

## Overview

### Soils for Sugar Project

#### Introduction

East Anglian farmers will benefit from a new, **inspiring project, funded through Defra's Resilience Programme**, which will develop sugar beet farming systems in the future.

The Soils for Sugar Project will **boost growth** through reviewing and **benchmarking** general cropping **business performance** in the East of England. The analysis will include **financial performance** and how participants **manage their Natural Capital**.

It will provide **practical guidance** on how to respond to the **changes highlighted in the Agricultural Transition plan**, the impact of **climate change** and requirements to **reduce carbon emissions**.

The project will **support** the participating farm businesses through **1:1 and group topic-based seminars** to achieve **sustainable, long term viability** through:

- Providing a **financial benchmarking service** delivered by the **Rural Business Unit (RBU)** at the University of Cambridge, using the Defra-funded **Farm Business Survey**.
- Providing an **environmental assessment** developed by **Suffolk FWAG** on how participants manage their **Natural Capital and biodiversity** across their holdings.
- **Improving productivity** through the **better management of soils** in conjunction with **Philip Wright**.
- Seeking to identify "**best practice**" for the purpose of **sugar beet production** in the area, with particular respect to the "**Protection of Soils**".
- Developing ways of **preserving Natural Capital** (as a minimum), **improving biodiversity**, and identifying ways of **carbon counting**
- Identifying **alternative opportunities and income streams**.
- Identifying future **revenue grant funding** opportunities.
- Providing the "**Golden Ticket**" for future **capital grant funding**

The programme will also enable **sugar beet growers** across the two counties to **forge even stronger links** and develop new contacts, **sharing valuable knowledge and expertise**.

#### New Opportunities

Between now and 2027 Defra will reduce and, eventually, stop direct support payments. This means farm businesses will **no longer receive broadacre subsidies**. Coupled with the uncertainty over **climate change**, it is essential that sugar beet growers **manage land** to become more **sustainable** and **develop new commercial income streams** for their business.

However, this presents **new exciting opportunities**. Which is why **Anglia Rural Consultants (ARC)**, the **University of Cambridge's Rural Business Unit, Suffolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and Wright Solutions** have created a unique partnership, to support sugar beet growers in Suffolk and Norfolk.

#### Expert Team

This experienced **team of experts, led by Jamie Gwatkin**, an award-winning rural business consultant, sugar beet specialist, ARC member and your group administrator - have a mission. The mission is to provide **professional advice and support** to the participants, through this **free, tailor-made programme** which will help growers demonstrate their "**Sustainability credentials**" and build **greater viability** for the future.

**Funded entirely by Defra**, the Soils for Sugar Project will run from **July 2021 to February 2022** and includes:

- Provision of a **benchmarking analysis** to identify the **needs of participants**. This service will **quantify any business issues** and provide valuable **recommendations** to improve **the farm business**.
- **One to one advice from expert rural business advisers**, to help create a business plan which will **improve productivity, resilience, and sustainability**.
- A programme of **inspiring webinars, face-to-face seminars and workshops** providing **in-depth knowledge** on important topics such as **Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI)** and **Environmental Land Management (ELM) rules, soil management, biodiversity and carbon counting**, as well as **grant funding opportunities to aid diversification and productivity**.
- An action plan which can be used to support future **Productivity Grant applications**.

Anglia Rural Consultants have **created a Soils for Sugar Project webpage** for the participants, which will feature :

- **Programme information**
- **Presentations**
- **Webinars**

More information will also be available on the Anglia Rural Consultants website (<https://www.angliaruralconsultants.com>) which is password protected and only accessible to project participants.

Attend the introductory **Benchmarking Zoom meeting** on **Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021 from 9.30am – 11.00am**

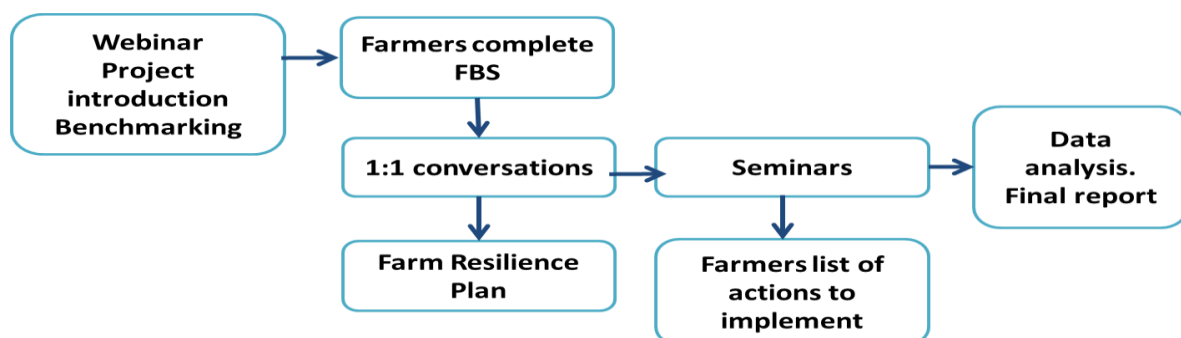
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83132699961?pwd=MzVuMmdUdUpuWmxDUlZrTERlSEZzQT09>

Have a look at the **Farm Business Survey** tool

<http://www.farmbusinesssurvey.co.uk/benchmarking/Default.aspx>

## Project Methodology

The project will follow the **steps** identified below:



## Seminar Outline ideas/topics

Themes	Potential issues to be covered
<b>Seminar A Improving your farming productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Update on Defra policy &amp; highlight implications.</li><li>• Ecological &amp; environmental land management principles including, for example, improved soil management.</li><li>• Opportunities from future funding rounds (Productivity &amp; resilience).</li></ul>
<b>Seminar B Assessing the value of Natural Capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identification of natural capital options</li><li>• How to measure them</li><li>• How to improve their value &amp; volume</li><li>• Grant funding opportunities highlighted</li></ul>
<b>Seminar C Biodiversity &amp; carbon counting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How improving biodiversity can improve resilience.</li><li>• Access to funding for biodiversity Carbon foot printing tools relevant to the farm types &amp; how to interpret the results.</li><li>• Potential future income from carbon credits &amp; biodiversity units</li></ul>
<b>Seminar D Alternative income earning opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exploring opportunities for diversification &amp; adding value</li><li>• Grant funding opportunities</li><li>• Six steps to consider for new product development .</li></ul>

### Contact Details

If you are interested in joining the project, please contact the Project Manager:

Jamie Gwatkin

Tel: 01284 386111

Mob: 07976 736393

Email: [jamiawatkin@btinternet.com](mailto:jamiawatkin@btinternet.com)

**N.B. THERE ARE ONLY 12 PLACES LEFT AND WILL BE OFFERED ON A FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS**