

# Malmesbury Monitor Farm meeting report

Meeting 11: Summer meeting  
Date: 25 June 2019  
Location: Lower Odd Farm, Crudwell, SN16 9SN

For more information, visit: [cereals.ahdb.org.uk/malmesbury](http://cereals.ahdb.org.uk/malmesbury)



## Key messages

- Consider what is best for your business – hybrid vs conventional winter barley; one size does not fit all
- Cover crops – eradication and trash management key to effectiveness
- Oilseed rape – no ‘silver bullet’ for success
- Stewardship – what are the costs of cross compliance?
- Crop marketing – forward selling can be a useful risk management tool but knowledge of costs of production essential.

## Hybrid vs conventional winter barley

- Use hybrids where ground conditions will allow early fertiliser application
- Use T sum theory for N application
- All nitrogen on before GS31
- Hybrids give good black-grass smother effect
- Higher seeds rates used to counteract absence of Deter
- Avadex applicator on drill to ensure correct timing
- Barley markets are at risk post Brexit, if it happens, as UK is a net exporter and could be subject to tariff

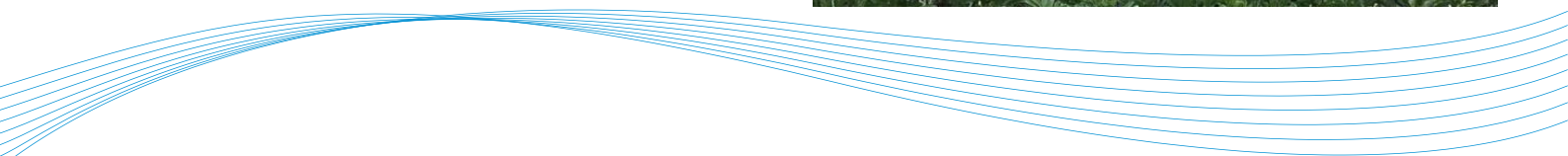
*Image (right) Conventional barley in foreground is not smothering black-grass as well as the hybrid in the background*



## Cover crops

- Beware of the capping effect from sheep grazing – mob grazing is preferential (see, [Livestock and the arable rotation](#))
- Higher trash residues have led to thinner crops but will monitor through combine
- Tine drills give better flexibility through trash

*Image (right) spring beans after cover crop – no difference can be seen between the different clover mixes*



## Oilseed rape

- Drill to weather forecast and soil to seed contact, not date
- Does moving the soil attract the flea beetle?
- Flat or ring rolls – depends on the weather and soil conditions
- Drilled crops with more even establishment (because of soil depth) at possibly less risk to flea beetle as there are not different stages of crop growth to provide constant food for beetle. Although, it is acknowledged that there is a risk that all could be lost in one beetle migration
- Crop with biostimulant appeared better but inconclusive as it may have been due to timing of establishment with rain
- Podstick and desiccant considered cost-effective to allow more flexible harvest timing
- OSR is the only Brexit 'tariff-proof' crop as UK is a net importer but there remains a currency risk and pressure on price from high world stocks

## Lower input costs and variety selection

- Skyfall crop with 230kg N and 1 fungicide has reduced the programme from £110 to £15/ha. Results to be assessed through combine. Accepted that crop by crop and year by year disease risk decision. But it is possible!

## Stewardship

- Should be considered for regularly poor performing areas
- Need to assess costs of cross compliance for Scheme
- Any drainage grants should be considered as Roger has felt major benefit on black-grass control (see, [Field drainage guide](#))

## Arable Business Group – Benchmarking

If you are interested in benchmarking your figures against Roger and other members from the Monitor Farm Group, please contact: David Pett, Regional Officer:

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## Next meetings

- 4 November 2019
- 2 December 2019
- 3 February 2020
- 2 March 2020
- 23 June 2020 (summer meeting)



### For more information contact:

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## Find out more

- [Cover crops and the arable rotation](#)
- [Brexit impact calculator](#)
- [Brexit: fit for the future – Publications, webinars and tool kits](#)
- [Crop biostimulants](#)
- [Farmbench](#)

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