How applied is ‘applied’ research in practice?

(And some thoughts on making it more applicable)
Adjusting to the policy mentality?

- **Value simplicity over complexity.**
  - In the conclusions themselves (‘as simple as possible, but no simpler’ - Einstein)
  - In how they are described; is jargon helping understanding?
  - Generalisations are ESSENTIAL! (If you don’t generalise, others will!!)
  - The cult of uniqueness is a big enemy: “Can’t always say it depends....”
  - Throwing out the RIGHT information is the skill – do you trust non-scientists to do it? (‘I made this so long because I didn’t have time to make it shorter’ - Pascal).
  - A ‘simple’ policy could mean losing precision, but could also involve missing the big picture – what is appropriate?
Adjusting to the policy mentality?

• *Give value to what we know, not what we don’t know*
  – What do we know *well enough*?
  – Putting ignorance into a wider perspective is essential
  – But equally, does what we know MAKE A DIFFERENCE? (remember that you use ‘significant’ in a different way)
  – Manage perceptions of risk (not least to the policy makers!)

• *Be multi-disciplinary*
  – If you don’t integrate, maybe policy makers will try to… (or maybe not)
  – Use shared language between disciplines for once!
Feeding into the knowledge chain

- *Policy has a time frame*
  - One day too late is too late
  - Policy interest in your topic can vary hugely over short time frames
  - Framework Programme or PhD scale is in reality out of synch with a lot of policy
‘Salience’ of research on HNV farming??

Yellow : research demand from policy makers?
Blue: academic research interest? E.g. FP7, FP8

Difference in response time AND potential input out of synch
Feeding into the knowledge chain

- **Policy has a time frame**
  - One day too late is too late
  - Policy interest in your topic can vary hugely over short time frames
  - Framework Programme or PhD scale is in reality out of synch with a lot of policy
  - Think about possible conflicts with publishing in journals
  - Sometimes the timescale of the problem itself is a limiting factor

- **Communication chain**
  - A project website is nowhere near enough
  - Maybe interlocutors are needed, but who are they and how do you engage with them? Chinese whispers problem…
  - Don’t assume all policy makers are uninterested in your ideas, if they are properly presented!
  - Can’t depend on ‘them’ coming to you! (“How can they believe unless they hear, and how can they hear without a preacher?”)