

ONE Agritech Programme

ONE AgriTech Update – E-Newsletter No 08

Dear Community Group Member,

Welcome to our eighth and last newsletter for the ONE AgriTech programme. In this edition we summarise the end of project survey findings, highlight recent technology evaluations and explain the next steps for AgriTech support in the North East through AgriTech Accelerator Farms.

Farmers Sought for Exciting New North East Scotland AgriTech Project – AgriTech Accelerator Farms

The current project – the ONE AgriTech Demo farm project – has now concluded. It has shown major financial gains of approaching £30K per annum on a typical mixed farm from a few items of well implemented AgriTech. And lots more tech is becoming available with potential to increase profits, save time and help you make better, faster decisions.

We have put together a new project to help more farmers benefit and to develop more useful technologies. This will involve up to 5 farm businesses (we are calling them “Accelerator Farms”), focusing on specific areas of technology which are critical for the future success of the farming industry. These could include

- Livestock Health
- Energy Cost Reduction
- Arable Automation and AI
- Upland Livestock Technologies
- Digital tools to enhance Intensive Livestock Margins
- Natural Capital

Are you interested in being one of these farmers, or would you like to nominate another farm?

Becoming an “Accelerator Farm” is a tremendous opportunity to get assistance to procure and establish tech on your farm which tackles issues specific to the business, and to be part of an exciting project working with other Accelerator Farms trialling a wide range of technologies.

If you are interested in exploring the possibility of being an Accelerator Farm please contact Jim Booth (jim.booth@saos.coop) or David Ross (David.Ross@sac.co.uk)



as soon as possible. There will be a webinar for all those interested which will explain the project in more detail and field questions. After that interested businesses can fill out a simple application form.

ONE Agritech Survey – How has the industry changed in the last 3 years?

At the start of the project one of the key ambitions was to see how the industry was adopting technology and try to quantify any change within the term of the project. To assess this there was a survey sent out at the start of the project and then one again at the end. This article summarises some of the changes seen during the last 3 years.

Top three highlights from the survey

1. There has been an increase in awareness of the technology that can be adopted on farm especially in small and larger farms.
2. Within the 3 years there is an increasing shift in proportion of businesses that have a greater reliance on using the data produced from technology to aid their decision making.
3. There has been little change in how well people feel supported in the use of agritech with the general feeling that they are reasonably well supported.

Other key findings from the survey:

Top 5 and bottom 5 pieces of agritech used on farm were:

Top 5	Bottom 5
Mobile phone apps	Virtual fencing
GPS steering	Health and safety monitoring
GPS variable rate lime	Remote sensing of crops
Livestock management records	Robotics/automation
Calving and lambing cameras	Remote storage monitoring

The survey asked about the drivers for adopting new technology to understand why farmers make the decision to invest. The main drivers were; improved productivity/profitability, reducing costs and making life easier. These are very similar to the results of 3 years ago and show that the challenges of farming have not changed much in this time.



The cost of adopting AgriTech is seen as the main barrier to uptake along with an uncertainty of the full value and benefits of adopting this technology. Availability of advice on which tech to adopt and poor rural connectivity and internet are also seen as barriers to uptake.

The survey showed that farmers in the North East of Scotland see the adoption of technology as a route to improved productivity and time saving. One interesting change in the 3 years between surveys is that farmers are increasingly using the data produced by tech to improve their decision making. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is seen as a lower benefit in farmers eyes, but with an increase in efficiency brought by using technology this should feed through to a reduction in emissions.

Poor rural connectivity was a theme of the first survey, and this continues in the most recent survey. Two thirds of respondents said their rural broadband was adequate, poor or very poor. This is very similar to the percentage of respondents in the original survey. While there is roll out of fibre to more locations, across farm connectivity is a problem.

Mobile phone signal was also surveyed with 75% of respondents rating their signal as adequate or poorer. This is very similar to the original survey and shows that although adoption of technology has increased, the infrastructure that is needed for a lot of these technologies to work efficiently is lagging.

Conclusion

There is a huge amount of data that has been collected through these surveys, and this article has tried to distil that data into the key themes over the last three years. It is encouraging to see that even though the industry has seen significant financial pressures due to markets and geopolitical unrest that farmers are still willing to invest in technology.

There is a better understanding of the benefits from the technology itself and how the data produced can make a real difference on farm through making informed decisions. This will lead to greater farm efficiency and profitability and help reduce the industries greenhouse gas emissions.

Connectivity is still a real problem in the North East and with the rollout of rural fibre broadband over the last year it will be interesting to see if this allows farmers to take the next step in investing in technology.

Understanding which technologies to adopt, how to do it effectively, and seeing evidence of the scale of return, which is possible to give the confidence to invest, are all still problems. The potential of AI tools is not on most farmers radar but may have a fundamental impact on existing and new technologies. These all provide pointers for any future NE AgriTech programme.

Well Done to the Winners.....

We offered those who completed the AgriTech survey to be entered into a prize draw for a hamper of North East goods. We have drawn two winners, congratulations to Ian Pirie, Lendrum, Turriff and Julie Robertson, East Carmont, Stonehaven, who are pictured below with their hampers!



Technology Evaluations

We have been adding to the suite of information that is available on the webpages [ONE Agritech Programme | ONE](#). Recently, we have added to the technical evaluations, these are carried out by producers in the area, who are using the technologies on their farms. They give an open and honest account of the pros and cons for the technology as they have found them on their systems, with ratings from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) on – ease of use, reliability, benefits and drawbacks, effectiveness, value for money and a final overall assessment. These can be found at [Farm Tech Evaluations and Reports 2 | ONE](#)

Newly produced evaluations include,

- Monil Collars
- Optical Grading for Potatoes
- Exatrek
- SOYL Variable Rate Seed
- AG Open GPS

A final thankyou!

The ONE AgriTech programme has run its three-year term, and we are extremely grateful to the management group, everyone who engaged with the programme and the funders ONE, Scotland Food and Drink Supply Chain Programme and Aberdeenshire Council. We are especially grateful to the Robertson family, of Titaboutie Farm, Tarland, who have been



a focus farm for the three-year programme. They have opened their doors numerous times, shared data, knowledge and experience and installed and tested numerous types of technologies on their farm. Their time and expertise have been a key part of the success of this three-year project. We also thank Ian Wilson formerly of Tulloch Farms, David Barron of Nether Aden and Scott Campbell of Kirkton of Kinellar on arable technology trials.

The Project Delivery Team

NAME	E-Mail	Mobile No
David Ross	david.ross@sac.co.uk	07765 220234
Kirsten Williams	kirsten@williamsruralservices.co.uk	07841 756881
George Noble	George.noble@saos.coop	07894 414512
Jim Booth	Jim.booth@saos.coop	07738 387306