

Crediton Monitor Farm

Meeting 10: Open Summer meeting

7 July 2016

Uppincott Farm, Shobrooke, Crediton

For more information, visit cereals.ahdb.org.uk/crediton

James Lee (Monitor Farmer)



Meeting notes

Lupins

- Variety Iris
- Hoping for 1.5t/acre - considered may be optimistic
- To be utilised for home feed with sheep and possibly ducks. Better quality protein than beans
- Challenge with late harvest and drilling following wheat but expected positive impact on wheat
- Estimate of costings indicate breakeven after variable and fixed costs but more reliable and better than beans



Linseed

- **Hoping for 1t/acre**
- **Home saved seed but increased rate to 32kg/acre.**
- **Crop has received 32kg N /acre**
- **Useful crop to control brome in**
- **Selling straw for biomass**
- **With price this year reduced by circa £50/t, crop becoming marginal**
- **BUT good entry for wheat (or Barley – see below)**

Soil Bio-stimulants

The group review the wheat crop, half treated with Alltech's **SOIL-SET® AID**, a product which is designed to activate soil microflora to support growth. Applied with a pre-emergence spray, the aim is to help plants establish a stronger foothold with a healthier rooting system by improving mineral availability for plant nutrition.

Although a little challenging with different field soil conditions, the treated half did look a better crop and as shown in the picture, rooting was better (left side treated). Also heads looked 'larger and fuller'. James will record yields via the combine monitor and the results will be discussed in the autumn.

Taking the process forward, the group wondered whether the healthier 'treated' crop could yield with less crop protection and nitrogen.



Rotation decisions

- Considering OSR again with increased market prices and ability to come back into rotation after long break.
- Consideration of barley as a first cereal? Should hybrids be used with higher seed cost? Only on poor ground. If possible, James will compare some wheat and hybrid barley after the Linseed.
- Spring barley. To be economic – need big yield or seed price contract. Former variable so only grow if latter
- Group gave view that too many crops. Four breaks – linseed, maize, OSR, one year grass. Maize market for dairy farmers unlikely to pick up.
- Fallow? No contribution to fixed costs and difficult to 'clean up after'. Would cover crop / green manure help

Longer term strategy

With challenging gross margins across all crops and struggling to cover business fixed costs, does cropping need rethinking? To take an extreme, should wheat /fallow (subject to comments above) only with simplified labour/ machinery fixed cost structure be contemplated?

But what are the positive financial synergetic effects to the business of the combination with the livestock enterprises? Home grown grain, protein, straw with manures back onto the land.

CropBench+ benchmarking

Not too early to start entering 2016 harvest data. The sooner you do, the sooner you will have an indication of costs of production at different yield levels to start making a marketing strategy.

For assistance, please contact **David Pett** david.pett@ahdb.org.uk **07813 454537**

Next meetings

- 3 November 2016 - Tackling the yield plateau**
- 1 December 2016 - Fixed cost analysis**
- 2 February 2017 - Soils – Joel Williams part 2**
- 2nd March 2017 - Fungicide performance and working with fewer actives**

To attend the meetings, please email Philip.dolbear@ahdb.org.uk or call **07964 255614**

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