

Addressing the future

Cereals Event preview

Switching things up, the Cereals Event has a new format this year aimed at providing a greater focus on regenerative practices, as well as continuing with the staple favourites such as the crop plots and soil hole. *CPM* takes a look at what's been planned.

By Melanie Jenkins

Although it might not seem as if spring has sprung yet, the summer show season has almost arrived and that means the Cereals Event will once again be opening its gates, this year at a new location and with a different format.

This year's event will be held at Bygrave Woods, Newnham Farm in Hertfordshire on 11-12 June, alongside its new co-hosted event *Direct Driller@Cereals*.

Hosted by Alex Farr and his cousin Edward Wainright Lee, both events will be held on the Farr family's 45ha outdoor event space – one of the 900ha arable farm's diversifications complete with established trackways and amenities. Its 10 years as a large event venue means it should be well-placed to host the 20,000+ visitors the events are set to attract.

"We love welcoming people to Bygrave Woods — it's great to be the host farm for Cereals after attending it during the years," says Alex. "The event offers such breadth of

information and technology; the progress in robotic technology is always something that gets our attention — and it never gets old meeting new and old friends."

No brainer

When the cousins heard that the event was looking for a new site they jumped at the chance to host it. "With our licenced festival area, we were well placed to host, and although some arable land has been used for the crop plots and soil hole, these will just go back into production after the event," explains Edward. "Cereals is one of the main farming events of the year so it's fantastic to be able to host it. It's somewhere you can go and have everything all in one place as well as providing a huge breadth of information."

As ever, Cereals will showcase the latest developments in arable agronomy, machinery, technology and business advice; with more than 450 exhibitors, 200+ live demonstrations, two days of seminar programmes, and several hundred individual crop plots on display.

New to 2024 is the co-located event — *Direct Driller@Cereals*. Co-hosted by Cereals and *Direct Driller* magazine, its theme is 'Regenerating farm profit', and the focus is on how regenerative agriculture can make large-scale arable farms more commercially successful. It'll comprise a full conference programme including seminars curated by BASE UK, and a schedule of demonstrations (see page 60).

Being co-located, *Direct Driller@Cereals* aims to offer visitors access to a much wider range of farming focuses. "Cereals wanted to cover regenerative agriculture in much more detail given the impact of the sustainable farming incentive (SFI)," says Clive Bailie, arable farmer and publisher of *Direct Driller* magazine. "*Direct Driller* magazine and BASE

UK are able to bring together topics, speakers, and demonstrations that will help large-scale arable farmers to implement these ideas in a way that will directly impact their farm profit."

Also new to 2024 is the Seed to Shelf stage – a fresh take on the Cereals main stage. This KWS-sponsored platform will host seminars designed to trace the arable supply chain from seed to retail, offering attendees insights from plant breeders, agronomists, farm contractors and farmers, through to grain marketers, processors, retail brands and retailers. The stage will also host a political welcoming session.

"We understand the critical role the arable supply chain has in producing sustainable food sources that feed our country now and for future generations, and we're delighted to be the sponsor for the Seed to Shelf feature at Cereals 2024," says KWS' Dr Kirsty Richards.

The programme will kick off with opening remarks from NFU president Tom Bradshaw and Minister of State for Food, Farming and Fisheries, Mark Spencer, followed by a panel discussion on regenerative agriculture and the future of crop breeding.

Among the panellists is Bill Angus of Angus Wheat Consultants, who says the topic of regenerative agriculture always makes for a contentious debate due to the many interpretations of the phrase. "My definition is that regenerative agriculture is what farmers should have been doing for the past 30 years or so but were incentivised not to do it. So now, we have to repair the damage of past agricultural policies."

Remaining at the heart of the show are the crop plots, expanded by a further six new exhibitors to put even more varieties on display. The Ceres Rural-curated winter wheat and barley feature will also return, offering a spread of popular winter wheats — groups one to four, and a collection of two-row and six-row malting barley varieties. The plots provide a unique opportunity to see a ▶



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Cereal Event preview



New to 2024 is the KWS Seed to Shelf stage which will host a political welcoming session on the first morning of the event.

► selection of leading Recommended List (RL) varieties side-by-side with experts on-hand to guide and advise across both days.

Over on the Senova stand, visitors will find

a multitude of new varieties. The firm is showing three new winter wheats, three new winter barleys, a new winter oat and its latest break crop varieties at the two-day event. "We're showcasing varieties that have durable resistance and tolerance to pests and diseases, which will allow growers to complement cropping with new SFI actions and reduce their reliance on artificial inputs," says Senova's Tom Yewbury. "We'll also be discussing the potential for pulses both as a source of home-grown protein and as companion plants in cereals."

A staple of the show, the 20m-long NIAB Soil Hole will return, giving visitors a unique insight into cultivation effects and crop growth below ground. ■

Event information

The Cereals Event will be held in Hertfordshire on 11-12 June 2024. Car parks open at 6.00am; gates open at 7.30am when caterers open for breakfast; stands and features open at 8.00am. Location: Bygrave Woods, Newnham Farm, Hertfordshire, SG7 5JX. Tickets are available online at www.cerealsevent.co.uk.

Cereals Event ticket holders have access to all areas and demonstrations except the DirectDriller@Cereals Conference Theatre, which is ticketed separately and includes all-day hospitality, food, and parking.

Seed to Shelf seminar line up

Below, CPM has picked out some highlights from across the Seed to Shelf seminar programme. The full programme can be found online.

Session	Date and time	Speakers	Agenda
Welcoming remarks	11 June 09:00-9:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mark Spencer, Minister for food, farming & fisheries, Defra ● Tom Bradshaw, president, NFU 	Opening remarks from the secretary of state and the NFU president.
Regenerative agriculture and the future of crop breeding	11 June 09:30-10:15 & 12 June 9:00-9:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emma Gillbard, deputy arable editor, <i>Farmers Weekly</i> ● Kim Hammond-Kosack, leader of Functional Genomics, Wheat Pathogenomics, WGIN and PHI-base, Rothamsted Research ● Bill Angus, co-founder, Angus Wheat Consultants Ltd ● Henry Barber, plant breeder, KWS ● Anthony Hopkins, head of policy & business management, British Society of Plant Breeders 	Panel discussion covering key topics relative to the future of plant breeding including the importance of regenerative agriculture to breeders, the place for heritage genetics, using genetics to increase tolerance to pests, diseases and weeds, as well as thoughts on genetic modification.
Crop protection, nutrition and agronomy update	11 June 10:15-11:00 & 12 June 9:45-10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Richard Lawrence, editor, <i>Agronomist & Arable Farmer Magazine</i> 	An update on the latest advances in crop protection, nutrition and agronomy.
Getting the next generation working in agriculture	11 June 12:30-13:00 & 12 June 12:00-12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Guy Moreton, executive chair, Morepeople 	Panel discussion headed up by recruitment specialist Guy Moreton looking at how to recruit the next generation across the whole supply chain.
GPU Compute in Agriculture: Yields up to 201% over 4 years	11 June 13:00-13:30 & 12 June 12:30-13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Josh Riddett, chief executive, EasyCrypto 	Open discussion around how farms can diversify to GPU compute and generate passive income. Find out about the cryptocurrency sector as well as the operations and earnings of operational sites.
What's happening in global grain markets and where next for UK prices?	11 June 14:30-15:15 & 12 June 14:00-14:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charlie Reeve, business reporter, <i>Farmers Weekly</i> ● Chris Wood, senior trader - Cefetra 	An update from grain traders and market experts – AHDB, Cefetra UK, and United Oilseeds – on the latest developments in global grain markets and how this is influencing farmgate prices in the UK.
Green premiums: What are their future prospects?	11 June 15:15-16:00 & 12 June 14:45-15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Andrew Meredith, editor, <i>Farmers Weekly</i> ● Brin Hughes, agronomy manager - Richardson Milling, BOBMA ● Richard Broadbent, president - Bairds Malt ● Simon Penson, technical director - ADM 	Advice and an update from speakers from the oat, barley and wheat markets about green initiatives and how growers can be incentivised to produce greener crops in the future.
From seed to shelf: BrewBoard Case Study	11 June 16:00-16:45 & 12 June 15:30-16:15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nick Tregidgo, lead brewer & microbiologist, BrewBoard ● Rebecca Gee, grain procurement manager - Crisp Malt ● Chris Borrett, agricultural merchant & director - Adams & Howling 	A special case study following beer brewing from variety selection through to the retail shelf.