

Sue Eberle

Controlling moorland vegetation by burning.

Going back to the way that the moorland is managed through agriculture, can you explain a little further about the various means by which that's done?

Yes certainly, I mean if you look in front of us there's an area that looks like its burnt, which is exactly what's happened, it's a traditional means of managing the commons and locally we refer to it as swaling.

And what does that do?

What that does is it gets rid of the surplus vegetation that can get very lank and what happens is the plants rejuvenate and you get fresh young shoots which is what the animals like, and so there's a better bite, rather than the rather lank vegetation that can grow if the grazing levels aren't sufficient to keep it down.

So it encourages animals back onto that bit of land?

It encourages animals back onto that piece of land and it's also, therefore, a very good management tool, if you're trying to get animals into a particular area, by burning it, afterwards, you'll see if you come up in the spring, a lot of animals will concentrate on those lovely green fresh young shoots, so if you want to get stock off a particular area because of concerns about erosion or damage than we can encourage them to other areas.