

Winchester Monitor Farm meeting report

Meeting 15: Final event

Date: 30 June 2017

Location: Newhouse Farm, Northington Down, Alresford

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



Meeting summary – key messages

1. Knowing your costs of production is crucial and without this knowledge you cannot identify what you are doing well or not so well.
2. You are not immune from the future: as with black-grass, just because you haven't got a problem now doesn't mean you shouldn't prepare for that scenario.
3. Be open minded about what you can integrate into your farming business. Take and make opportunities.
4. "Failing to plan is planning to fail," Alan Lakein.

The past three years and now into the future

Newhouse Farms SWOT analysis at their launch event on 6 Nov 2014

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership and capital base • Openness and willingness to embrace change • Farm resources including Hampshire Grain Storage • Freedom from black-grass 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-utilised labour and machinery • Potential to increase yields • Use of technology • Soil management • Rotation and introduction of more livestock with stubble turnips • Use external advice e.g. agronomy
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Machinery structure • Labour compliment 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil organic matter • Black-grass

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotation • Lack of independent advice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of chemistry • Outside factors – legislation, CAP Reform • Succession |
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At this meeting the group went over these points and considered the differences three years on.

Black-grass control was highlighted as a strength but also recognised as a threat. Over the past three years black-grass has now encroached onto the farm meaning husbandry strategies have been altered.

The willingness to **embrace change and take risk** / opportunity has seen livestock (sheep) being integrated within the arable rotation grazing temporary herb rich swards. The reasons for doing this are:

- Grass ley /fallow strategy to assist in black-grass control
- Aiding biodiversity which helps cultural control of pests and encourages pollinators
- Soil and nutrient enhancement: herbs and grazing stock dung

Diversification: the farm also rents out facilities to local businesses. This includes the rental of buildings along with 5 ha planted with plum trees for making gin. This may open future opportunities for Newhouse farm, possibly using their farm name as the for this produce.

Benchmarking the farm's costs against other local farmers was seen as crucial part for ensuring business resilience/robustness and future sustainability. The Newhouse benchmarking group will continue to meet.

Words of Wisdom: as a final round up, three farmers were asked to give their thoughts about future farming at Newhouse Farm. Their views highlighted:

- Newhouse Farm continues to have a strong and loyal farming staff which is a massive asset to future progression and robustness of the Newhouse farming business.
- They continue to be very open-minded, open to be challenged and open to changing / trying different farming strategies. However, they must continue to challenge every part of their farming enterprise (especially



fixed costs) in order to make their business more efficient, robust and resilient.

- Continue to take diversification opportunities as and when they may arise.

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To find out more about Farmbench, AHDB's benchmarking tool, contact: Emma Nankervis, Regional Benchmarking Officer (South East); emma.nankervis@ahdb.org.uk

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