

We are not registered organic growers but we think we are at a sensible half way mark between conventional and organic farming. Here are some facts about the husbandry methods we use at Hallwood.

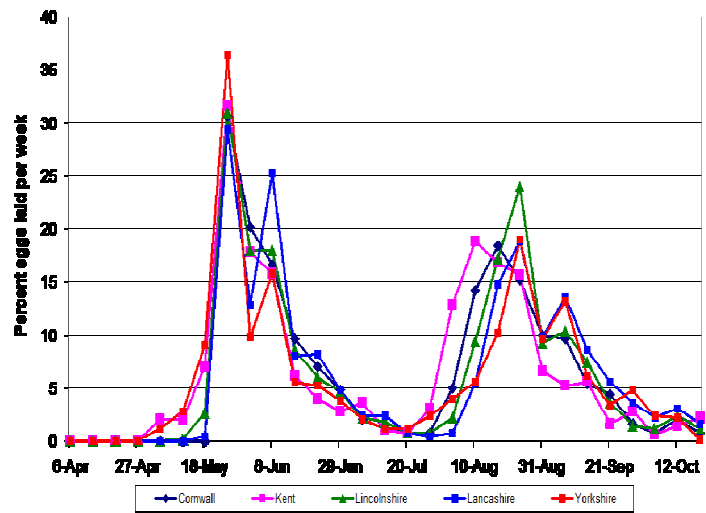
• Carrot Fly

With the aid of computer prediction systems and sticky traps we can get a very accurate picture of female fly egg laying activity, this allows us to only spray the crops at risk, if necessary we spray Pyrethrum (Chrysanthemum extract) between 4 pm & 6pm to target the highest fly activity

We drill 12 separate times in a season, often only 2 of these will need a carrot fly spray!



Sticky traps used to verify the computer model results



• Weed Control



Good weed control is vital to ensure a good strong crop and to reduce harvesting costs (40% of our costs are labour!)

We use a stale seedbed technique very popular in organic husbandry, this means we grow a crop of weeds to then kill off prior to planting or seeding.

We use a tractor mounted steering hoe (see inset) this is very good in dry conditions but useless when wet! As the weeds just re-grow.

When we do use Herbicides to target certain weeds, they are usually applied before the seed has even germinated. Finally we do use some hand labour to hoe and pull weeds but this is usually prohibitively expensive.

• Aphid & Caterpillars

You will always find me bending over in our crops on the hunt for pests, I tend to work on a threshold principle and only when we have a real problem will we spray to control, so a lot of the time I will tolerate a degree of pests in the hope that our customers don't mind a few bugs in the knowledge we are reducing our pesticide usage.

• Disease Control

Likewise the threshold principle applies here as well...when I used to grow 5 million cabbage p.a for Waitrose & Sainsbury there was no option but to have spotless crops or face rejection, now I can tolerate a degree of disease before spraying is necessary. We are very fortunate to have some marvellous new chemistry at our fingertips for instance one of the best recent fungicides is actually a mushroom extract called Strobilurin, sort of poacher turned gamekeeper! I always feel its better to use a naturally occurring product if possible.

Often the best defence against disease is a healthy crop with good air movement, because I am not going for huge yields the crop is planted further apart which allows the wind to get in and blow the spores away, this is sorely lacking in supermarket crops where maximum yield is the only way to survive with the low prices paid by supermarkets.

• Rotation

We move crops around the farm and try and avoid the same place each year this prevents disease build up, we have also grassed down a veg field for 3 yrs with a clover mix to build fertility, something that underpins an organic rotation.



- Slugs**



We do not use slug pellets unless really necessary, We Roll all our ground with a Cambridge roll this causes the ground to become relatively consolidated which slugs don't like, they prefer big open cloddy soils. This also greatly helps to conserve water.



Also in the course of land preparation we use a power harrow this tends to smash up slug eggs early in the season, we need to use such machines also because we want a fine seedbed for our little seeds.

- Soil Fertility**



We rear our lovely Ruby Jersey cattle here on the farm which provides us with a good supply of rich manure, this is spread on the fields in the winter and spring prior to planting the vegetables. Ph levels are checked every year and Lime is applied if the index falls below 6.5, we do use some artificial fertiliser but it is applied according to crop needs, some things like Sweetcorn/Carrots can grow happily on their own, but Leeks for instance need a helping hand



- Farm Labour**

We have a very hard working band of local workers, the furthest travels 4.6 miles to work! We believe that the rural economy is very fragile and by using local contractors and labour they will spend their hard earned pound in our great rural businesses, Pubs Village shops etc A fact from www.pluggingtheleaks.com £1 spent in a supermarket is worth 30p to the local economy, but £1 spend locally is worth £2.13



If you have any further questions please feel free to ring Richard on 07831 186268 or 01837 811762