

# Duxford Monitor Farm Meeting Report

Meeting 1: Monitor Farm Launch

Date: 19 June 2018

Location: Rectory Farm, Great Chishill

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



## Duxford Monitor Farm Introduction

David and Tom have different businesses but common goals and problems, the jointly-hosted Monitor Farm will provide an opportunity to look at collaboration, farm management and business resilience from two different perspectives. During the Monitor Farm programme, David and Tom are looking forward to finding ways to push their businesses forward, looking in detail at soils and costs, linking up the supply chain and learning from others, both within and outside the industry.

### Farm Background

	David Hurst, Law Farming	Tom Mead, Bleak House Farm
<b>Total farm hectareage</b>	1,821ha	383ha
<b>Arable area</b>	1,355ha	356ha
<b>Cropping</b>	Rye, wheat, barley, oats, spring barley, forage rape, spring mustard, sugar beet	Winter wheat, oats, OSR and sugar beet
<b>Preodominant soil type</b>	Chalk over chalk or sand over chalk	Sandy loam over chalk
<b>Labour</b>	David as Arable Manager with three full time tractor drivers and a harvest student, plus a full time shepherd.	Tom and his father full time, with harvest help.
<b>Machinery</b>	Three tractors, two forklifts and a combine with a contract hired sprayer and hired prime mover.	Two tractors, one forklift, trailed sprayer and a combine.
<b>Cultivation policy</b>	One pass system with ploughing for grass leys, winter and spring barley.	Use a mixture of ploughing and minimal tillage cultivation, aiming to cultivate as shallow as possible when the conditions allow.

<b>Grain storage</b>	All grain stored on farm – typically in small sheds across different sites.	2,000 tonnes. Winter barley and OSR typically sold at harvest.
<b>Non-arable enterprises</b>	1750 head sheep flock; outdoor pigs; ELS/HLS agreement and host cereals.	Two small campsites.

## Duxford Monitor Farm Steering Group

David and Tom are joined by the following local farmers and agronomists 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:



Andy Hutchison



Jock Willmott



Matthew Doggett



Ralph Parker

## Launch Farm Walk

The farm tour at the Monitor Farm launch included a tour of the cropping, the challenges of black-grass were discussed, diverse rotations on the two farms, markets and the supply chain, grain storage and logistics and environmental stewardship – the benefits and challenges.

There was also the opportunity to start to analyse the cost structures of the two businesses. We looked at the required capacity for the two businesses, using the following formulae:

**Required coverage:**  $\frac{XX \text{ ha}}{36 \text{ hours}} = \text{XXha/hr spraying time}$

**Required boom width:**  $\frac{\text{ha/hr} \times 10}{\text{kph} \times \text{field efficiency (eg. 0.6)}}$

### Law Farming: 50m boom required

The farms sprayer is working efficiently to be able to get over the required acreage.

### MF Mead & Son: 15m boom required

The farm sprayer is over capacity for requirements, but enables efficient application and travel between farms.



**HORSCH  
PT280  
Cost:  
£4.18/ha**

**Berthoud  
Sprayer and  
JD 6155R  
Cost:  
£6.05/ha**

## SWOT Analysis

The group conducted a SWOT analysis of David and Tom’s farm businesses at launch meeting, outlined below:

David Hurst, Law Farming			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Rotation	Spread of land/ travelling	JV's and joint working	Climate change
Marketing opportunities/ networks	Lack of diversification options	Livestock/ forage	Brexit
Scale	Scale	Precision farming	Loss of staff
Organic matter from pigs	Soil moisture	Alternative crops	Markets
Good staff	Grain storage and logistics	Increase in contracted crops	Loss of BPS

Tom Mead, MF Mead and Son			
Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Experienced labour	Field size	Further FBT	Losing land
Soil type (adaptable)	Black-grass	Diversification/ location	Flea beetle
Open minded	Individual SBI units	Collaboration	Neonics
Capacity spraying	Challenges of scale	Black-grass - rotations/ wildlife	Succession
	Small team	Environmental stewardship – unproductive areas	Brexit

The group also looked at the areas that the Monitor Farm programme should focus on over the next three years, based on the challenges for arable farms ahead. The main results of this discussion are below:

### Top 10 challenges facing arable farms over the next three years:

- Financial viability
- Political interpretation/implementation
- Soil health
- Staffing
- Loss of glyphosate/PPP's
- Rural crime
- Market consolidation
- Machinery strategy
- CFA/GBT's – loss of BPS
- Public perception

### What should this Monitor Farm programme focus on:

- Making a margin
- Farming without/lower PPP's
- Scale – fixed costs structure
- Unproductive areas/environmental schemes
- Black-grass
- Public wins
- Soil health
- Whole farming system
- Evaluating precision methods
- Collaboration/joint ventures
- Change management

## Find out more – Links to AHDB information sheets or research

[Encyclopaedia of pests and natural enemies](#)

[The encyclopaedia of cereal diseases](#)

[The encyclopaedia of arable weeds](#)

For information on soils, visit [ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils](http://ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils)

AHDB's Brexit impact calculator, resilience checklist, toolkit and Horizon documents can be found at [ahdb.org.uk/brexit](http://ahdb.org.uk/brexit)



## Next meeting


All meetings will start at 9am with a bacon roll at Fowlmere Village Hall, Chrishall Road, Fowlmere, Cambridgeshire SG8 7RY.

### Winter meeting dates 2018–2019

- Friday 16 November 2018
- Friday 21 December 2018
- Friday 18 January 2019
- Friday 15 February 2019

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