

Case Study



Nick Rowsell

John Rowsell Limited, Hampshire

ARABLE

DAIRY

BEEF

SHEEP

HORTICULTURE

OTHER LIVESTOCK

Nick Rowsell

Arable farmer



Size
300 ha



Staff
3 full-time



Rainfall
805mm



Soil type
Light to
medium loam
with flints



Nick, together with his father, farm West Stoke Farm on the Hampshire Downs, just north of Winchester.

West Stoke Farms forms part of John Rowsell Limited, which is a complex and dispersed enterprise, with land situated on

two main sites. Some 140 hectares are in agri-environment schemes.

Nick does not follow a rigid crop rotation but balances his decisions based on sound agronomics and market conditions.

- Wheat
- Oilseed rape
- Barley
- Forage maize
- Linseed
- Poppies
- Oats
- Rye

“ Using the framework of IFM, we aim to make the business robust and enable it to withstand the shocks associated with weather, policy changes and prices of inputs and outputs. ”

Why LEAF?

I believe we are at the forefront of environmentally responsible farming. This was one of the main reasons I joined LEAF. I became aware of LEAF at an event and thought “ah, that’s what we’re doing”. Becoming a member has enabled us to implement the principles of IFM in a more formal and less ‘ad-hoc’ way.



Financial

We've been a LEAF member now for eight years. During this time, we've taken advantage of the many services LEAF offers and made significant changes to the farm business, starting with the LEAF Audit.

It's a really straight forward management tool to review the whole farming business. We've been able to step back and assess what we are getting right and where improvements can be made. Most of the changes we've made have helped us save money. Such as:

- Introducing GPS soil mapping to help us target our fertiliser applications, we estimate that this has reduced our fertiliser bill by some 15%
- We've installed humidity sensors in the grain store leading to reduced electricity costs
- By carefully monitoring our diesel use and using minimal tillage, our fuel consumption has stayed the same, despite us acquiring new land.

“ Doing the LEAF Audit helps us stay ahead of legislation. When it comes to conforming to regulations, it means we're ahead of it. Being a LEAF member is like having invisible armour. ”



Only available to LEAF members and included in your membership fee, the LEAF Audit provides a comprehensive health check of the farm and gives benchmarks and action plans to focus the business for the year ahead. Saving you time and money.

Environmental



Technical Field Days

LEAF's Technical Field Days offer in field demonstrations of some of the latest innovations and technologies as well as the opportunity to network with other members and learn about best practice.

LEAF's Integrated Farm Management and the tools available to you as a LEAF member, have really helped increase our awareness and understanding of the environmental impact of our farming practices.

As farmers, we see ourselves as custodians of the countryside. We've always tried to balance our need to run a profitable farming business with care for the environment.

By doing the LEAF Audit and attending LEAF's technical field days, we've made a number of changes to the way we farm that have had huge environmental benefits.

For example, we've seen significant increases in bird species and doubled our number of lapwings. Insect life has also increased hugely and some very rare wild flowers have reappeared on the farm, including meadow clary. I think the attention to detail demanded by an Integrated Farm Management approach has really helped improve the biodiversity on the farm.



I really believe our LEAF membership has also helped to present us in a much more favourable way when we applied for the Higher Level and Countryside Stewardship Scheme.



Social

I have always had a huge interest in reconnecting people with where their food comes from. Getting involved in LEAF's Speak Out initiative and Open Farm Sunday has given me the confidence to stand up in front of people and explain what I do and why.

LEAF offers fantastic Speak Out training courses, to help farmers communicate to the general public about what they do. It was great. We looked at everything from what makes a good farm visit, avoiding jargon through to health and safety and farming in the national curriculum.

“I really love this industry and LEAF's Speak Out initiative has given me a way to express it.”

Speak Out training really gave me the confidence to take the next step and get involved in Open Farm Sunday. It's a great way to engage with our local community and it has really helped local people understand what goes on in the fields around them. One visitor commented after a tractor and trailer ride that they were amazed by what went on and that "it's just like a business!".



Open Farm Sunday is the farming industry's annual open day that gives everyone the chance to meet the farmers who grow their food and care for the countryside. Open Farm Sunday is organised by LEAF.



LEAF's 'Speak Out' initiative helps farmers improve their communication skills and provides them with the know how to explain 'what they do and why they do it.'

LEAF's IFM



LEAF's Integrated Farm Management (IFM) approach combines the best of traditional farming methods with modern technology, allowing farmers to manage their farms in an informed, professional and caring way. IFM encourages farmers to maintain the highest standards of food production with the minimum environmental impact.

Join LEAF today

TECHNICAL EVENTS • DEMONSTRATION FARMS • SPEAK OUT • LEAF MARQUE • LEAF AUDIT • GREEN BOX

Go to www.leafuk.org and join online!

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