

# Bridgnorth Monitor Farm

Meeting title: Final meeting

Date: 6 November 2019

Speakers: Adrian Joynt (Bridgnorth Monitor Farm host), Martin Williams (Hereford Monitor Farm host), Rob Fox (Strategic Cereal Farm – West host)



## Improving soil health through use of cover crops

- Provide over-winter cover (minimise erosion, weeds, nitrate leaching)
- Potential benefits for soil structure, water holding & porosity. Don't always work in all scenarios,
- Increase N retention –provide nutrients to next crop. Bridgnorth Monitor Farm made savings in application of N to subsequent crop (after testing Nitrogen at 60cm).

		KgN/ha			Value £/ha			Cost
		2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	
<b>Maize Pro</b>	<b>Peas, rye, clover, phacelia, buckwheat, sunflower, linseed, vetch, radish</b>	52	31	117	28	16	84	50
<b>Betamax</b>	<b>Clover, deeptill radish, peas, phacelia, niger, oats &amp; vetch</b>	79	32	115	42	17	83	74
<b>Grabber</b>	<b>Rye, tillage Radish &amp; vetch</b>	64	31	94	34	16	68	63
<b>Sprinter</b>	<b>Black oats, slovenian vetch &amp; berseem clover</b>	29	28	110	15	15	79	54
<b>Farm own mix</b>	<b>Oats &amp; beans</b>	20	30	84	10	16	61	35

- Limited evidence of SOM benefit per se.
- Grazing offers a financial return
- But, avoid damage to soil structure through poaching

## Further information

- [Testing soil health](#)
- [Soil assessment methods](#)
- [Soil health and biology partnership \(91140002\)](#)
- [Using the soil health scorecard case studies](#)
- More information from the GREATsoils programme can be found at [ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils](http://ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils)

## Precision farming

Three Monitor Farmers (Adrian Joynt, Bridgnorth / Martin Williams, Hereford / Rob Fox, Leamington Spa) compared the costs of precision farming for their own businesses:

	Rob	Martin	Adrian
<b>Total cost per ac</b>	£8.93	£5.98	£4.89
<b>Total cost per acre per year</b>	£8930	£10,160	£6672
<b>Total cost to business (over 5 years)</b>	£44,650	£50,800	£33,360

### Take-home messages

- Talk to other farmers about their experiences. Learn from their lessons.
- If you put in the time to set up precision farming correctly then you will avoid mishap further through your journey.
- Have a clear plan of what you would like to achieve from adopting the technology.
- Precision agriculture has to be based on good agronomy. Precision agriculture will not make a bad farmer into a good farmer, but can make a good farmer into a better farmer.

## Alternative cropping (Triticale)

### Take-home messages

- Triticale can withstand a low input strategy.
- Diversity of markets to sell tritiale (feed grain, AD, ethanol, whole-crop silage).
- Drought tolerant – performs well on light land.
- Has potential to out yield wheat as a grain crop.
- Grain buyers buy at discount.
- Storage and handling problems.
- Can sometimes struggle to establish an end market for the crop.

## Contact details

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