Gary Willoughby

Basis qualified farmer, small time farm contractor, AHDB Wainfleet monitor farmer, direct driller and hopefully, soon to be carbon trader.

- Primrose Farm, near Skegness on the east coast of Lincolnshire.
- On the marsh at sea level.
- Predominantly Silty Clay soil.
- Reasonably low rainfall area, although still get some extreme weather events.
- 180ac owned. 100ac FBT. 100ac regular stubble to stubble contracting. Spray a neighbouring 300ac farm, harvest 750ac of our own and contracting work. 200ac a year drilling for various neighbours.
- Arable farm. All combinable cropping. Wheat, Barley, Osr (but not this year), Beans and Linseed.
- All straw removed, FYM is returned to the farm on a muck for straw deal.
- We were a plough based system. Now direct drilling. Not sure if i can label/identify myself as regen ag. Just going with the flow!

So whats of relevance to todays discussion? On farm cultural weed controls.

Rotation…….No fixed rotation!

Cereals, Brassicas, Legumes, Linseed.

Early drilled, Later drilled, spring drilled.

Cover crops. As diverse as i can make it.

Tine drill/disc drill.

Drainage.

Most drainage on farm is getting tired and in need of replacement. Weeds love wet, poorly drained soil. Subsoiling and ploughing are a great denial that you have a bigger problem.

A move to direct drilling and minimal soil disturbance.

Rotation, Drainage, Minimal soil disturbance, Cover cropping. All in the name of soil health.

Soil health. What does that actually mean?

For me its just good farming practice. Its not complicated!

What more could i be doing on farm? Future direction?

- Even more diverse cropping. Grass leys, miscanthus, whole fields down to pollen, nectar and bird seed mixes.
- Companion cropping? What herbicide options are available here?
- Living mulch, Clover understories.
- Rotational Ploughing? Doesn't fit with carbon capture.
- Soil biology? Helping improve soil structure and function.
- Anything i can do before reaching for a can of pesticide!