

Chelmsford Monitor Farm Meeting Report

Meeting 9 – Future proofing your farm

11th January 2019

Galleywood Heritage Centre

For more information, visit: cereals.ahdb.org.uk/Chelmsford



Hew and Christy Willett,
Chelmsford Monitor Farmers

Meeting Summary – Key Messages

1. Look at your farm business assets and where you might be able to diversify with regards to location, your expertise and passions, profit, how it fits in with current operations etc.
2. Can you achieve 10p of profit/m²?
3. Future proofing your farm in terms of carbon, soil quality and profit before subsidy are likely to be important for any future considerations.
4. Look for opportunities to collaborate when looking at new ventures.

Sheep and the arable rotation

Ian Metson, N & P Stacey

- Grass and sheep introduced on the farm in 2013 with the aims of controlling black-grass, building fertility, finding a profitable break crop and getting the full benefit of land in stewardship
- Using Exlana sheep with performance recording
- Currently, 350 ewes and 80 ewe lambs tuppied with 24ha of 2 year leys and 19ha of permanent pasture
- Ian's key tips:
 - Farming is changing and sheep can improve profitability of arable farms – more profitable than combinable break crops
 - Sheep can build huge amounts of fertility and reduce weed burdens
 - In areas without much livestock, winter grazing can be low cost and clean grazing is also a big advantage
 - If you're not keen on being a livestock farmer, collaborate with someone else



Carbon, climate and calculators

Becky Willson, Farm Carbon Cutting Toolkit



**Farm
Carbon
Cutting
Toolkit**

- Farm Carbon Cutting Toolkit is aiming to encourage and support farmers to reduce their GHG emissions, increase their farm energy resilience and in so doing improve their farm businesses for the future
- Why? 30% of anthropogenic GHG emissions relate to agriculture and land use. We have targets to meet and need to reduce emissions by 3% a year.

- 3 main agricultural GHG emissions: nitrous oxide, methane and carbon dioxide. Can mitigate against these with carbon sequestration, soil management, fertiliser management and other areas.
- Carbon footprinting is a tool to be able to quantify the contribution that the farm is making to climate change. Looks at quantity, source and highlights areas for improvements.
- There are two main approaches: whole farm approach and life cycle analysis of a specific product.
- Use the tools to establish a baseline for your business and gain an understanding of where the emissions are in your business.

Future proofing your farm

Luke Paterson

- Keen to have 12 ideas to bring £12,000 into the business each year in profit
- Aimed to generate cash without much investment
- Work with the right people to use your asset – split the profits/start a joint venture or similar
- Use LEADER or other funding, as appropriate
- Diversification examples include:
 - www.canalcamping.co.uk
 - www.tonnagebridge.co.uk
 - www.patersonag.co.uk
 - Land down to maize, land let for potatoes and rye
 - Prickly Fish Farm
- “Taken the fun out of farming, but has de-risked the business”
- Aim is to have a net profit of 10p/m² = £1,000/ha profit – consider how much space you have and what it is worth/the return?



Further Information

- Farmbench: <http://farmbench.ahdb.org.uk>
- AHDB Carbon Footprinting Tool: <https://ahdb.org.uk/knowledge-library/carbon-footprinting-for-cereals-and-oilseeds>
- Farm Carbon Cutting Toolkit: <https://www.farmcarbontoolkit.org.uk/>

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

Winter Meeting Dates 2018 to 2019

- Friday 8 February 2019

All meetings will start at 9am with a bacon roll at Galleywood Heritage Centre, The Common, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8TR.

Contact Details

- For more information, please contact your AHDB Knowledge Exchange Manager: Teresa Meadows - teresa.meadows@ahdb.org.uk - 07387 015465
- For more details about Farmbench and benchmarking, please contact: Holly Howsam - holly.howsam@ahdb.org.uk - 07767 001543