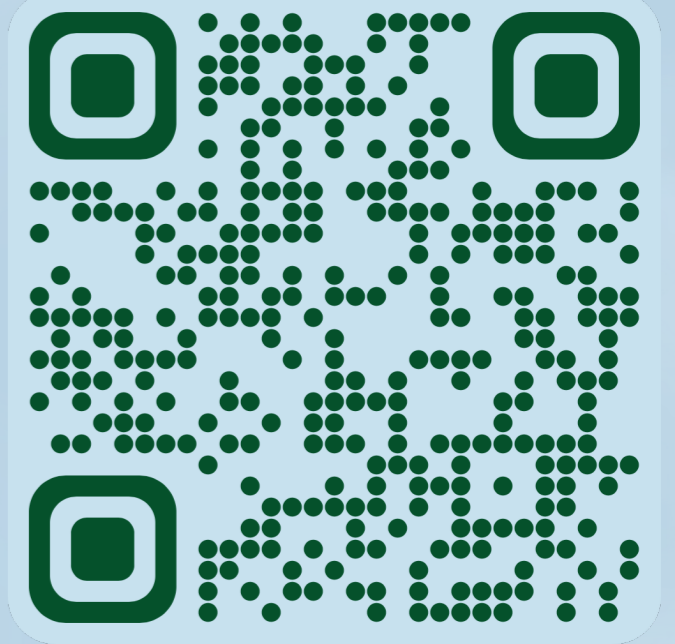


Sustainable Agriculture

Barriers faced by farmers in Devon

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Research gap and background context

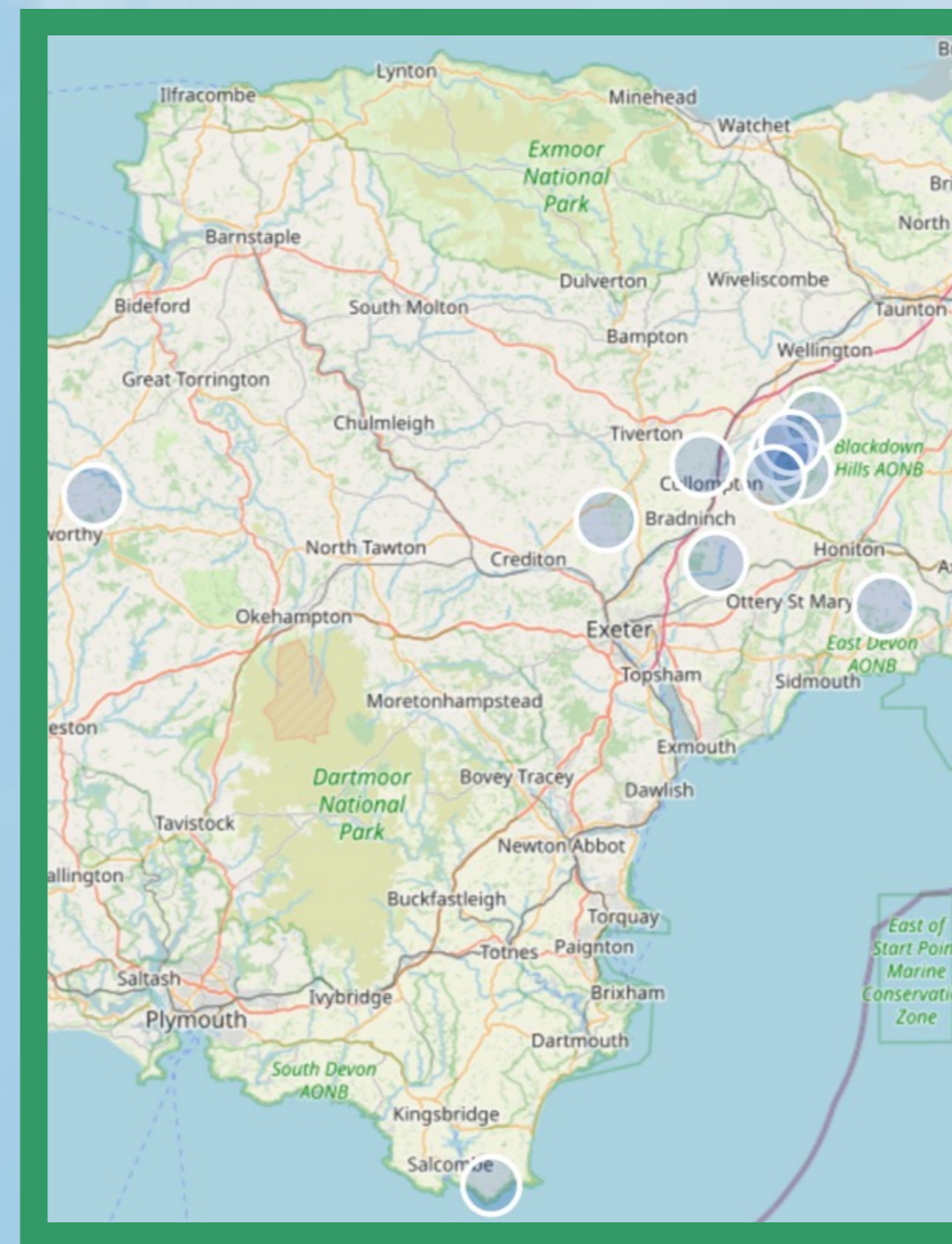
Brexit means the loss of EU policies that have underpinned UK sustainable agriculture for decades⁽¹⁾. Studies show context specific policies that incorporate farmers perceptions have a greater uptake and ecological benefit than traditional economic incentivisation⁽²⁾. Therefore, Brexit has created an opportunity for the creation of new UK specific policies that incorporate these contextual factors. However, there is a research gap with no post-Brexit empirical research that investigates how the context a farmer's decision is made in can influence their decision.

Aim

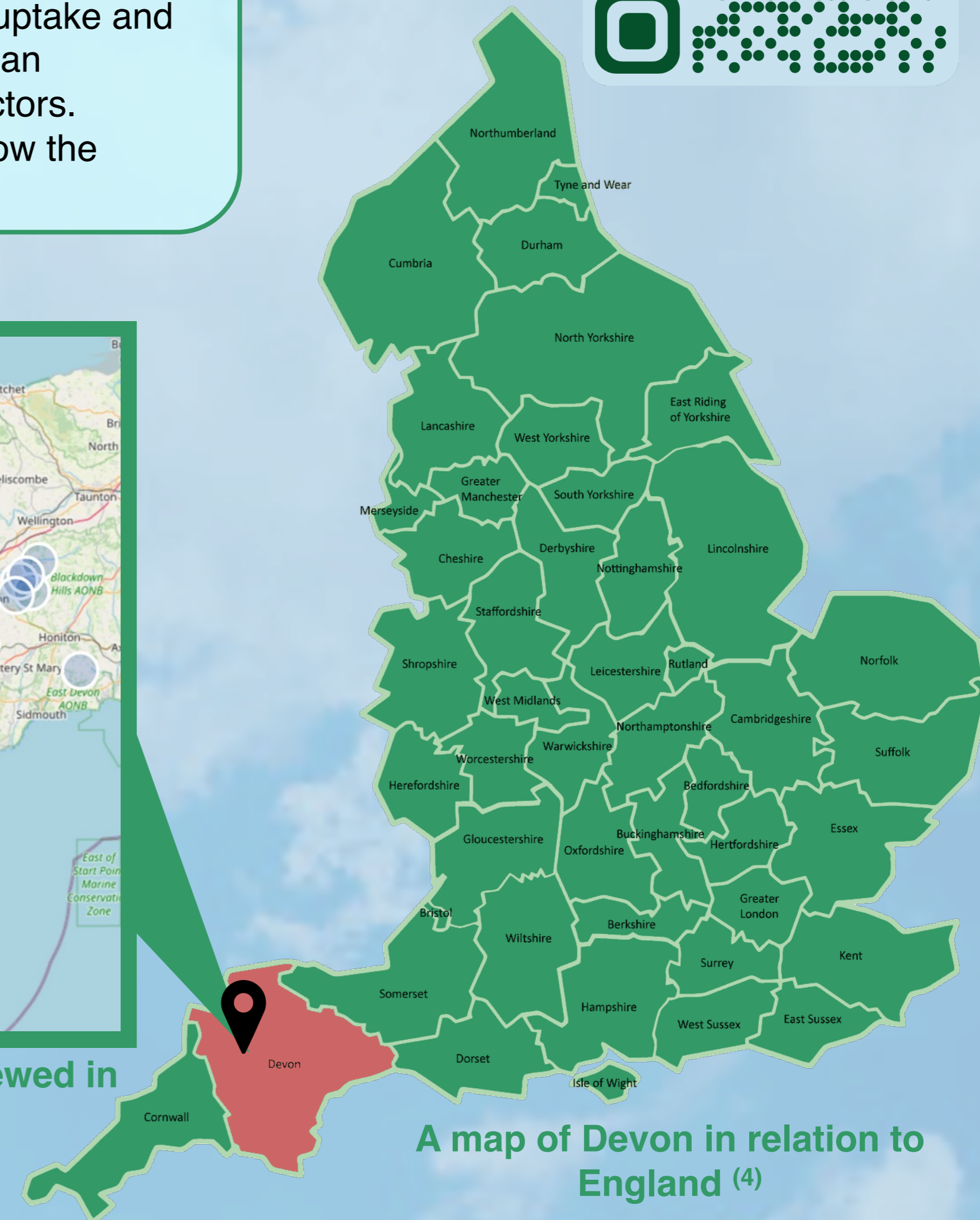
To understand how the context of the decision can influence farmers willingness to adopt sustainable agricultural practices (SAP) in the UK and to inform post-Brexit UK policy decisions.

Research design and methods

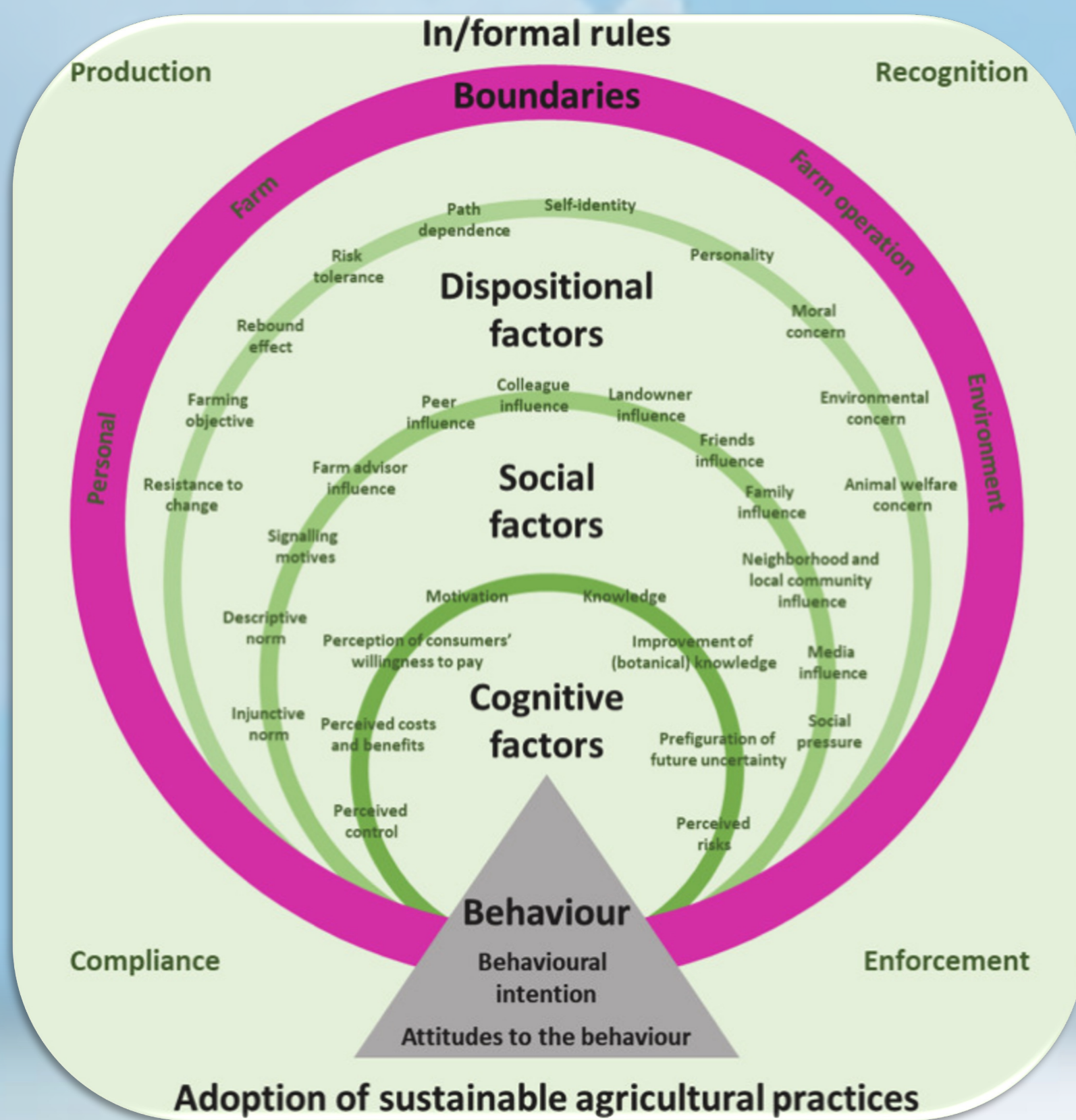
- The case study of Devon was selected due to the high dependency on EU sustainable agriculture schemes, with Devon ranking as the highest proportion of Countryside Stewardship Schemes in the UK (6).
- 11 oral history style interviews were conducted with Devon farmers.
- Thematic coding using the four 'boundaries' from the RBB framework: Personal, Farm, Farm operation and Environment.
- Findings are compared against UK post-Brexit policy planning.



A map of farms interviewed in Devon (3)



A map of Devon in relation to England (4)



The Rules-Behaviours-Boundaries Framework (5)

Labels	Sub-theme									
Personal	High age	Low education	Limited agency	Gender	Personal/family characteristics	Low personal job satisfaction	<i>Generation of farming</i>	<i>Succession</i>		
Farm	Farm size and form of organisation	Part-time or full-time farm	Tenure status and duration	Machinery	Farm income	Land endowment	Size of agricultural land	Grassland share	<i>Buyer influence</i>	
Farm Operation	Farm management	Work organisation	Yield	Symbolic and cultural capital	Extensive versus intensive production	Labour requirements	Tourism activities	Possibility to innovate		
Environment	Suitability of the area	Local conditions	Soil conditions	Labour availability	Rice development on the agricultural market	<i>Disease</i>				

A table showing the thematic codes used, derived from the RBB framework (5)

Results

- The context a decision is made in does influence the likelihood for a farmer to adopt SAP and needs to be considered in policy.
- The impacts of succession, generation of farming, buyer influence and disease were found as additional boundaries that should be considered within the RBB framework.

Recommendations for:

Policy makers

- Increased consideration of local conditions and flexibility within policies.
- Land cap on the amount of productive land given to SFI schemes.
- Increased clarity around policies.
- Work with buyers to collaborate on similar, complimenting criteria.

Future research

- This research design and framework being applied in other regions of the UK
- Conduct quantitative analysis to analyse the significance of trends identified