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Paul Totterdell on The FarmED Podcast: From IT to Bees

Something a little different for this episode of The FarmED Podcast, which covers computer systems and farming systems and a little agricultural history too. You'll discover why farmers growgrass as well as what AI and beekeeping have in common.

Presenter Alex Dye is joined by Paul Totterdell, who started his career studying IT and is now Director of Cotswold Seeds.

Around 75% of UK's land is farmed agriculturally, Paul explains, and a huge proportion of that is grassland. 'All the grass that you see out there in the fields when you're driving past, that hasn't just grown there by itself. We've had to plant that. A lot of people don't realise that grass needs to be planted.'

Paul tells us how the agricultural upheavals after the end of the Second World War created a reliance on fertiliser and high yielding ryegrass. Shallow-rooted, the plants struggle in the drought conditions we've seen this summer. 'Cotswold Seeds have been looking for many, many years at different novel plants that we can plant alongside the ryegrasses and sometimes without any ryegrass whatsoever,' Paul explains.

He goes on to talk about a new scientific research project which Cotswold Seeds and FarmED are both involved in, known as CHCx3, which is looking at how plants can capture carbon from the atmosphere and mitigate climate change.

Paul also talks about how all of this relates to bees. Paul's apiary was the very first project to be introduced at FarmED, long before the other livestock and crops arrived.

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