

Soil Management: Moisture, Nitrates & Health at Houghall Farm, Durham, DH1 3SN.

10:15 to 2:15, Monday 13th Dec 2021



Our event is open to anyone. However, can you RSVP via our email or mobile number below so that we can plan catering.

10:30 – 11:30 Walk and Talk with Chris Jackson Agrii and Keith Cook Houghall Farm Manager:

Houghall college has a traditional mixed farm, which used to rely on ploughing and power harrowing for crop establishment. Recently they have transitioned towards direct drilling. Changing to direct drilling has generated lower input costs in fuel, time and maintenance. Crop establishment has been more resilient with comparable yields, improved profitability from less effort. In this first session, we will walk around the farm to assess the change of the drilling method and the infield effects.

11:30 – 12:00 Keith Cook Converting a drill to direct drilling on a budget

Keith will walk you through what led him to convert an older seed drill to a direct drill, why it made financial and environmental sense. He will talk you through the modifications undertaken on the 2000 Simba mini flow to enable direct drill and the problems.

12:00 – 12:30 Lunch – Cold Buffet

12:30 - 12:45 Martin Colling WRT – Overview of NE Hydrogeology and the Topsoil project

How agricultural nitrates can travel from the field surface, through the soil and into groundwater reserves through fractures in the bedrock.

12:45 – 1:15 Thomas Jackson WRT - Soils Management: Moisture, Nitrates & Health.

Thomas will relate the different cultivation methods, informed by the IMetos field climate station, to the vulnerability of drinking water abstraction boreholes to nitrates, and the effect cultivation has on nitrogen mobility by analysing the N min results. Conclusions and insights will be identified and views invited for discussion by the group.

1:15 - 1:45 Chis Jackson Agrii - Nutrient Use Efficiency (NUE)

1:45 – 2:15 Jackie Hamer Environment Agency - Farming rules for water