

John Lycett's blog – August 2026

I'm in the Big Field, Queen's Court this morning looking at the emerging rapeseed crop. This crop was drilled in drought conditions but now seems to be germinating very evenly.

This last month, climate change has been higher than usual on farmers' topics of conversation, particularly in relation to the effect on grassland production, combinable crops, root crops and the environment. The government has juggled some DEFRA money about and they are now encouraging us to build more reservoirs. Looking long term, according to Countryfile, by 2080, we could be growing chickpeas, wild rice, hemp and sunflowers as the norm.

Now I have moved down to the Cross in Ruyton and am thinking about a totally different subject – diversification instead of, or alongside, farming.



So, what is going on within fifteen miles of here?

Vending machines – meat, eggs, milk and cakes

Pop up shops selling free range pork and beef, promoted on social media

Farmers selling meat boxes

Farm shops - but they're not new

Fishing ponds

Caravan and camping sites

Moto-cross tracks

On-farm storage

Some ex-Gittins staff, had one of their regular breakfast meetings, in an ex-potato and carrot store, which had been converted to a café, shop and plant stall!

Looking a little further away, some farmers have forsaken dairy farming and taken on McDonald's franchises.

This year, Shropshire Petals at Newport, as an added attraction, have hired a 50-piece orchestra to play in their flower fields.

So, farmers are diversifying in all sorts of ways but it's not for all as it can be expensive.

Our maize takes a different route than many of the other crops we grow. As well as going for animal feed, it is used to feed our anaerobic digester, where it is converted into renewable energy, the electricity produced going into the National Grid. The remaining digestate is then returned to the fields as a valuable fertilizer, helping to provide nutrients for the next crop.

If there is anything you think we can help you with, please get in touch with the office.