



CAMBS FARMS GROWERS Ltd

DELIVERING
our PROMISE



Who are G's and why is our local environment important to us?

- Started growing on the Fens in 1952
- Group of marketing led farming businesses
- Over 1 billion packs a year
- 7,000 employees across the group
- 12,000ha of core cropping globally
- Mix of conventional and organic farm land
- Supply all UK and European Retailers all year round



Importance of our Fenland farming operation....

- 5,500 ha croppable fenland in production for salads and veg.
- Production of 80% of the Summer season salads for UK group.
- Supplying volume of 400 million packs per year.
- Split over 3 key growing areas: Ely/Stretham, Littleport, and Wissington.
- Farming 10% organic matter to 80% organic matter.



Our Journey...why?

- **Losing topsoil every year.**
- **Future generation stability.**
- **Passion for environment we live in.**



We needed to develop a long-term strategy for the farm focussing on the conservation of: Conservation is not just habitat creation...

1. Soil – erosion, nutrition, structure, potential
2. Nutrition Farming
3. Farm biodiversity - habitat creation mixed species



It takes a Whole Farm Approach.....

A farm strategy that links the....

- Land
- Water
- Air
- Environment to protect our soils, to enhance our wildlife and ecosystem



Whilst.....

- Driving quality and yield.. and
- Improving nutrition in our crops- creating a stronger more robust farming business.

The more we investigated and discussed the more we realised that every aspect on the farm was intrinsically linked - if we strengthen one the others all benefit.

Overall minimise our impact on the environment.

From this the **'Whole Farm Approach'** was developed.

The G's Whole Farm Approach



Trust | Efficiency | Quality | Expertise | Can do



How to achieve this... ? Soil

Planned a consistent rotation.

Tillage Reduction to help prevent mineralisation and structural damage

- Better timing
- Less ploughing
- Reduced passes
- Direct Drill vs Strip-till

Using over +150ha of green manures to scavenge locked up nutrition and hold on to nitrogen.



How to achieve this... ? Soil

Organic amendments with an aim to be zero imported P and K.

- Drive the efficiency of the AD process - Using a closed circle energy and nutrition cycle – growing maize, AD plant, digestate (solid and liquid)
- 25,000 tonnes of SMC managed through rotation
- 2000 tonnes of straw for muck
- Raw hen muck in trials



Reintroduction of circa 5000 sheep into rotation.

How to achieve this... ? Soil

Target zero bare soil over winter, 1300ha mixed cover crop.

Green manure



Diversity & Structure



Soil Erosion (Wind blow)



Companion Cropping



Trust | Efficiency | Quality | Expertise | Can do



How to achieve this... ? Water

1. Probes and sensors help us to plan and minimise our irrigation usage
2. Investment in reservoirs+2,000,000 cu.m.
3. Extensive investment in drainage and water table management.
4. Where possible maximise night-time irrigation to reduce evaporation
5. +90% of the farms equipment is boom rather than rain-gun irrigation for greater accuracy
6. Significant investment over the past 4 years to move to drip tape irrigation systems, 20-40% lower water usage



How to achieve this...? Nutrition Farming

1. Back to Basics farming - not organic, not no-till but more environmentally friendly farming.
2. Feeding only what plant needs –
 - precision fertigation through drip,
 - Individual dose through GPS
3. Grow tolerance and resistance in our crops to help reduce fungicide use.
4. Reduce dependence on artificial chemicals and fert.

How?

- Leaf tissue testing, what does the plant need?
- Soil test – what is available naturally for the plant?
- Review of soil management practises to unlock potential nutrition, hold nutrients and increase micro life.
- Work to strengthen the Plant and Soil relationship



How to achieve this... ? Farm Biodiversity

It is vital that as a business we recognise our responsibility to the wider environment while producing food.

What was our strategy.....

- Create a multi species Biodiversity Action Plan to areas of the farm with certain focus points.
- Drive a philosophy that food production and the local environment must and can work in harmony.
- Restore neglected habitats and ecosystem that we already had.
- Create diversity on the less productive land... this in return creates corridors for the wildlife to move and live around them farm.

Farmland birds show rapid decline

By Claire Marshall
BBC environment correspondent **BBC**

Farmland bird decline prompts renewed calls for agriculture overhaul

Official figures show a 9% decline between 2010-15 in birds living and breeding on the UK's farmland



Research into the decline of some farmland bird species have shown that there is no single reason, but that different species reacted to different factors.



Farm Biodiversity..... what have we done to date...

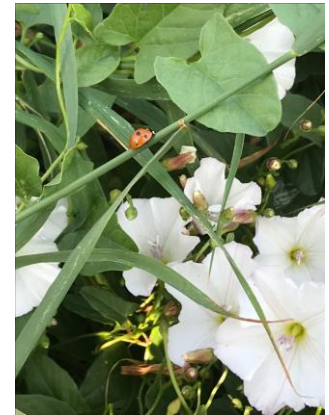
We are a L.E.A.F Marque Demo Farm

We Joined a 5 year Countryside Stewardship Scheme in 2017....

- Two higher tier schemes... 5-10% of land committed...
- Two mid-tier schemes... 3-5% of land committed.



We now have a Total of 714ha of fixed conservation habitat



Farm Biodiversity..... what have we done to date...

- Complete range of habitats across all our farming land base.
- We have created a 3ha wetland area to provide a habitat for breeding waders
- Providing year-round food areas near habitat -
 - 53ha of wild bird seed mixes, is supplemented by 17.5t of winter feed.
 - 65 hectares of nectar and floristically enhanced mixes across larger land blocks.



- Nesting habitat created with the above insect rich flower meadows linked
 - 47 miles/7.5ha of planted and managed hedgerow.
 - 628 miles/101ha of managed reed wetland and drainage networks.

We have seen our native farmland birds increase year on year with the likes of Grey Partridge, Yellow Hammers, Barn Owl and Tree Sparrows

In conclusion....

- We have created a robust Whole Farm Approach and set the targets.
- Followed the nutrition farming model to begin the process to grow better healthier crops that are more resilient to help reduce our inputs.
- Continued to build and create biodiversity around the farm.
- Have we got to the end of the journey???????

Not by a country mile!!!!!!

Thankyou.....

