Delivering savings, examining trade-offs and monitoring impacts

This business focused technical event will examine the economic gains and costs of more environmental farming. In this unpredictable and incentive driven climate, where can sustainable farming strategies reduce risk, allow greater business resilience and offer consistency of yield. What role does, can and should natural capital play in this, today and in the future?

We will examine the current strategies that Blackbird Farming Ltd - a LEAF Demonstration Farm and AHDB Monitor Farm – are implementing. Blackbird Farming is an arable, fruit and sheep business just outside Sittingbourne. They are an integrated business using cutting edge technology and innovation to ensure they are on the front foot in an increasingly volatile market. We will examine the thinking behind their management approach and then, through experts and group discussions, look at additional ways to enhance these methods in order to promote their overall business efficiency.

Date:
Tuesday 19th February 2019 - 9:30 to 14:30

Location:
Blackbird Farming, Hempstead Farm, Hempstead Lane, Tonge, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME9 9BJ

Lunch will be provided
Programme

9.30 Arrival

10.00 Towards continuous improvement
Paul Hill, AHDB; Alice Midmer, LEAF; Mark Bowsher-Gibbs, Blackbird Farming
Introduction to Blackbird Farming (the trading name of G H Dean and Co Ltd) and Integrated Farm Management.
How does Blackbird Farming use the LEAF Sustainable Farming Review and FarmBench to quantify their economic and environmental success.

10.50 Farm tour
Mark Bowsher-Gibbs, Blackbird Farming

Making Water Work - Paul Dracott, NIAB EMR
Efficient water management through assessing and enhancing on-farm use to increase production and achieve environmental benefits.

Soil Essentials - James Holmes, AHDB, David Shepard, Omnia Precision
Key practices of sustainable soil management including monitoring soil health, maintenance and improvement to increase fertility, yields and profitability.

Healthy Crops - Mark Bowsher-Gibbs, Blackbird Farming; Dr Ben Woodcock, CEH
Examining the role of IPM, enhancing and monitoring beneficials, varieties and rotations. How does the success of these measures impact the bottom line.

Optimising Landscape Management - Peter Thompson, GWCT; Stuart Fletcher
Landscape and nature conservation at Blackbird Farming and examining the integration of sheep and livestock production for better grassland and soil management.

13.00 Lunch

13.30 Talking tactics
Untapping future potential at Blackbird Farming – following the morning’s discussion, we will assess where there are areas yet to be unlocked, maximised, rationalised and rejuvenated at Blackbird Farming and amongst attendees own businesses.

14.00 Future plans
Caroline Drummond, LEAF Chief Executive; Dr Susannah Bolton, AHDB Knowledge Exchange Director

14.15 Round-up and closing remarks
Richard Ashworth MEP

14.30 Finish

Note: Please come prepared for a farm walk

To book your place email: events@leafuk.org

This event has been organised by LEAF (Linking Environment And Farming) in partnership with AHDB and Blackbird Farming.