

Isle of Wight Catchment Sensitive Farming Summer 2023

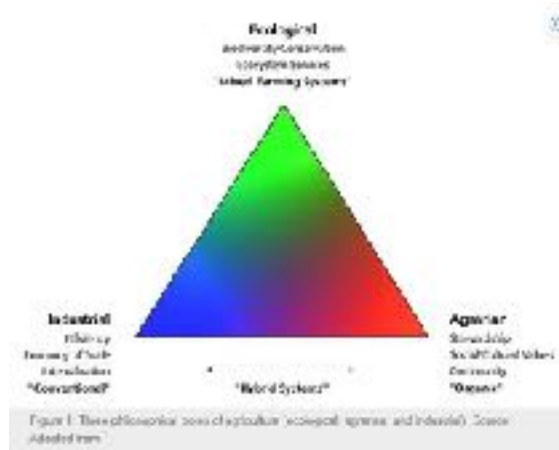


Welcome – Now that the 15th May deadline for BPS and Countryside Stewardship claims has passed we can all draw breath and focus on more interesting activities. It may be a chore but how often can you fire up the computer and secure such an income with just a few strokes of the keypad?

Groundswell - Many of us will be looking forward to the 'Groundswell' event in Hertfordshire at the end of June. This is a festival providing a forum for farmers, growers or anyone interested in food production and the environment. Two days of talks and practical session enable us to learn more about the theory and practical applications of regenerative farming systems.

If you hate the term 'regenerative' don't let this put you off from attending. Farming has always evolved, and we are now experiencing a major upheaval of Government policy since leaving the EU. The talks at Groundswell will keep you up to date with where farming is heading and, most importantly, how you will stay in business.

One talk that always attracts a good attendance is that by John Cherry who manages the site's holding. His definition of regenerative agriculture is '*any way of farming that enhances the effective functioning of various systems upon which it relies*'. My reading of this is that nobody is telling you how you must farm. Instead, you make an analysis of your land and you manage it to best effect. You may think your soils are in rude health and your farm is in a better state than when you took it over, but is that accurate or wishful thinking?



John thinks that nationwide, our farming systems are for the most part, degraded. This is the result of an 'industrial mindset' towards food production and soils and not reaching their potential. As he acknowledges, many of the regenerative techniques are relatively ancient. In the past, certain practices worked to grow food but the science behind them wasn't understood. Thanks to soil scientists we now know so much more about the interaction between plant roots with bacteria and fungi in the soil. Why has some of this knowledge taken so long to arrive? Without going down the American QAnon type conspiracy theories, it wasn't in the interest of companies to focus on how to improve and sustain soil health when they could sell a bag chemicals or numerous pieces of kit to pulverise your soil into submission. If you need to be completely convinced about what you soil can do in terms of productivity, and avoid dependence upon costly artificial inputs, then the talk by Joel Williams will be essential listening. Joel can hold the attention of a farmer audience for many hours. This year he will talk on integrated pest and disease and soil management. I predict there won't be an empty seat in the tent.

The move towards regenerative farming has not been overlooked by the machinery sector so I anticipate demonstration by the likes of Amazone, Garford, Sumo, Clandon and Mzuri. The alphabet of more than 200 trade stands run from Abundigro to Zulu Forest Science!

key 2023 date (via the Farm Advisory Service)

31 August – deadline for making certain changes to a Countryside Stewardship (CS) revenue claim declaration that was submitted before midnight on 15 May (without reduction).

4th July – Applications for NVZ grassland derogations close on 4th July.

Free Expert Advice

Via your Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer Island farmers can benefit from a completely free range of advisory visit by ADAS. Reports by these external consultants are owned by the farm and are entirely confidential. They can cover anything from an assessment of the farm infrastructure through to slurry/manure sampling and analysis and, soil & nutrient management planning. These are just examples from a list of around 30 consultancy visits.

Farming in Protected Landscapes - This grant scheme, administered by the Island's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), is continuing to roll out funding for a wide range of farm-based projects. Funding will continue in 2023/24 and the next financial year. A high uptake will confirm to Defra that farmers are keen to support environmental management across the Island's landscape.

See...

<https://www.wightaonb.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes/>

...where the application form can be completed or printed for posting to the AONB.

Catchment Sensitive Farming

For a free advisory farm visit
contact:

mark.simmons@iow.gov.uk

**Isle of Wight AONB,
Unit 8,
Branstone Industrial Park,
Branstone Farm
Branstone
Sandown
Isle of Wight PO36 0LT**

Mob: 07851 093532

www.iwcsf.org.uk

This Newsletter is being provided to through a partnership between Natural England and the Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) for the purpose of delivering Catchment Sensitive Farming. The AONB take looking after your data as seriously as we take looking after the environment. Your data is only used by us so we can email, call, write or text you about our Catchment Sensitive Farming work. This will include free advice, access to grants, events and campaigns.

We hope you want to hear from us, but you can change your preferences or mind at any time by emailing **mark.simmons@iow.gov.uk**

Please provide your contact details and tick how you would like to be contacted by the Isle of Wight for Catchment Sensitive Farming partnership or Natural England below:

- () You can contact me by phone/mobile:
- () You can contact me by email:
- () You can contact me by post:

Natural England's Information Charter is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england/about/personal-information-charter>

For more information: [Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming Privacy Notice](#)



Issue No.2 2023

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) is delivered in partnership by Natural England, the Environment Agency and Defra

