

Attitudes of Level 6 Graduates to Hedgerow Conservation

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Abstract

With such a strong focus now being placed on conservation and preservation of the earth's natural environment, the farmer's role as custodian of the environment is more important than ever. Therefore farmers' behaviours and subsequent attitudes towards the environment need to be understood to ensure adequate incentives and knowledge transfer. Using both Quantitative and Qualitative methods these attitudes were determined for a cohort of young farmers who have completed a Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Agriculture. These attitudes to hedgerow conservation and management were used as a proxy for attitudes towards the environment generally. The study found a high proportion of pro-ecological attitudes among students as well as high levels of understanding and awareness of hedgerow importance and contribution to a farm. However, the study also found that these young farmers reacted with disinterest when the environment was mentioned. The study recommendations include relating environmental information in terms of the benefits to the farmer directly and that this approach may result in a stronger comprehension, alongside indirectly increasing adoption of environmental conservation and/or preservation behaviours.