

Newport Monitor Farm

Measuring Soil Metrics and Joint Venture Farming Agreements

28 October 2015

Speaker: Emily Smith (AHDB)

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

Meeting summary

- Update on Monitor Farm
- Review of Harvest 2015 at Howle Manor
- Joint Venture Agreements Q&A
- What are the key metrics for measuring soil health?



Harvest Review

Winter wheat

Seed

Feed

Variety	T/Ha	T/Ac		Variety	T/Ha	T/Ac
Santiago	9.48	3.84		Santiago	9.85	3.99
Leeds	9.43	3.82		Cubanita	9.10	3.68

- Two part harvest
 - Started 12 August
 - Finished 11 September
- Moisture 13.5% - 18%
- Variable yield range
 - 4.7t/ac to 3.5t/ac
- Shared storage due to number of crops
- Drying at £9 per dried tonne
- A light land year for wheat growers

Oilseed rape

Variety	T/Ha	T/Ac
Incentive	4.64	1.88
PT211	4.41	1.79

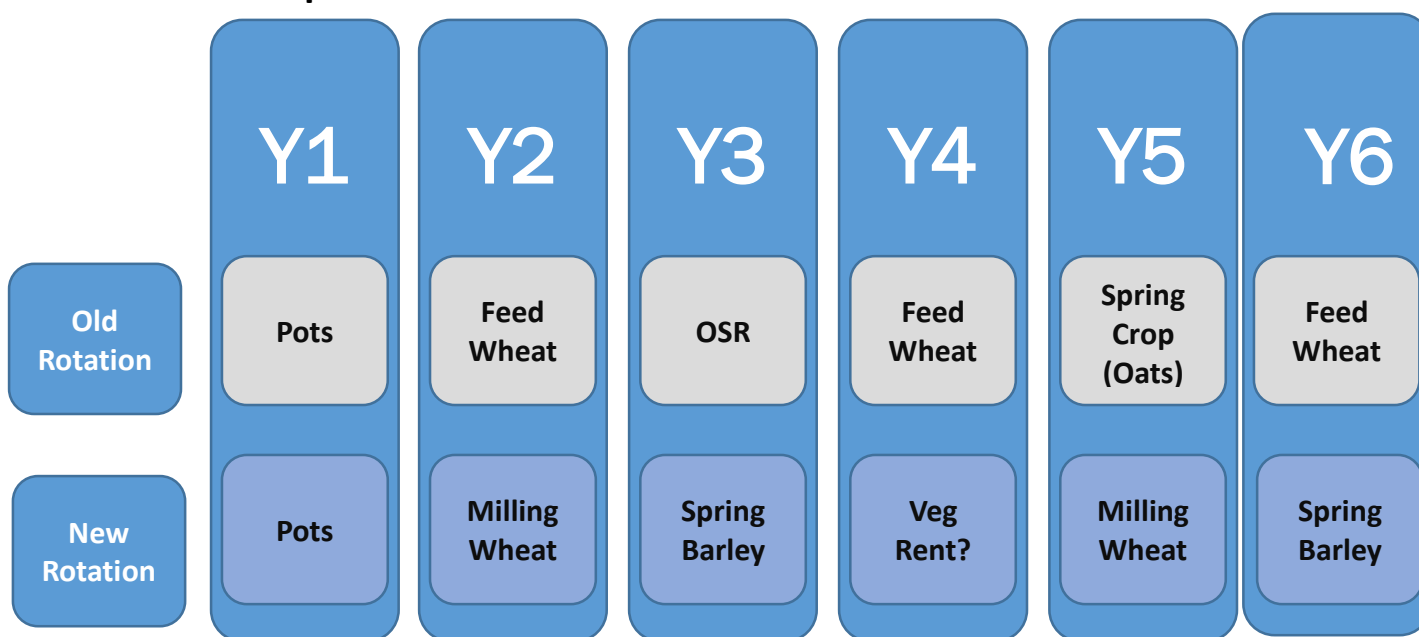
- Slightly disappointing yields
 - All crops looked good, with low disease presence
- Only completed one sclerotinia spray
- Stored at neighbour's grain store
- 7.5% - 11% moisture

Oats

- Winter oats looked good throughout and harvested dry
 - Spring oats went flat after late August rain but harvested reasonably well

Variety	T/Ha	T/Ac
Gerald (W)	7.28	2.95
Aspen (S)	5.27	1.79

New crop rotations at Howle Manor



A year for trying new things...

- **Milling wheat** - not a massive wheat yielding ground, so shifting focus from producing quality rather than quantity. Achieving premiums = better margins?
- **Oilseed rape** – out of rotation just at Howle Manor
- **Peas and/or quinoa** – replace OSR as break crop?
- **Veg ground to lettuce grower** - good income source but high traffic & no chicken litter to be spread on ground
- **Rotation lengthened from 5 to 6 years** – because of potato PCN levels

Joint ventures Q&A - key questions

- One of the key points of its success was the staff buying into the concept
- Joint Venture allows them to perform many tasks which they usually wouldn't be
- Allows more leeway for staff to take holiday in peak periods
- Each staff member is responsible for the staff member who is covering their tasks when taking leave
- Openness with staff is key

Q: Did you struggle to get your staff to buy into the concept?

Q: Would you ever pool all of your resources / gross margins?

- We would not share gross margins
- Have to respect that each business involved has different goals/objectives
- Impossible to align different marketing goals of each business involved



- Financial gain – less x2 tractors & x3 staff members in 15 years
- Newer machinery & technology can be afforded
- Timeliness of work performed has improved
- At the end of the year the machinery is still a saleable piece of kit

Q: What do you feel are the key benefits for your businesses?

“Each farm involved in the joint venture is catering for its own individual industry. I think that this adds to the success as they are not all growing for the same market. It is an evolving joint venture and these differences make it stronger.”

Tony Reilly, Farm Manager at M & RG Levin and Joint Venture Member

Improving soil health – tools for land managers

Cost of establishment



Visual assessments



Penetrometer resistance



Earthworm counts



Infiltration



Yield mapping



Gross margins



Soil nutrients



Nematode community



Soil organic matter



Deep N



Next meeting – No-till farming

Date: 9 December 2015

Time: 10:00am (Lunch included)

Venue: Howle Manor, Newport, Shropshire,
TF10 8AY

Topic: No-till Farming

At the October meeting we discussed whether a growing emphasis on soil health could be a deciding factor in what type and how much tillage farmers choose to utilise going forward.



You are invited to join us at the December Monitor Farm meeting where we will be joined by Jeff Claydon (Claydon Drills) who will speak to us about his first-hand experiences with no-till farming. We will aim to discuss and analyse the potential merits and drawbacks of both conventional tillage and no-tillage systems.

The meeting will also include a machinery demonstration in a nearby field so please bring suitable clothing and footwear. BASIS & NROSO points have been applied for.

Contact details

To find out more about both past and future meetings, go to cereals.ahdb.org.uk/Newport

To attend the meetings, please email richard.meredith@ahdb.org.uk or call 07717 493015

Cropbench+ benchmarking



Cropbench+ collections will be taking place in December/January. Megan will be contacting all those who participated last year. If you wish to be contacted please contact Megan on the below details.

Megan Loynes

megan.loynes@ahdb.org.uk

07815 600240

Disclaimer: While the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board seeks to ensure that the information contained within this document is accurate at the time of printing, no warranty is given in respect thereof and, to the maximum extent permitted by law, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board accepts no liability for loss, damage or injury howsoever caused (including that caused by negligence) or suffered directly or indirectly in relation to information and opinions contained in or omitted from this document. Reference herein to trade names and proprietary products without stating that they are protected does not imply that they may be regarded as unprotected and thus free for general use. No endorsement of named products is intended, nor is any criticism implied of other alternative, but unnamed products.