

Developing your strategy to manage healthy soils for sustainable production



Prevent yield loss due to compaction • Improve soil structure
Save money, nutrients and fuel • Principles of control traffic farming

Designed for:

Individuals who wish to understand how to improve soil health through good soil management to achieve optimum and sustainable yields in arable and grassland systems

Entry requirement:

An intermediate course best suited to those who are **able** to demonstrate some practical experience

Price:

£225 + VAT

Duration:

One day classroom based course

CPD points:

Applied for

Learning outcomes:

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- Describe and interpret soil health – integrating physical, chemical and biological measures
- Understand the key role of soil organic matter in many soil functions and the options available to increase organic matter in farming systems
- Understand the interactions between soil and the wider environment
- Investigate soil health using key indicators to support decisions that will help maximise crop production in the present whilst ensuring a sustainable future

Content:

Classroom Module 1 (half day) - Introductions; farmer motivations for attending the course

Importance of soil health

- Getting to know the soil's character - understanding sites and soil, how to interpret a soil map
- Principles of soil health (chemical, physical, biological)
- Measuring and monitoring soil health and performance using key indicators

The key role of soil organic matter (SOM) in soil health

- An overview of soil function including the maintenance of soil structure, the need for fertility and the value of organic matter/ types of organic matter
- What is SOM and how do we measure it
- SOM and soil structure
- Building SOM - gains and losses of SOM via management
- The use of different soil amendments (similarities, differences and impacts)
- Critical levels of SOM and using soil for carbon storage for GHG mitigation

This course is an ideal follow on from **SW01 – Essentials of good soil management**



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SW03

Soil and
Water

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continued



Field and classroom-based Module 2 (half day) –
Monitoring soil health in the field

Trainer:

Dr Elizabeth Stockdale, Head of Farming Systems Research, NIAB

- How to get the best information about soil health from the field using soil sampling and field measurements
- Putting it all together in the field, a practical session

Key practices to improve soil health (content below is indicative – the topics covered will be shaped to meet the interests and requirements of attendees)

- Managing soil to reduce the impact of compaction and erosion
- Building arable rotations and increasing rotational diversity - the structure of crop rotations and how rotational intensity can impact upon performance
- Impacts of diverse swards in grassland systems
- Using cover crops to improve soil health and worm populations
- Different methods of cultivation and establishment on soil health
- Using knowledge of soil health to adapt the nutrient management plan for a field

Developing a soil management plan



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