Cotswold Seeds Ltd
The Cotswold Business Village
Moreton in Marsh,
Gloucestershire GL56 0JQ

SARIC Open Day



Ian Wilkinson took part in the SARIC Open Day today, a unique open day with a range of marquee exhibits, talks and field based demonstrations focusing on the SARIC project '*Restoring soil quality through re-integration of leys and sheep into arable rotations'.*

This event offered the opportunity to see the ongoing SARIC field work and meet the team, hear about the differences between plough or direct drill, the impact of grazing or mowing, and whether simple grass leys perform better or worse than complex leys.

SARIC Project Overview:

Agricultural intensification and decline of mixed farming systems has led to an increase in continuous arable cropping with few fallow or break years. This can undermine soil structure, organic matter and overall soil health. AIntroducing leys, temporary grasslands lasting one to four years, into arable rotations may alleviate such issues by building soil fertility and improving soil structure. Herbal leys, containing a diverse mix of grasses, legumes and herbs, are gaining popularity, are promoted in agri-environment schemes and have even more potential to deliver ecosystem services than conventional simple grass-clover leys. A four-year project with experimental field trials across the country was set up to quantify differences between ley management strategies and whether these can speed up soil improvements without undermining success in the following crop. Now in its final year, our site at Duxford will be open to the public to see our results in person. This project is funded by BBSRC as part of a special SARIC initiative.

Programme:

13:30 - 15:00 Talk series in the marquee

- Restoring soil quality through re-integration of leys and sheep into arable farming - Prof. Jonathon Leake (University of Sheffield)
- Impact of herbal leys on livestock productivity and greenhouse gas emissions - Emily Cooledge (Bangor University)
- Farmer perspectives on reintroducing leys and livestock in arable rotations - Dr Lisa Norton (UK-CEH)
- Soil carbon testing and impact of soil treatments - Dr Patrick McKenna (NIAB)
- Nitrogen cycling and emissions - Prof. Sami Ullah (University of Birmingham)
- Soil structure and water infiltration - Emily Howes (Herriot Watt University)

14:00 - 16:00 Field Demonstration Tours

- Herbal ley - Ian Wilkinson (Cotswold Seeds) and Dr Lydia Smith (NIAB)

- Cereal Tillage options - Dr Nathan Morris (NIAB) and Dr David Clarke (NIAB)
- Herbal leys and sheep production - Emily Cooledge (Bangor University)
- Project aims and outcomes - Prof. Jonathon Leake (University of Sheffield)
- Cereal and soil management - NIAB Farming Systems

Date Posted: 28th June 2022