims / Activity</u>
Fidra	Environmental charity supporting sustainability & preventing pollution
Propagate	Scottish collective specialising in local, community and sustainable food projects.
Scottish Gov. (MSP)	I made numerous amendments to the ARC bill. For as long as I am an MSP with the Rural Affairs remit I can help raise issues on funding and policy with the Scottish Government.
Wildlife Estates Scotland	Aims to promote the best habitat and wildlife management practices, build recognition and raise standards through the introduction of an objective accreditation system .
Really Regenerative	Our mission is to reconnect people to the place in which they live and work, and to help communities, projects and businesses find ways to bring a regenerative economy into being.
The Soil Association	Working with everyone to transform the way we eat, farm and care for our natural world
Farming Consultant	Helping farms, estates and rural businesses become holistically managed, regenerative organisations.
3LM	Land and Livestock Management for Life, and we are the local Savory Network hub in the UK and Ireland. We educate farmers in Holistic Management, a decision-making and planning framework developed by Allan Savory.
Nourish Scotland	We work towards 4 high-level aims in Scotland: 1. Everyone has reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food 2. Our food is grown, produced and distributed with care for the soil, climate and all the living world 3. Food growers, producers, distributors and consumers share control over the food system 4. A Scotland where we grow more of what we eat and eat more of what we grow
Nature Friendly Farming Network	Membership organisation for farmers, working alongside other organisations and public supporters. Together, we are a strong voice for sustainable food and farming in the UK.
Scottish Rural Network	Encourages rural development by sharing information, ideas and good practice. We work with, and for, anyone who lives, works or has an interest in rural and island Scotland.
Sustainable Food Trust	Charity that works to accelerate the transition to more sustainable food and farming systems.
Real Farming Network	We bring people of all food and farming backgrounds and experiences together in networks and gatherings, to share and collaborate
Pastures for Life	We are a diverse movement, from farmers and butchers to artisans and academics, working together to champion ways of farming which are restorative for all life.
AFN Network+	Our mission is to shape the next decade of research to support and drive the agri-food sector's progress towards net zero

Table 2. Aims of Organisations Connected To GO Falkland 2024

Further Discussion

While the survey provides insights into attendees and most usefully the IC, there are other aspects of the gathering and work of FST that have a bearing on future work that are outside the scope of this report. These include the repository of presentation material and the wealth of relevant information held by individual attendees and presenter organisations that are already innovating and engaged in developing a CoP around RegenAg and SLFS.

The strong opinions in favour of system change, improved education and government support suggest fertile ground for acceptance of innovation and changes to practices. The need for greater knowledge in particular, is evident in the low level of accurate awareness around food statistics, the low opinions around existing agricultural education, and the needs expressed and intended actions around peer-to-peer learning and more technical skills and knowledge. Encouragingly, there are many offers of support in this area.

While there is strong opinion that consumers are essential for the success of RegenAg, there is an impression that consumer support for RegenAg is currently low, contrary to research showing around 2/3rds support. Other opinions and awareness that support strong links between farmer and consumer include Soil Health for Human Health, RegenAg for Net Zero and maintaining soil, Food Systems for Food Security and Nature connection is essential for well-being. There is also a high level of moderate to strong interest among attendees across Health, Sustainability and Social Justice, all with positive implications for engaging consumers around their well-being.

The response level was 20% of overall attendees, which is at the high end of typical response rates¹, despite some challenges in getting the survey in front of attendees, as covered above. It would be reasonable to assume that the majority of attendees already have a medium to high level of interest in RegenAg and SLFS. The number in the IC represents 50% of responders and 10% of overall attendees. It is not possible to extrapolate from this to assess overall IC without further engagement with the attendees.

The appointment of a project manager for this research was important as the existing FST team was heavily committed to event delivery as well as its other work on the ground. Marketing and funding GO Falkland ended up being a greater challenge than in 2023. Conversely, this additional role was undertaken with limited prior experience of the team or general operations of FST. The GO Falkland 2024 team grappled constructively with all these challenges to deliver the event and survey, learning and sharing lessons on the way about: how to increase engagement; transfer knowledge; and play our part in building a community of practice.

¹ Campbell-Reid (2021) What is a good post-event survey response rate?
<https://www.explori.com/blog/what-is-a-good-post-event-survey-response-rate> Retrieved 3/12/24.

Conclusions

The survey provides many positive indications for moving forward with developing a CoP in Scotland for RegenAg and SLFS. The demographics indicate the majority were from Fife and its neighbouring regions and overall 90% from Scotland. The attendees' activities or areas of interest were also spread across RegenAg and SLFS, both directly and in supporting roles. There are largely positive attitudes and intended actions for systemic change. A large IC was identified, with a clear desire and intended actions to engage with and help develop a CoP across Scotland.

An holistic approach supporting wide implementation of both SLFS and RegenAg fits well with the needed support by and benefits to the consumer. The multiple strands of these mutual benefits can be incorporated into a communication strategy and plan in support of change.

The greatest need expressed is Peer to Peer Support / Learning, followed by Policy Change, a National Network / Community of Practitioners, then Technical Knowledge and Skills. Solutions offered helpfully reflect these, from both those directly engaged and supporters. There are further offers of Research / data, Technical or business advice, education and community building. There is further potential to match needs from across organisations associated with presenters, and the wider global community of practitioners.

There is a clear call for change, with more learning & skills, funding and policy change, enabled by the CoP in a national network and local peer to peer support / learning. This survey provides valuable insights into the attendees and activity needed to support positive actions across Regenerative Agriculture (RegenAg) and Sustainable Local Food Systems (SLFS) and to help develop a CoP in Scotland. It must be recognised however that the survey insights are limited by the absolute scale of the response. While the response rate was high, the total identified in the IC was only 38 respondents, and further work would be required to reach beyond these in developing a framework of organisation and work-plan for further work.

GO Falkland has received positive feedback from within the landscape of farming, local food systems, academia and government. FST has hosted this Gathering for 2 years and is positioned as a beacon of learning. Developing a CoP in Scotland is a task for national organisations to engage in and lead on. There are organisations from GO Falkland identified herein that may suitably take the lead, having similar aims and an array of capabilities and capacity.

In moving forward, further work is required with a framework of organisations to establish what is theirs and what is FST to do. The survey has helped to define what the overall task would entail and identified a cohort of willing innovators to start with. Opportunities presented from the survey that can be used to structure a work plan in moving forward include:

- Approaching the identified IC as members and contributors in founding and developing the CoP
- Exploring potential to collaborate and leverage solutions from across organisations associated with attendees and presenters, and the wider community of practitioners and stakeholders
- Developing an education and training strategy, including peer to peer learning
- Developing a communication strategy around the mutual benefits across RegenAg, SLFS and consumers
- Developing supportive policies with national and local government
- Using feedback and offers of support to improve the planning and delivery of future gatherings.

For FST, the following opportunities are presented

- Developing an education, training and events strategy and plan at Falkland as a regional hub
- Strengthening FST's communication strategy and planning
- Hosting events locally that align with national and regional policy and practice development
- Using feedback and offers of support to improve the planning and delivery of future gatherings.
- Continuing to build relationships and partnerships for future events.

Recommendations

To develop a national Regenerative Agriculture Community of Practice and help the call for change to be met across Scotland, there is a need for a nation-wide organisation to take the lead role. This could be an existing organisation or a new body. There are a number of organisations positioned to be able to lead and many ready to bring it to life and contribute effectively. To enable this, a pathfinder study is recommended to establish a strategy, with a framework of organisations, work-plan and funding needs, incorporating and building on the opportunities as presented above:

- Approaching the identified IC as members and contributors in founding and developing the CoP
- Exploring potential to collaborate and leverage solutions from across organisations associated with attendees and presenters, and the wider community of practitioners and stakeholders
- Developing an education and training strategy, including peer to peer learning
- Developing a communication strategy around the mutual benefits across RegenAg, SLFS and consumers
- Developing supportive policies with national and local government
- Using feedback and offers of support to improve the planning and delivery of future gatherings.

For FST to continue its work, building on the Regenerative Agriculture Gatherings, and develop as a regional hub within a national framework, opportunities present for new projects and developments of its existing operations. It is recommended that FST develops a program of works to progress the following opportunities:

- Developing an education, training and events strategy and plan at Falkland
- Hosting events locally that align with national and regional policy and practice development
- Strengthening FST's communication strategy and planning
- Using feedback and offers of support to improve the planning and delivery of future gatherings.
- Continuing to build relationships and partnerships for future events