

John Lycett's blog – July, 2024

In the middle of the month, Steve started the rape harvest. Yields were very variable. If we took out the three worst fields, a good yield of 1.5 tonnes/acre was achieved. So, maybe after 40 years of growing rape, the farm could be taking a year out from this crop.

Onto the winter barley, which yielded very well considering the wet weather conditions throughout the winter, the straw has been baled and Steven has sown the stubble with a cover crop to feed sheep over the winter.

Grain yields:

Our yields in some cases have definitely plateaued. It is a far cry from the days of Oliver Walston, (a Cambridgeshire farmer), who wrote in the Farmers Weekly about grain mountains and wine lakes.

The lucerne and grass have both had three cuts, with the grass going into the pit with the lucerne being dried and baled. The lucerne seems to be leaving the farm fairly quickly.

Other jobs include hauling solid and liquid digestate to spread on the fields and chicken muck to the digester. The gateways to combinable crop fields have had their hedges cut to aid visibility when entering and leaving.

The wheat harvest is about to start soon. The straw is very dry but it's just not fit enough. Grain moisture is 21% - 22%.



On my own little bit of England, I have sown a winter wild bird mix, AHL 2.



Recently, I was invited on a farm walk down the Corvedale and visited a very well-run farm growing combinable crops, a large acreage of potatoes, for McCains, and broiler chickens. The scenery from where we were, towards the Brown Clee, was stunning and looked well farmed.

On a sad note, our neighbouring farmer, Garry Slater passed away recently. His farming enterprise is now being looked after by his daughter, Faye.

Also, this week, we have lost Pat Smith, who supplied the farm with seed potatoes in the eighties. His son, Andrew worked on the farm for a short while.

They will both be missed.

In the villages around Wykey, the grain harvest will create a little more traffic. The size of some of the vehicles concerns some residents but courtesy and care is always our priority.