

## **Farming and Diversification into Tourism**

David Leslie - Glasgow Caledonian University

The decline of the agricultural sector in the U.K., as elsewhere across Europe, has prompted much concern over the future of farming. Such concerns are not solely centred on farming and encompass the impact of this decline on local communities and the rural economy and, though less so, on the rural landscape itself. In marked contrast to the decline of farming in areas of outstanding attraction is the rise of tourism. This is nowhere more manifest in the UK than in the Lake District National Park with its distinctly 'cultural' landscape.

This situation has promoted tourism as a suitable form of diversification for farmers to supplement declining incomes. But, such promotion is predicated on assumptions, which at times even obfuscate other potential avenues of diversification not so readily seen as commensurate with conservation and the "rural idyll". Diversifying into tourism is not so simple nor without risk and it is this risk which the author seeks to explore and develop, in the process drawing on extensive research in the Lake District and specifically on a study to investigate the experiences and attitudes of Scottish farmers towards diversification into tourism.