

# Chelmsford Monitor Farm Meeting Report

## Meeting 11 – Summer meeting - Drainage

21<sup>st</sup> June 2019

Parklands Farm

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



Hew and Christy Willett,  
Chelmsford Monitor Farmers

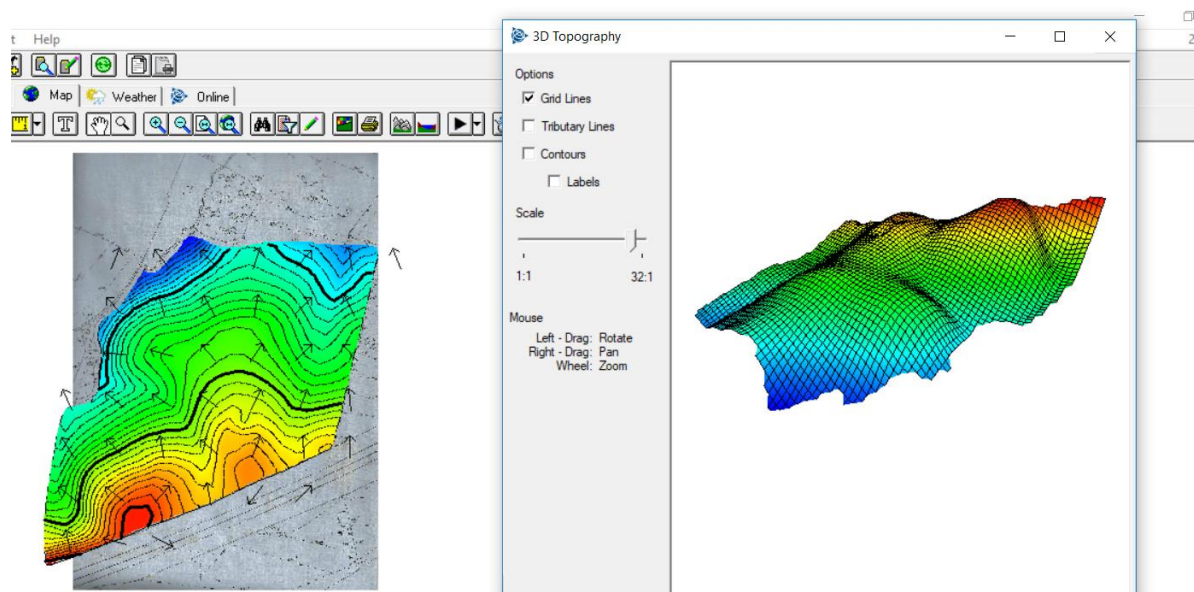
## Meeting Summary – Key Messages

1. Maintain your current drainage systems
2. Consider the options and costs when looking at new drainage systems or renewing existing ones.

## Drainage

**Rob Burtonshaw, Farm Services Ltd**

- Drainage was first developed by Thomas Scagg in 1945, when he developed a method of mass producing clay tiles.
- From 1850 to 1880 over £12million was lent to farms to develop their drainage systems, many of which were then enhanced after World War II.
- The key to drainage is to maintain what you already have installed.
- Check the type of drainage you have, backfill and drainage maps. Aim to link moling in with current drainage. Use the AHDB Drainage Guide for information and guidance.
- Drainage contractors use the latest technology available to look at field topography and water flow, in order to design new drainage schemes. See an example from Parklands Farm below:



## Drainage discussion

Having talked through drainage in the yard and seen the practical session in the field, the group then discussed what Christy and Hew should do on the field in question. The results from the conversation were:

| To Drain<br>✓✓✓✓✓✓   | Not to Drain<br>✓✓   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yield</li> <li>• Less black-grass and slugs</li> <li>• BPS – worth investing now?</li> <li>• Improved nitrogen use efficiency</li> <li>• Get on fields 3 weeks earlier -&gt; increased timeliness</li> <li>• Tax</li> <li>• Cost</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long farming?</li> <li>• Ditches</li> <li>• Increase in yield required to justify?</li> <li>• 20 year payback - +1t/ha</li> <li>• Or...</li> <li>• Just to main drains? Or just the laterals?</li> <li>• Re-wild!</li> <li>• Bricks!</li> </ul> |

## Parklands Farm Drill Changes

- Change from the Mzuri to the Sly drill. The Mzuri is to be sold with a strong 2<sup>nd</sup> hand market.
- The Sly drill is a 6m disc drill, which will sit behind a 180HP tractor. This will mean that 4-5 tonnes of weight will be taken off the tractor. The drill will come with two tanks for seed and fertiliser.



## Further Information

- AHDB Drainage Guide: <https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/field-drainage-guide>

For details about the Chelmsford Monitor Farm and past meeting information, please visit: [cereals.ahdb.org.uk/Chelmsford](https://cereals.ahdb.org.uk/Chelmsford).

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