



BOOTS ON THE GROUND: A YEAR IN THE LIFE ON FARM

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Mapping for success

Kris Grzelak manages LE Tuckwell Farm in Framlingham, Suffolk and operates on 1800 acres of arable land growing mainly wheat, oil seed rape, peas and parsley.

I'm currently mapping out the whole farm to help plan a number of drainage schemes, which are particularly important as the farm is relatively flat and prone to flooding. We find that effective drainage is essential for minimising water logging and avoiding anaerobic soil conditions.

Our drainage schemes are created by using data collected from the combine harvester or tractor. As they record coverage data, they also create an elevation map. So, as the machine moves across the field and the gradient changes, it records the different heights above seawater, delivering a clear picture of the topography for each field.

Once these maps are complete, we export them from the John Deere Operations Centre into Gatekeeper. This helps me to plan much more accurately, which ultimately results in significant cost savings.

This has definitely been a month of planning and strategy first and foremost. I've been developing nitrogen plans within Gatekeeper to complete our nutrient management planning in order to forecast our fertiliser requirements. This doesn't just set out a clear path forward but supports us in making better purchasing decisions.

We're also trying to get ahead of things and develop variable seed maps ahead of March. By importing soil conductivity scans from the Soyl app and historical satellite imagery from Hummingbird into Gatekeeper, it's easy to make the right computations for variable rate drilling.

I've been asked why I put such trust in these data solutions. Essentially, having the ability to easily pull data from multiple sources and combine it to build data-rich maps means I always know about any problem areas across the farm. Whether it's vulnerability to flooding and waterlogging or prone to black grass growth, I have all the information I need to take action at my fingertips.

I started out using Gatekeeper about three years ago, originally mainly as a precision agronomy tool. In that time I've since added financial data to add further context, creating an indispensable centralised intelligence hub for our farm business. I can now trust that any decisions will not only benefit the land, but the farm's bottom line as well.

Gatekeeper has helped the business to be more efficient and profitable. The mapping functionality is invaluable, but the extra detail you can add in is fantastic and informs our decisions. The ability to increase accuracy is really important at the moment, as it allows us to keep tighter control over our costs.

Find out more at
www.farmplan.co.uk/bootsontheground

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- ✓ Plan drainage schemes
 - ✓ Develop nitrogen maps
 - ✓ Variable seed maps

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Kris Grzelak
LE Tuckwell Farm





Informing business decisions

Robert Wilkins owns Pallingham Farm which is a mixed farm comprising 250 acres of grassland, 500 acres of arable (half of which is in a stewardship programme) and 50 suckler cows. He also runs an estate business of 18 rental properties which includes residential, stable yards and commercial units.

Significant management time is needed for a complicated, mixed enterprise, especially as we're a family-run business that only employs one member of staff. The key to keeping on top of things, particularly in-field operations, is Gatekeeper.

By accurately recording our farm practices, we can maximise transparency of our farm operations and maintain compliance with the Red Tractor assurance scheme.

We make full use of the mapping functionality to benefit from both variable rate fertiliser and seed applications. Although the arable side of the business is quiet in January, I'm kept busy by property interests and the cows. After all, calving is just around the corner! Farmplan's Livestock Manager software helps to manage the livestock business, with the pedigree data and cow history features particularly useful.

This month, we've mainly focused on developing our farm budgets to enable more precise forward planning. In particular, we're looking into expanding the suckler cow business. Livestock Manager plays a role here informing decisions about viability and determining how many bulls we'll need to sustain the expanded business.

By pulling together data within Gatekeeper, I can review proposed changes to the farm business and monitor their likely impact, which gives me confidence in each decision and helps future-proof the business.

Gatekeeper is a great tool that helps me manage my farm business, from budgeting and forward planning to operational management, all whilst delivering compliance data for assurance schemes. I'd find it hard to manage such a complex business without it.

Find out more at www.farmplan.co.uk/bootsontheground



“a great tool that helps me manage my farm business from budgeting and forward planning to operational management”

Robert Wilkins
Pallingham Farm



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