

Precision Farming

Where do I start...

...and how can it benefit me?



Ian Beecher-Jones admits precision farming isn't for everyone, but in the same breath he says farmers he has worked with, who were initially sceptical, would now not go back to the way they were working before.

Age and a lack of technological know-how needn't be barriers either. If the technology can potentially improve performance, profit and day-to-day work routine on your farm, then the only barrier should be whether or not precision farming can pay for itself and what benefit can be made by using it.

Admittedly more savings will be made on arable and horticultural farms but that's not to say that **variable rate fertiliser spreading, yield / soil mapping and autosteer guidance systems** don't have a place on dairy farms.

Play the screencast video below, read the case study links and other guidance on the HGCA website to see if precision farming could stack up on your farm.

Do you know the width of your drill, cultivator or sprayer...

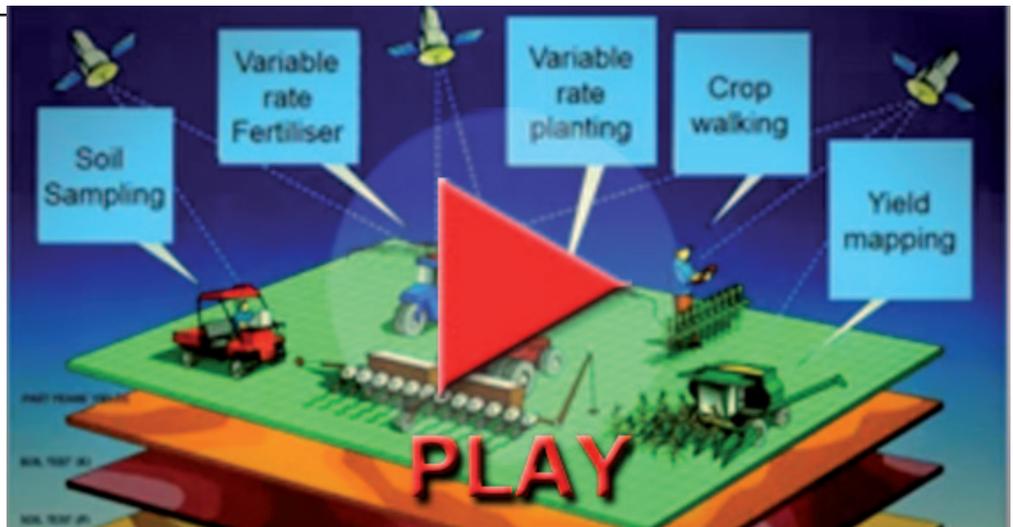


"Before any investment is made in guidance and steering equipment, a tape

measure should be the first, and most cost effective, investment that is made!"

If you don't measure it, you can't manage it!

Ian Beecher-Jones



Screencast video (Touch this picture to launch on YouTube)

Where to go next?

THE potential to make financial savings through the use of precision farming equipment can be significant.

However, growers who are considering trying out the new techniques should make some rough estimates relating directly to their own farms, before going ahead with any major investment, by using HGCA'S cost benefit calculator.

Taking a field measuring 12.6ha as an example, a medium level accuracy system could reduce costs by as much as £64, compared

with conventional methods. Most of the savings come from reduced overlapping and making better use of inputs (seed, fertiliser, fuel, labour / time) particularly when variable rate application techniques are adopted.

Farms where a high level accuracy system is adopted could potentially make savings of £150 or more. When these figures are transferred to a calculation based on a 500ha farm, a medium level accuracy system could save almost £5,500/year and a high level more than £9,500.

Case Studies from the HGCA website



Touch the pictures above to read practical examples of precision farming

[Go to the HGCA Precision Farming web page >>](#)

Ian Beecher-Jones has delivered events for the HGCA's 'Be Precise' knowledge transfer programme on precision farming across the country, with involvement from the England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative. This screencast was produced for Myerscough College and the RDPE-funded FarmNW website to explain some of the key principles discussed at those meetings to inspire a wider audience of NW farmers in its potential use.