

OXFORD REAL FARMING CONFERENCE 2013
DAY 2 – 4TH JANUARY 2013

SPEAKERS

Chair: John Meadley

9.00-9.30am John Turner

Pasture and productivity on the mixed farm.

John Turner is from a 100ha organic farm in Little Bytham, near Stamford in Lincolnshire which he runs in partnership with his brother Guy. As an increasingly rare farming model for this part of the country, the mixed farming system supports a pasture-fed commercial beef suckler herd and produces wheat, barley and oats for human consumption. As one of the founding members of the Pasture-Fed Livestock Association his work both on and off the farm has an emphasis upon exploring practical, viable steps towards reducing reliance upon non-renewable inputs whilst maintaining a commercial focus to the business.

9.30-10.00am Tom Chapman

Mob grazing: An arable break crop for the 21st century?

Tom obtained an honours degree in agriculture and land management at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, then went into dairy herd management. He later became business advisor to Grant Thornton, and subsequently became an agricultural banker with HSBC and Clydesdale Bank. He has now moved into consultancy and estate management, and his core clients include a traditional country estate. In 2012 he completed his Nuffield Scholarship on the subject of mob grazing.

10.00-10.30am. Ian Wilkinson. Cotswold Seeds

Species diversity and productivity in grasslands

Ian Wilkinson joined Cotswold Seeds in 1987 and is now Managing Director. On leaving school he became an agricultural apprentice and went on to study Farm and Grassland Management at The Berkshire College of Agriculture. Ian describes himself as a seed merchant and considers his role as a 'bridge' between the producer and the end user of seed. Cotswold Seeds puts together seed mixtures for over 10,000 farmers every year. The company is committed to scientific research and is currently involved in the prestigious Marie Curie 'LegumePlus' project which seeks to re-invent the role of legumes in agriculture.

10.30-11.00am. COFFEE

11.00-11.30am. Julian Hosking. UK Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee

Agricultural biodiversity and Pastoral Farming: Will Homo sapiens live up to its name?

Brought up on a family mixed farm, Julian Hosking has studied agriculture, rural estate management and town and country planning. He has worked and lectured in land management and is a member of the UK Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee. His recent projects include: biodiversity policy enhancements, CAP reform and the rural developments programme; innovative agri-environment scheme developments; and extensive grazing systems.

11.30-12.00pm Jim Twine

Real Food: A question of justice

Jim Twine runs Court Farm in the Chew Valley near Bristol. The farm has been organic since 1969. Jim is now in a share farming partnership with lifelong friend Luke Hasell. In total they farm over 500 acres of organic land and sell their produce through a brand called The Story which supplies organic beef, lamb, pork and poultry in partnership with Bill and Emma Yeats. Together they run a box scheme, a small farm shop, provide organic catering services and supply independent retailers, local schools and restaurants. Jim is also a founder member of The Community Farm – a CSA developed in the heart of the Chew Valley that now has over 200 members.

12.00-12.30pm. Panel discussion on grazing.

12.30-2.00pm. LUNCH

2.00-2.15pm Chair's introduction: Robert Plumb. Soil Fertility Services.

Introduction: Re-building soil fertility: The new challenge.

Robert has spent a lifetime involved with soils and soil fertility. He has travelled widely in the USA, Australia, Japan and Europe looking at alternative methods for improving soil and plant health. In the mid 1990s he developed the Total Fertility Audit using the CEC and soil mineral balancing methods still in use today. This was followed by the introduction of a range of soil conditioners and plant growth stimulants designed to “feed the soil.” In 2004 Robert developed the Better Grass Program, now sold to grassland farmers throughout the UK.

2.15-2.45pm. Robert Richmond

Pastures: What are we managing them for?

Robert Richmond grew up on a family dairy farm in North Yorkshire. He studied for a degree in animal science at Edinburgh University, then embarked on a career in agriculture. He currently manages an organic dairy farm in the Cotswolds. In 2012 he completed a Nuffield Scholarship looking at the benefits for farming and the environment of rebuilding soil carbon levels. His conclusion - fertility is related to a soil's ability to hold nutrients and water. To achieve this it's important to manage and feed the soil microbes. The best way of doing this is with the grazing ruminant.

2.45-3.05pm. Dave Stanley. e3

The climate change gamble: Is soil carbon the joker in the pack?

Dave was a late developer in farming. He bought 2 in calf heifers some 15 years ago on leaving the Environment Agency and expanded to 45 head on 80 acres. He encountered the usual range of cattle management problems and eventually realised that the problem was not the cattle, it was the soil and what they were grazing. Over the last 10 years he has monitored the soil carbon levels and noted the amazingly high carbon sequestration rates. In 2012 he won the Lincolnshire Environmental Award for farming for his work on this project. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, and serves on their assessment and selection panel. He has drafted and supported the development of national training on carbon and GHG management, and sustainable business practice.

Dave has facilitated the development of food and land management strategies for leading NGOs including CLA, WWF and Wildlife Trusts. He lectured at the National School of Government and at various universities, presenting on Sustainable Development and Government policy, appraisal, energy, Climate Change, sustainable procurement, FM, sustainable land management and food.

3.05-3.35pm. Michael Harrington. Edaphos Ltd.

The loss of soil carbon and its effects on agriculture

Edaphos Ltd provides an advisory service to farmers on all aspects of arable farming and soil fertility. The company has a specialist interest in soil fertility and the improvement of soil and plant health in commercial and organic systems. The business also supplies a range of natural biological inoculants and stimulants and has designed and built its own Compost tea brewer range using purpose made compost and inoculants through them. The microbes are all beneficial and natural to the environment and are used to facilitate balance and/or replenish exhausted or poor soil

systems. The company is linked with a number of other like-minded businesses trying to utilise the best of what is currently available for the industry.

3.35-3.55pm. Martin Lane. Field Science

Today's Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

Martin Lane founded his company, Field Science, around 13 years ago. The company carries out soil remedial work leading to raised mineral levels in the foods grown on it. He is currently carrying out development studies with major food retailers. Field Science is also developing non-oil based fertilizers and researching sequestration techniques for removing nitrates and phosphates from watercourses.

3.55-4.30pm. Panel discussion on soil fertility