

APPROACH TO AGRI - ENVIRONMENT

Woodhead Farm a case study



Located in East Lothian, Woodhead is a 217 hectare arable farm, North of the Lammermuir Hills. The family run farm business is operated by Hugh Broad, providing contract farming services to seven other local farms in the East Lothian area. The farm's core function is to produce a range of high quality combinable crops that are utilised in food and drink manufacture. Over the last thirty years Hugh has integrated his core farming business with increasing levels of biodiversity output, managing old and creating new habitats.

Woodhead hosts a range of diverse habitats including areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland, new plantations, species-rich permanent grassland and open arable farmland. The 3.2 grade land is crossed by two burns, which link into wetlands and ponds. Field boundaries are lined with hedges, ditches and dry-stone dykes to form a rich mosaic.

Woodhead Farm is a LEAF demonstration farm. LEAF farms show the beneficial practices of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits.



LINKING ENVIRONMENT AND FARMING

Woodhead Agri-Environment Journey

Hugh has utilised various schemes over the years to help the farm deliver its agri-environment goals.

- CPS - Countryside Premium Scheme 5 years
- RSS - Rural Stewardship Scheme 10 years
- AECS - Agri-EnvironmentClimate Scheme 5 years
- POBAS - Biodiversity outcomes based pilot project 2 years

Appropriate Land Management

With both Woodhead and the contract farms he manages Hugh assesses the most appropriate use for his land i.e. he has evaluated the land he manages and determined its best use for delivering production and biodiversity goals. This has allowed Hugh to practice sustainable intensification, with crop production concentrated on the field centres, allowing good management of the biodiverse field margins.

KEY LESSON

Take a business approach to delivering environmental benefits, gaining satisfaction in delivering measurable improvements

Delivering on Agri-Environment

Acknowledging that farming at scale is key and with increasing costs of machinery in arable systems, Hugh has struck a balance that has enabled him to focus his productive farming efforts on land that will generate the best returns and thereby increase his average yield.

Taking a business approach to where is best to deliver environmental benefits has yielded results. For example, assessing where biodiversity corridors can be naturally extended generates maximum biodiversity benefit, whilst not compromising efficient productive field sizes. Hugh has demonstrated that arable farming through responsible land management is part of the solution in addressing the biodiversity crisis and the impacts of climate change.

