

# Canterbury Monitor Farm meeting report

## Launch meeting

Date: 3 July 2019

Location: Hamill Court Farm, Woodnesborough, Sandwich, Kent.

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



## Canterbury Monitor Farm introduction

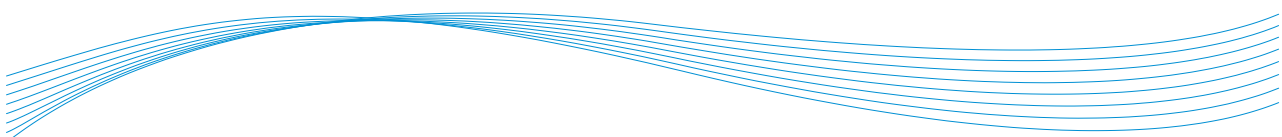
Will Smith runs Beaute Farm, in Winham near Canterbury, in partnership with his father and brother. Will's goal is to increase profits by reducing inputs using an integrated farm and pest management approach, while reducing his impacts on the environment.

### Farm facts

- 768ha total farmed area
- 678ha. (combinable cropped) of which:
  - 189ha Owned
  - 100ha Rented
  - 475ha Contract Farming Agreements
- Low input grassland – utilised by livestock and for hay business
- Rainfall average: 614mm
- Mean temperature annual average: ~ 10.2 °C

## Canterbury Monitor Farm steering group

William is joined by the following local farmers and advisers as Steering Group members, who will help to guide the programme over the three years. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to get in touch with the Steering Group members:



## Launch farm walk

### Soil types and rotation

- Agricultural land classification: Mainly grade 1 with some 2 & 3's
- Medium to light silty and lime-rich loamy soils & heavy marsh clay
- ~30m above sea level

### Rotation

- 2000–2015: OSR, 1st wheat, 2nd Wheat, OSR
- As the farm was in a low rainfall area with virgin OSR land, growing full specification milling wheat and OSR gave the best margins
- 2015 onwards – the rotation was extended due to declining OSR yields and increasing black-grass levels to grow a mix of autumn and spring crops over a four- to five year rotation
- Milling wheat groups 1, (incl. 1st & 2nd and spring wheats), winter barley, OSR (conventional 2019), spring beans, soya and maize for local AD plant

NB. Rotations are adapted according to market prices and weed and disease pressures

## Labour and machinery

### Staffing

- 3 partners
- 1 full-time employee
- 3 harvest students and part-time casual help as and when required

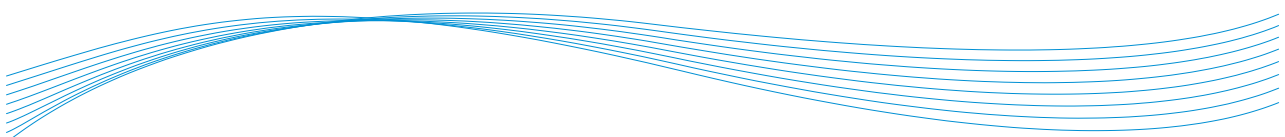
### Machinery (Arable)

General policy is geared towards buying low hr. used equipment and sell as and when price and time is right.

- Combine NH CR9090 with cutting capacity 1000ha
- JD 6250R – 250HP (cultivations / drilling)
- (JD 6830 – 140HP (Share agreement with neighbour)
- JD 6175R – 175HP (Purchased on a buy, utilise and sell-on later in 2019 policy)
- (JD 6930 – 155HP (hired in for harvest but only when required)
- Claas Scorpion telehandler (2013) – 120HP
- Sands Vision 5500L 36m Sprayer – 165HP

### Livestock / hay & straw business

- JD 6195R – 195HP utilised for baler
- JD 7530 – 180HP with fore-end loader

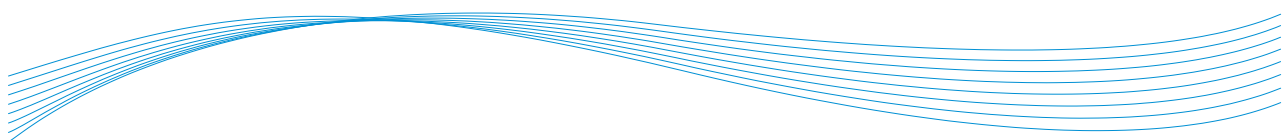


### Tillage and technology

- Aiming for minimal soil disturbance, Beaute Agri utilises a Horsch Avatar and Horsch Sprinter direct seeding equipment. This gives them the versatility to drill directly into a variety of crop aftermaths / mulches including, the cover crops he grows which he now kills off with the farm’s crimper roller that attaches to the front of the tractor.
- Precision farming technology includes variable rate N, P, K and lime through SOYL, Mobile RTK on the Sprayer CTF tramlining and primary tractors for accurate drilling.
- Plough utilised when necessary for fusarium and grass weed control

### Yields

Average yields	Year	t/ha
1st & 2nd wheats mixed	2016	9.84
	2017	10.23
	2018	9.28
Winter barley	2017	9.57
OSR Avg. yield	>2015	3.0–3.5
Beans	2016	6.18
Soya	2018	2.10
Maize for AD	2017	44.08
	2018	39.80



## Farmbench – Knowing your costs



### What can it do for you?

- Multi enterprise
- Instant reports
- Physical and financial data (/tonne, /ha, /enterprise)
- Compare to group, regional and national averages
- Private or part of a group
- Assist with decisions
- Monitor trends



### Why use it?

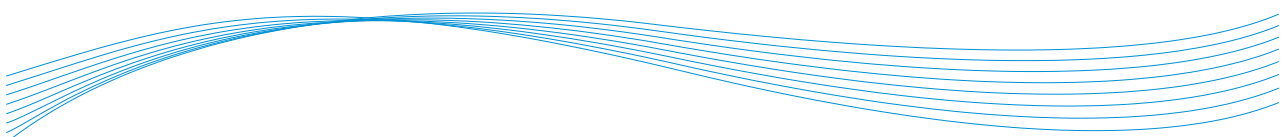
- It's free, unbiased & uncomplicated
- Take guard
- Identify problems
- Highlight ways to improve
- Informed decisions
- Keep checking

For more information, visit [ahdb.org.ukfarmbench](http://ahdb.org.ukfarmbench)

## Farm analysis and suggested future topics

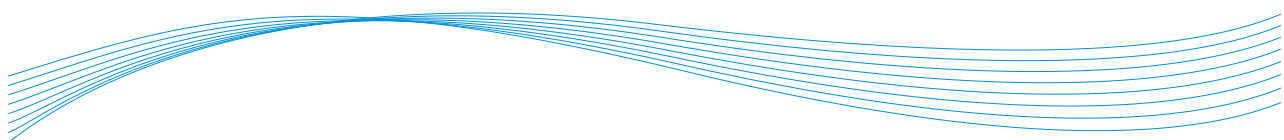
The group conducted a SWOT analysis of the business and the wider industry at the launch meeting. This, alongside a look at key issues and topics that the group would like to cover, will help guide the Monitor Farm programme of meetings over the term and provide a focus for business improvements for Will.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Low cost of production	Security of tenure / lack of contract agreements
Will's knowledge, enthusiasm & reputation	Time management – finding time to focus on business planning and strategies (What value do you put on your time?)
Attention to detail (knowing COP)	Diversification – diverts time and focus
Strong working relationship with landowner	Reliance on the chemical tool box (incl. glyphosate)
Open and honest about his mistakes and willing to learn from them	High risk crops in rotation e.g. Soya, Maize, Quinoa



Integration of “Natural Capital / Public money for public goods” –Will is already on the “bus”	Business reliance on arable through BPS
No written contracts – no ties	AD plant – its life span and security of price for commodity
Seed crops	All the knowledge is in Will’s head so would the business survive if he went?
	Declining subsidies

Opportunities	Threats
ES schemes and building on/exploiting the farms natural capital assets (IPM / IFM)	Slugs – from CC strategies and loss of Metaldehyde
Land owners open to cropping experimentation / try-outs	Diminishing chemical tool box
Varied crops growing so lots of marketing opportunities in order to compensate for possible crop / variety disasters	Weed competition contamination from ryegrass & black-grass
Farm’s location – AD plant, shipping ports etc.	Labour employment and retention
Marketing opportunities – as above but including the crops he can grow	Experimentation, time & money and risks associated
Expansion – more land, further partnerships	High risk crops in rotation e.g. Soya, Maize, Quinoa – (been lucky so far)
Farm buildings (development) – exploiting opportunities to maximise income through other potential usage	Climate Change – being proactive rather than reactive
Integration of livestock within the cropping rotation	
Short-term land / cropping swaps to help control weeds / pests and increase SOM (e.g. potatoes)	



## Further information

**Winter meetings will take place at 10.00am registration for 10.30am start, Venue TBC on:**

- 7 November 2019: BYDV – Understanding the disease and what options we have to control it.
- 19 December 2019: YEN – Developing strategies to consistently hit your yield potential
- 13 February 2020: Drilling into your fixed costs to sow a profit (Labour & machinery review)
- 12 March 2020: Consumer trends and grain marketing strategies for now and after Brexit

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