

John Lycett's blog – January 2025

I am writing this on Wednesday, 5th February. Time goes by so quickly. A look over the hedge at some of the winter wheat fields tells me that some are in excellent condition, as you can see. However, like everywhere some have the odd puddle in owing to the wet autumn. Wheat sown after potatoes is struggling and it looks to me as though it might not even pay the rent.



Grain sales are not very exciting. Long gone are the days where the grain price would increase £1.00 per month. Sometimes now, it can change £3.00 in an hour! Anyone trading grain might need help #mental

The Lamma Machinery Show took place in Birmingham in January. Some of the men on the farm, Sam, Steven, Mati, Luke, and George, caught the train at Gobowen and visited the event.



Tree planting

Since “Plant a Tree in ‘73”, the farm has been planting and gapping up the odd hedge and planting trees ever since. This January, a wood has been replanted with 6,300 trees, some of them being hardwood.

Tractor protests are still taking place across the country from Scotland to Cornwall but the Yorkshire one, crossing the Humber Bridge must have looked quite spectacular.

To keep it fresh, Steve is lifting energy beet on a, more or less, hand to mouth basis i.e. lift it, wash and use it. Lyn, the farm secretary, informs me that there is a lot leaving the farm at the moment.

It seems to me that a harvest, of one sort or another, energy crops, fodder crops, or combinable crops, now takes place every month of the year.



Reminiscing

In the '50s my uncle at Lythwood Farm, bought a Massey 780 combine for between £1,300 and £1,400.

In the '50s a tonne of grain was about £21.00 so, in today's terms, that should be worth £1,300 per tonne and the combine should be £30,300.

Today's spot price is actually £183.00/tonne and a combine is anything from £250,000 to £700,000!

That is rather depressing!