

Stowmarket Monitor Farm

Meeting 11: Open Day & Farm Tour

10 June 2016

Lodge Farm, Westhorpe

Brian Barker (Monitor Farmer) & Ed Barker (Cheffins)

For more information, visit: cereals.ahdb.org.uk/Stowmarket



Brian Barker

Meeting summary

- Update on Monitor Farm project
- Update on farm business
- Farm tour:
 - Wheat field YEN entry
 - Crop establishment comparison
 - Case study field for debate
- Debate on 'To Crop or Not To Crop'

Open Day Theme

With current prices and agronomic challenges, at what point are you better off putting the poorest parts of your farm into Countryside Stewardship (CSS) and maximising efficiency on the rest? Does the new stewardship scheme offer a viable alternative?

To Crop or Not To Crop

Using Shrubbery field as a case study, the group considered:

1. Blackgrass burden
2. Yield variation
3. Field shape & topography
4. Cost / efficiency of operation
5. Impact of woods, hedges & pylons
6. Drainage
7. Opportunities from CSS

Ed Barker explained that new CSS:

Doesn't have to be on whole farm

Includes range of options suitable to this farm

Involves a competitive application process



Straight line farming

Academic concept or commercial reality?

- Use yield, area and cost data
- Create Net Margin map
- Don't crop loss making areas
- Use stewardship to fix income
- Reduce operation costs
- Increase operational efficiency
- Improve average yields

Can fixed costs be reduced at farm level?

Does it help to meet soil & water regs.?

Is CTF the perfect fit?

Do un-cropped areas create other risks?

How can full yield potential be reached?

These questions and others will be addressed in the next round of meetings



Next meetings – winter 2016/17

All winter meetings start at 11am at Wyverstone Village Hall, IP14 4SH and include lunch, unless otherwise advised:

Friday 4 November 2016

- Reaching your yield potential (YEN Project)

Friday 2 December 2016

- Soil health; the dark science

Friday 6 January 2017

- Crop establishment costs & cover/companion cropping

Friday 3 February 2017

- Reducing machinery costs & increasing income

To attend the meetings, please contact your AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds Manager:

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To find out more about AHDB's CropBench+ benchmarking tool, please contact:

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