

Strategic Farm West 2018-2024 launch

Strategic Farms West introduction

The Strategic Farm West, hosted by Rob Fox at Squab Hall Farm, is a platform for the integration of research and practical farming that has the potential to change the way we farm for the better. The Strategic Farm West demonstrates research outputs and communicates the full net-margin cost benefit analysis of demonstrations to help farmers make real differences to their businesses and continue to be proud of our industry and the jobs we do.

The vision of the Strategic Farm West is to independently test research outputs in an open, honest and transparent way. The project will help the UK agricultural industry, primarily farmers, to try out new strategies and develop practical solutions to address regional priorities and challenges.

Rob Fox joins a growing network of Strategic Farms, including Brian Barker who hosts the [Strategic Farm East](#) near Stowmarket, Suffolk. Rob is supported by a steering group of local farmers and advisers who will help to guide the programme over the six years. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to get in touch with the steering group members – Jock Willmott, Colin Woodward, Ian Matts and Mark Wood.

Baselining

The first year of the Strategic Farm project, known as the baselining year, aims to determine the starting point of a number of indicators within the farmed environment before any changes are investigated and evaluated.

The following indicators will be assessed during the first year of the programme, 2018-2019, and monitored over the next six years.

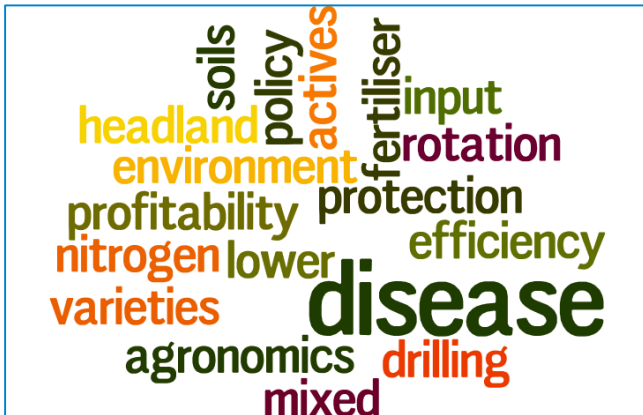
- Weather station
- Soil nutrient analysis
- Soil biology
- Earthworms
- Electrical conductivity scanning
- Water sampling
- Soil physical structure
- Crop biomass
- Weeds
- LEAF Sustainability Review

For more details on the baselining assessments, read our [Strategic Farm baselining review](#)

Identifying the priorities for the next six years

Attendees of the launch meeting were asked to consider the question “*Where do you think the industry will be in terms of 1) environmental protection, 2) healthy soils and healthy crops and 3) nutrition in six years time?*” The feedback from these discussions will be used to identify appropriate research project outcomes to demonstrate on the Strategic Farm West to address these challenges.

Environmental protection



Healthy soils and healthy crops



Nutrition




Cost benefit analysis

Every demonstration will be subject to a full cost benefit analysis so the impact on financial productivity can be seen as clearly as that on physical productivity. Using [Farmbench](#), the costs of production per tonne for each crop grown on the Strategic Farm and for each trial will be calculated. Key comparisons will be shared with those that attend and more widely in the network through the annual report.

Further information

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