

Update

July 2017 – Issue 19

Beacon Commodities



Our English coriander crop was sown this year on 12th April over a total of 35 acres. After a dreadful yield last year we have persevered with the project and made some slight 'tweaks' to the planting which we will explain below.



In full flower



Searching for bees, not coriander



Encouraging signs

The 2016 crop suffered terribly from extreme weather with flash floods and an incredibly cold May, however we were encouraged by the quality of aroma compared to European and Moroccan coriander.

Drilling the crop

In a very wet and cold farmyard in January, we set about the plan for this year's crop and following research with European growers and agronomists decided to make some changes in the way we planted.

We have selected four fields instead of two. This will spread the risk of crop failure across different soil conditions and field aspects. We also have to accept that the yields in the UK are much smaller due to the weather and how well we clean the crop and therefore increasing the acreage from last year seemed sensible.

The biggest change we made this year was in the drilling of the seed. We have reverted to direct drilling from a Vaderstad Rapid Box Drill and have reduced the sowing density considerably. The idea behind the reduced sowing density was to reduce the competition that each seed experiences.



A welcome visitor



Can you spot the unwelcome visitor?

The fields we selected had maize crops in them in 2016. Maize provides the best blanket weed suffocation and this we hoped would translate into the coriander (not always the case). When the fields were dry enough to drive over we applied mushroom compost and they were ploughed around a week later before being direct drilled on 12th April.



A coriander flower

In full flower

At the time of writing the coriander is in full flower, with a blanket cover of white flowers. The hot weather during June certainly gave the crop a welcome boost and it appears incredibly drought resistant. Beacon Commodities have become 'weather forecast fanatics' and discuss the weather now even more than the traditional Englishman! It will be sun dances next.

The field is currently covered in honeybees which means that Michael, the 'beekeeper' and 'swarm collector' is rarely seen in the office.

We would be delighted to hear from you if you feel you may have interest in acquiring a particular quantity (subject to sample approval) of the 2017 seed as this will allow us to plan (as much as we can) our stocks going forward. Please contact Tommy on 01273 844264 or email tommy@beaconcommodities.co.uk.



A honeybee with pollen baskets



The early stages



A tweed cap to look country

