

John Lycett's blog - December 2023

I have arrived on Blackbow Hill, or as the locals call it, Blackberry Hill.

I am looking back towards The Park field. A wonderful field of wheat but there is a flood at the bottom of the hill. Then I turn and look over the hedge at the cow pasture, another field of wheat scattered with small pools of water. This is not surprising given the rainfall we have had this past year. Our average rainfall is 640ml but this year it was 846ml, most having fallen in the latter part of the year. We hope all this surface water will not hang about too long.

Let us see what the farm staff have been up to this last month.

They have managed to sow another field of wheat.



They have lifted more energy beet. The beet has been washed and is used in the AD plant and sold to livestock farmers. Because it is soil and stone free it can be used in feeder wagons.

Here is another load going to a livestock farm.

I'm not totally au fait with the digester but I understand that during the last year it has performed to 97% of its capacity and I think that is excellent.

The main liquid digestate lagoon at Wykey has been pumped and emptied to a satellite lagoon using the 8" underground irrigation main system, which is a lot cheaper than tankering. They are still busy drying wood chip and paper pulp on the drying floors.



Oswestry and Whittington YFC Illuminated Christmas Tractor Run in aid of the Lingen Davies Cancer Appeal, passed through the village, with more than eighty lavishly decorated tractors which the onlookers thoroughly enjoyed. This created a lot of goodwill in the village. If it encourages one future tractor driver, that's a bonus!

And lastly, I want to make a huge shout-out for everyone at Wykey Farm doing their best during the past very challenging year. Well done Sam and Luke (AD plant), Steve, Steven, Mark, Scott, George, Matty, Lyn and Gypsy in the office, not forgetting Minty who helps out with roguing and keeping the yard tidy.

A couple of noteworthy dates in December – World Soil Day, 5th December with the theme "Soil and Water: A Source of Life", and the Shortest Day, 22nd December, 2023, 3.27am. Roll on longer lighter days.

A very Happy and Healthy New Year to you all!