

Cardiff Monitor Farm Update

Issue: 1

Meeting held: The Six bells Inn, Penmark, Vale of Glamorgan, 6.00pm on 4 December 2014

Summary of Monitor Farm launch meeting

- **Overview of the monitor farm concept** (*Richard Laverick, HGCA*)
- **Introduction of key individuals at Penmark Place Farm and HGCA** (*Julian Radcliffe, EH Radcliffe*)
- **Yield potential in South Wales** (*Daniel Kindred, ADAS*)
- **Precision farming at Penmark Place Farm** (*Harry Henderson, HGCA*)



Penmark Place Farm

Farm summary

- 600ha farm area
- 43ha forage crops
- 134ha permanent pasture
- Woodland
- 8ha managed fallow
- 250 head beef herd
- 200 breeding ewe flock
- 2 full time family members, 1 full time student & 2 part time employees

Combinable Crops

- **175ha Wheat**
Panorama, Claire, Leeds, Evolution & Dickens
- **85ha Barley**
Cassia, KWS Glacier & Venture
- **25ha Oats**
Panorama, Claire, Leeds, Evolution & Dickens
- **175ha Wheat**
Panorama, Claire, Leeds, Evolution & Dickens
- **90ha Oilseed Rape**
Vision, DK Cabernet & Incentive
- **18ha Spring Beans**
Vertigo

Arable enterprise

- 3000 tonnes capacity grain storage
- Minimal forward selling; most sold on the spot market towards the end of the marketing year
- Stephen Harrison – South West Agronomy
- Cropadvisors buying group
- SOYL & Courtyard Partnership
- Variable rate P & K application

Key challenges

- Exploiting yield potential
- Control of black-grass
- Control of Septoria
- Developing a marketing strategy to address price volatility
- Precision farming – making it financially viable

Yield potential in South Wales Region (*Daniel Kindred, ADAS*)

Yield = resource x capture x conversion

Resources	Capture	Conversion
Light, water & nutrients Site, infrastructure & management	Explains most yield variation Husbandry, engineering, chemistry & genetics	Explains least variation Most sustainable, mainly genetics, species & variety

- Large yield shortfalls are still evident in the UK
- 'Technology gap' between best farms and average farms
- Genetic progress continues but slowly and with no progress on 'the average farm'
- Nitrogen is not the major driver behind the yield

Breakout sessions: Updating the sprayer at Penmark Place

Led by Harry Henderson (HGCA) groups explored the different options available to Julian with the spraying technology on the farm.



Current sprayer at Penmark Place Farm;
14 years old
4720 hours
250 – 300 hours per annum
3350 lt tank & 24 meter boom

Option	Pro's	Con's
Minimal update of current sprayer (£300 for new RDS controller battery)	- Cheap - System known to work	- No progression forward
Upgrade to GPS Auto Technology (Approx £5000 to upgrade)	- Simple to upgrade & access technology	- Reliability of new system technology - Still using a 14 year old sprayer
Purchase a new self propelled sprayer (Approx £82,000 to pay for a basic Househam Spirit)	- Fully integrated technology - Sprayer is new	- Large expense
Purchase a new trailed sprayer (Approx £45,000)	- Much cheaper to purchase and run with equal amount of technology	- Ties up a tractor - Lower ground clearance for OSR
Use a contractor	- Releases labour for other work - Known cost	- Timeliness at risk - Field condition at risk

Next monitor farm meeting:

**Six Bells Inn, Penmark, Vale of Glamorgan
6:00pm, 4 February 2015**

Grain Marketing Workshop

Jack Watts, Lead Cereals and Oilseeds Analyst at HGCA

With volatility looking set to continue, rising costs and uncertain UK weather conditions, UK arable farmers must have a well thought out **Price Risk Management strategy**. To help provoke some thinking on this, the HGCA team have selected a wide range of strategies to analyse and discuss at the meeting

It would help to know how many of you can join us, please email Richard Meredith on Richard.meredith@hgca.ahdb.org.uk if you wish to attend

