

Petworth Monitor Farm meeting report

Launch Meeting

Date: 21 June 2018

Location: Medhone Barn, Blackhouse Lane, Petworth GU28 9NZ

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



Petworth Monitor Farm introduction

Mark Chandler farms with his father Richard at G Chandler Farming Limited at Moor Farm, Petworth. The family moved to Moor Farm in 1981, where Mark's grandfather George and his father Richard were joint tenants of the Leconfield Estate. In 2012, Mark succeeded the tenancy and is currently the 2nd generation on the main holding of around 400 hectares. The business was restructured from a family partnership in 2012 and G Chandler Farming Ltd was formed in 2013 with the aim of running the arable farming and contracting business through the limited company, and retaining the family partnership to run the home farm.

The total area farmed and managed is around 1460 ha, of which 1285 ha is in combinable crops for harvest 2018. This area varies every year depending on various agreements and the individual farms land use. Currently, 458 ha is on the farms own AHA tenancy which includes the arable area at Moor Farm, grassland areas and fallow. Mark and Richard currently have 151 ha on Farm Business Tenancies which are up for renegotiation.

Mark also runs six separate contract farming agreements across separate businesses. In addition to this they have a stubble to stubble contract on 216 ha locally. Beyond the combinable cropping area, Mark has around 221 ha of permanent grassland which is predominantly utilised through the HLS scheme, buffer strips and field corners, ELS options and fallow.

The farm also has some diversified interest, including Crawford Business Park which was established in 2002 after the farm stopped the suckler beef enterprise and potato production. In addition, VS fisheries rears carp for the course fishing restocking market, and the farm also has a small livery yard. Richard is currently in the process of establishing Petworth Schooling Course.

Petworth Monitor Farm steering group

Mark 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:



Shai Gilad



Stuart Martin



William Tupper



Simon Carter



Tom Edwards



Richard Chandler

Launch farm walk

Soil types and rotation

The soils are extremely variable across farms and within fields. Soil type ranges from heavy clay loam over weald clay – this is the predominant soil type at the home farm. Other soil types include green sand, sandy clay loam and calcareous clay.

On the main block of the farm, Mark runs a simple rotation of winter wheat (C1 seed is grown on contract for Bartholemews; Group 1 milling wheat Illustrious, Skyfall and Zyatt; Group 2 hard milling wheat KWS Lilli and Group 3 soft wheat Scout); oilseed rape (mainly conventional oilseed rape varieties are grown (Campus, Elgar and Barbados) and some hybrid rape is grown (HOLL V0316)); winter wheat and spring beans or spring barley (30% of Fanfare spring beans are grown on C1 seed contract, and the remainder is for HLS).

Mark is starting to question whether the rotation is fit for the future, and has trialled soya for the first time this year. Pest pressures have resulted in a patchy established crop however, due to the rotational advantages of this legume crop and, a theoretical healthy margin, Mark feels he needs to grow Soya for 3 years in order to ascertain whether it's a viable crop for his farm.

For more information on soils, see ahdb.org.uk/greatsoils

Labour and machinery

At Moor Farm, Mark and Richard have 3 full time employees – Paul, Matthew and Harry. The staff are highly skilled and dedicated to the business. Mark and Richard are committed to their future and ensuring that they remain part of the business is a top priority.

Cultivations are based around a Simba SL600 cultivator running LD legs and points. Shallow cultivations are completed behind the combine in front of the Horsch Sprinter drill on duet coulters which since adding has given Mark more drilling options upon the varying soils. An LD subsoiler and a set of Carrier discs are used on compacted areas or on tramlines if the ground needs moving again.

In 2012, Mark purchased a 6m hybrid mounted Claydon drill with the aim of replacing the cultivation system with a one pass strip till drill however, this drilling system is now up for review due to “hair-pinning” and seed closure due to the soil types. Mark runs a Claas Lexion 770 TT with a 10.2m header. A local contractor is used for balancing harvest. In 2016, a 100 t/hr intake trench and 42 t/hp Perry Dryer replaced the former 15 t/hr Alvan Blanch and 30 t holding bins.



Yields

Crop yields (t/ha)	2015	2016	2017	3 year average
W Wheat	10.98	8.74	10.27	9.99
S Barley	7.37	6.11	5.07	6.18
OSR	4.47	3.67	4.11	4.08
Beans	4.54	2.98	2.99	3.50

Farm analysis

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 Mark and Richard.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy of scale • Diversity of income streams • Internal knowledge and enthusiasm to drive business forward • Committed and skilled staff • Grain storage and other building infrastructure • Business cost awareness • Diverse rotation • Openness to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment scheme soon to end (loss of income) • Short rotation – impact on grass weed control • Varied soils impacting on drilling dates and cropping • Tillage systems versus grass weed husbandry
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover cropping to promote soil structure and fertility in the rotation • Extend rotation (include winter barley) • Precision farming and increased use and interpretation of field mapping data • Environmental scheme coming to an end – reapply or wait 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm Business Tenancies/ rental agreement insecurity • Threat to any longterm investment • Grass weeds • End of environmental scheme • Climate change • Political uncertainties

Winter Monitor Farm meetings

Winter meetings will take place at 10 am, Medhouse Barn, Blackhouse Lane, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9NZ on:

- 18 October 2018
- 6 December 2018
- 24 January 2019
- 28 February 2019

Find out more – Links to AHDB information sheets or research

[GREATsoils](#)

[AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds blogs](#)

[AHDB Cereals & Oilseeds videos](#)

[Webinar: Staff recruitment, retention and motivation](#)

[Webinar: Machinery for farming or farming for machinery?](#)

For information on Brexit, visit ahdb.org.uk/brexit


Next meeting

Date: 18 October 2018

Time: 10am

Location: Medhouse Barn, Blackhouse Lane, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 9NZ

For more information contact: Paul Hill

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To find out more about Farmbench, AHDB's benchmarking tool, contact: Emma Nankervis

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