



FarmWell

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Q&A WITH IAN MARGETTS

Farm Manager and the 'Master of Mint' for Summerdown

What experience do you have of managing through change?

I have been involved in the growing and producing of crops for more years than I would like to say here! so I have experienced my fair share of change. Due to the nature of farming, I feel that every year is a change year when it comes to managing the weather, commodity prices, harvest schedules and that's before we take into account our fickle essential oil crops and consumer facing business.



Ian Margetts

What did you consider to be the most challenging aspects of managing through change and how have you overcome these?

Unexpected change is not usually a pleasant experience. Covid has certainly brought that reality in to sharp focus for us all. However I have tried (not always successfully) to approach every harvest, every situation and every year with a focus on having clarity around what we are looking to achieve and confidence in the plan that we have put in place. This focus on clarity and confidence removes the need for certainty in my mind and this has been the most helpful. Working with arable crops is a constant reminder that no matter how much you plan, it is just not possible to control the outcome. Removing the need for certainty gives me and the team the flexibility to adapt and respond to the constant changes that a normal year (if not day!) in farming offers.

How do you see the changes that our industry faces?

Entering this year we knew that we would see our exit from the Common Market, an unknown outcome in the ongoing negotiations around what a future trading relationship might look like, coupled with the move towards ELMS. It is safe to say that this year was always going to be challenging. Add into it Covid and the complexity that this brings to our day to day work, and farming is certainly a challenging environment to be involved in.

However with change does come opportunity to re-asses ways of working and to explore possible new markets. As a farm and consumer business, what has been re-enforced over the past year is the importance of having a clear understanding of what you value and how you embody these values. Constantly reminding myself and by extension, the team, of these values and beliefs allows us all to ensure we continue to make decisions and operate from a place of strength.

What tips do you have for managing change successfully?

Work as a family or team and figure out what you care about – form your values and ways of working from these beliefs and ensure they are at the centre of every decision you make.

Work towards being ok with not being in control and develop a clear strategy for the coming seasons that you can have confidence in. It's also important to regularly check in with your team members to see how they are faring - team cohesion and wellbeing is essential to success here at Summerdown.