

Fertility Building Leys and Green Manures

Tuesday 16th September 2014

Abbey Home Farm, Burford Road, Cirencester GL7 5HF

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The use of diverse legume ley mixtures: a farmer-led DOFF Field Lab

- Increased forage yield
- Improved nitrogen fixation and release to following arable crops
- Resilience to variable environmental conditions
- Benefit for bees and other pollinators

10.00 Coffee

10.30 Introduction, John Newman (Abbey Home Farm manager), Richard Morris (Wimpole farm manager) and Mark Measures (facilitator)

10.45 Summary of farmer experience

11.00 Fertility Building Leys and Green Manures – what's new? MM

11.30 Farm walk. JN and Sally Westaway, (Organic Research Centre) to see Abbey Home Farm diverse mixtures sown spring 2014.

How did Abbey Home Farm decide which species to grow?

Visit Red Clover diverse mixture and White Clover diverse mixture.

Visit and report on the OSCAR trials (ORC)

Species identification, cover and yield assessment. JN, SW.

Farmer field trials protocols SW and MM

1.00 Lunch

2.00 Research results on the use, persistence, feed value and yield of trefoil and benefits of diverse mixtures for yield, tannins and trace elements. Alan Hopkins (Independent grassland adviser)

2.40 Designing mixtures

3.00 Discussion and final conclusions of the DOFF Fertility Building Leys and Green Manures Field lab

4.00 Tea and finish

The ORC Leg Link research project shows the potential for a major change in forage seed mixtures towards more diverse swards including specific legume species. Informed by research from IGER North Wyke and recent field research on crop yields at Reading University this series of 3 Field Labs will help you select mixtures for your farm:

- Characteristics and selection of legume species including red and white clover, lucerne, black medic, trefoil, crimson clover and sainfoin
- The importance of including grass species
- Use of diverse mixtures for fertility building in arable rotations
- Prepare for new Defra support for diverse mixtures in 2016

Richard Morris, Wimpole Home Farm Manager and lead farmer

Mark Measures, facilitator and organic adviser

Dr. Bruce Pearce, ORC researcher

Sally Westaway, ORC researcher