

Taunton Monitor Farm meeting report

Meeting 3: Healthy soils, healthy profits

Speakers: Clive Bailye (TWB Farms)

Date: 12 December 2018

Location: The Anchor, Hillfarrance, TA1 4AW

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



Meeting summary – key messages

- A diverse rotation is key for disease and pest control as well as soil health
- Pest, weed and disease control is specific to each farm – work out what is needed for your business
- Assess soil health – this can be done by digging a hole with a spade
- Benchmarking and using calculator tools, such as the [Machinery cost calculator](#), can help monitor and compare costs of farming systems/practices

TWB Farm system

- Zero till farming for 10 years following a min till system
- Moving to zero till has reduced machinery, labour and fuel costs:
 - Less machinery – 1HP /ha
 - Less fuel – 4l/ha establishment fuel
 - Less labour – £100/ha labour cost
- Less soil biology disturbance to allow soil biology to thrive and build strong networks
- Aim to never to have bare land – reduce water loss
- Diverse rotation is key for crop disease and pest control and for soil biology health
- Feed soil biology from fungi – be a carbon farmer and incorporate livestock and cover crops into the rotation



Define the success of your farming system

- In building a spray programme, determine whether you want to follow and pay for a preventative programme or do crops yield without?
- Do they generate profitable margins?
- Is the system sustainable?
 - Are organic matter levels increasing?
 - Is water filtration increasing?
 - Are grass weed populations reducing?
 - Is consumption of inputs reducing?

Find out more – Links to AHDB information sheets or research

- [Livestock in the arable rotation](#)
- [Soil assessment methods](#)
- [Biological testing for soil health](#)
- [Testing soil health](#)
- [Opportunities for cover crops in conventional arable rotations](#)
- [Machinery cost calculator](#)



Next meeting

Date: 7 February 2019

Topic: Health soils, healthy crop

Location: Tregairewoon Farm, Portscatho, Truro, Cornwall, TR2 5EP



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