

# Henson & Andrews Farming

## Arable Information Pack

Overall, the Cotswold Farm Park visitor attraction is a relatively small part of the larger Henson & Andrews farm business totalling 650 hectares, including a 400 hectare arable enterprise. Henson & Andrews also contract farm an additional 300 hectares of mixed farming and supply contract management services on a further 240 hectares.

All of the farmed area is covered by a combination of environmental stewardship agreements, and conservation is a key element in the business' farming policy.

Together, Adam and Duncan run a modern and progressive business that has maintained a positive momentum through initiatives such as expansion, diversification and adding value. Their progressive business ideas and diversification projects are an excellent example of how modern farming can be managed in a sustainable and environmentally effective manner.

### Soil

Bemborough Farm is situated on the Cotswold limestone escarpment, with a maximum elevation of 300m. The soil type is called Cotswold Brash, and is typified by its high stone content (up to 50% of soil volume) and shallow nature (with depths of only 150mm over bed rock in places).

The soil has a medium texture and is free-draining. It has a fairly high clay fraction and is therefore very sticky, and liable to compaction when wet. In dry conditions its shallow nature and the porosity of the underlying limestone means that the soils are prone to drought. The high mineral content and low level of organic matter inherent in these soils exacerbates its liability to drought, and limits its nutrient availability.

### Rotation

The farm's rotation is governed by the following factors:

#### Soil depth

Deep rooting crops such as beans cannot root sufficiently and root crops such as potatoes have insufficient depth to grow. Light/shallow soils are more susceptible to soil-borne disease such as Take-All, limiting the incidence with which certain crops can be included in the rotation.

#### Moisture availability

Spring/summer droughts limit productivity and spring-sown crops are particularly susceptible.

### **Stone content**

Low lying crops such as peas are difficult to harvest without damaging equipment, stones also harbour slugs which can be very injurious to crops.

### **Economics**

Shallow, drought susceptible soils are inherently lower yielding than deeper soils and crops need to be chosen that will perform consistently in varying climatic conditions.

### **Markets**

Market preferences and commodity prices vary. Rotations need to be balanced to control risk, but flexible enough to take advantage of market opportunities.

### **Fertility**

Low fertility soils require higher levels of nutrition to achieve higher yields and to ensure high protein levels in milling wheat.

### **Conservation**

Soil protection, moisture conservation, building organic matter and fertility, and ensuring biodiversity requires a mixture of cultivation techniques, drilling dates, crop types, and production methods.

### **Pest, disease and weed control**

Rotations need to be chosen to minimise pesticide usage, avoid the build up of soil/vegetation borne disease, and use husbandry methods to control weeds and pests

The farm has a standard three year rotation of:

- First cereal-Winter wheat (a mixture of feed and milling varieties) followed by
- Second cereal-Winter or Spring barley (all for malting) followed by
- Break crop-Oilseed rape (plus spring beans/rotational grass) followed by winter wheat, etc

## **Agronomy**

The farm's management is based upon integrated farm management (IFM) techniques. The [LEAF organisation](#) promotes IFM and the following information comes from their website...

IFM is a whole farm approach that combines the best of traditional methods with beneficial modern technologies, to achieve high productivity with a low environmental impact.

Farming has always been innovative and enterprising, responding to consumer demands and Government priorities but the challenges now are very different. Food security, climate change, a growing, ageing and urbanised population all put pressures on our natural resources and create disconnections between food, farming and nature.

IFM contributes to solving these global challenges. It is a widely accepted and practical way forward for the farmers to deliver sustainable agriculture. It is a balanced approach built around existing knowledge and sound husbandry principles and is constantly being improved in accordance with current research and new technology. This encourages farmers to review their current practices and make changes.

With IFM attention to detail is key. Wise and efficient use of resources, smarter approaches to business planning and new technologies all contribute to increasing productivity whilst still protecting our valuable resources. A recent survey carried out among LEAF members also demonstrated significant costs savings, through better soil management, the use of minimum tillage and reduced pesticide use, alongside improved wildlife numbers and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

It brings together the management practices and decisions across the whole farm in a balanced and considered way. This includes:

- Organisation and Planning
- Soil Management & Fertility
- Crop Health & Protection
- Pollution Control & By-Product Management
- Animal Husbandry
- Energy Efficiency & Water Management
- Landscape & Nature Conservation
- Community Engagement

Henson & Andrews retain the services of a Masstock agronomist and consultant to provide professional support and crop production advice.