

## **FARM DAYS – AGENDA**

### **Arable Day – Monday January 6 2014**

#### **Building success through diversity**

**9.25am. Graham Harvey** introduces the theme “Diversity in agriculture” and hands over to the day’s chair, **Tim Finney**.

**9.30am Julian Hosking. Rural land management specialist**

#### **Embracing diversity in agriculture**

Julian will argue for building more resilience into farming systems by extending biodiversity. The weakness of present systems lies chiefly in the wide reliance on monocultures in both plant and animal production. Biodiversity isn’t restricted to wild species – it needs to be built into farming systems too.

**9.55am. Henry Edmunds. Wiltshire organic farmer.**

#### **Biodiversity on the commercial farm**

Henry describes his farming system in which biodiversity is built into the whole farming system – in the choice of grazing and conservation mixtures, and below ground in the soil. He is highly critical of modern, intensive arable farms and the power of agrochemical corporations to promote them. He describes his reconstruction of ancient chalk grass ecosystems on his farm.

**10.20am. Stephen Briggs. Cambridgeshire farmer and agroforestry specialist**

#### **Agroforestry: a new approach to increased farm production.**

Stephen recently completed a Nuffield Scholarship on commercial agroforestry and its applicability to the UK and temperate farming systems. This year Stephen has won a 3yr EU funded Leonardo training project on agroforestry involving 6 member states - the aims are to train farmers, trainers and exchange knowledge between member states.

**10.45am. Julian, Henry and Stephen take stage for Q&A chaired by Tim**

**11.00am Coffee.**

**11.30am Tim Finney introduces next speaker.**

**11.35am. Tim May. MD Kingsclere Estates, Hampshire.**

#### **Building sustainability on a large arable estate**

Tim May is making dramatic changes to the farming system at Kingsclere. For some years the estate has been run as a conventional, high-input arable farm. But in spring 2013 Tim reseeded almost half the acreage down to “herbal leys” containing a broad mix of grasses, legumes and deep-rooting herbs. He has already introduced a large sheep flock, and cattle are soon to come onto the farm. The livestock are to be intensively grazed as a means of increasing soil carbon.

**12.00pm. Q&A session with Tim May chaired by Tim Finney.**

**12.10pm Robert Plumb. Soil Fertility Services and Michael Harrington. Edaphos**

**Biological farming: the profitable alternative to high-input agriculture**

These two specialists in soil fertility will discuss the principles of biological agriculture, with special reference to Tim May and the other farmers. Robert and Michael will discuss the results of trial work with biological soil amendments and will suggest there's a bright and profitable future for biological agriculture.

**1.00pm Tim Finney gives lunch information. Session ends.**

**14.30pm Workshop sessions.**

**Soil workshop. Grove Auditorium.**

Workshop and discussion on soil health. Hosted by Robert Plumb and Mike Harrington.

**Agro-forestry workshop. Summer Room**

Workshop and discussion hosted by Stephen Briggs.

## **Pasture and grazing day – Tuesday January 7 2014**

### **Building diversity**

**9.25am. Graham Harvey** introduces the day and hands over to the day's chair, **Dave Stanley**, who introduces the first speaker.

**9.30am. Jono Cole. Cornwall organic farmer.**

**How did I end up here?**

Jono describes his transition from conventional farmer and contractor to organic farmer. He has moved into Stabilizer cattle and will describe their advantages on grazing systems. Jono is a member of Tamar Valley Organic Group in Cornwall. He describes how the members work together to find biological solutions to farming challenges.

**9.55am. Henry Gent. Devon dairy farmer and Green Party activist.**

**How the tax system distorts farming**

Henry shows how the present tax system skews UK agriculture towards monoculture and high inputs. It bears down heavily on employed labour but is very light when it comes to fossil fuel inputs, particularly reactive nitrogen. In this way the system works against resilient, biodiverse mixed farming and encourages high-input monocultures. Henry proposes solutions.

**10.20am. Robert Thornhill. Derbyshire dairy farmer and Nuffield Scholar.**

**Forage and grazing techniques for sustainable pasture-based dairy farms**

Robert is just back from his Nuffield trip to New Zealand where he has been looking at alternative grazing systems to high-input ryegrass monocultures. He has grown an experimental herbal ley on his limestone land near Bakewell. With the facts he has gleaned in New Zealand he hopes to make better use of these diverse pastures for his spring-calving herd.

**10.45am. Jono, Henry and Robert on stage for Q&A chaired by Dave Stanley**

**11.00am. Coffee.**

**11.30am. Dave Stanley introduces next speaker.**

**11.35am. David Hugill. Hill farmer on the North York Moors. Adapting North American grazing techniques for use in the UK – the story so far.**

Mob grazing has attracted growing attention from livestock farmers in Britain. David has made an in depth study of these methods and looked at how well they adapt to the conditions in Britain. His experience in this topical area will help farmers identify the benefits and the pitfalls.

**12.00pm. Jay Abrahams and Emma Goodwin. Biologic Design. Combining physics and biology to make the land more productive**

Though trained in microbiology, Jay set up Biologic Design to produce enhanced ecosystems. He spends much of his time designing and installing wetland waste treatment systems. Today he will talk about how to make land more productive by “site reticulation” – he calls it “ridge and furrow with hedges”! Emma is the landowner where this pioneering development in productive and resilient agriculture is taking place.

**12.25pm. David, Jay and Emma on stage for Q&A chaired by Dave Stanley**

**12.35pm. Robert Plumb. Soil Fertility Services and Michael Harrington. Edaphos**

**Biological farming: making livestock healthier and more profitable**

These two specialists in soil fertility will discuss the principles of biological agriculture, with special reference to this morning’s speakers. Robert and Michael will discuss the results of trial work with biological soil amendments and will suggest strategies for reducing inputs in livestock production by making soils more fertile and productive.

**1.15pm. Dave Stanley gives lunch information. Close of session.**

**14.45pm Workshop sessions.**

**Soil workshop. Grove Auditorium.**

Workshop and discussion on soil health. Hosted by Robert Plumb and Mike Harrington.

**Grazing management workshop. Summer Room.**

Grazing management workshop hosted by the PFLA.

**16.30pm. Telling the world about pasture-fed foods. Grove Auditorium.**

An open forum introduced by Graham Harvey.

**5.00pm. Close of Farm Days.**