



Press release

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Latest tech celebrated at Cereals as farmers gear up for the future

Funding grants of up to £300,000 will be made available to farmers to help them boost their businesses and add value to their produce, announced Minister Jo Churchill at Cereals today.

£30m from the Farming Investment Fund (FIF) will enable farmers in England to purchase equipment to process, diversify and add value to their products after they have been harvested or reared, she said.

“There are many examples of innovation and farmers and growers should be supported to purchase equipment. Innovation will allow our sector to flourish,” she added. “There are some tremendous things happening out there and it is up to us to seize the opportunity.”

The latest robotic technology was being demoed at Cereals, attracting a lot of interest. AgXeed showcased its AgBot FTender 1600 for drilling cereals, oilseeds and cover crops.

At Opico’s demo plot, the Farmdroid FD20 autonomous weeding and seeding machine was in action. “It is electronically powered using energy from solar panels on top,” explained the firm’s Harvey Sherwin. “Any surplus electric goes into a power pack battery system which allows the machine to work in the dark. Since we brought it to market earlier this year there are around 10 machines in the UK.”

In the Syngenta Sprays & Sprayers demo area, Knight was among the companies taking part, showcasing its new 1850V self-propelled machine featuring a 5,000-litre tank and added under-chassis clearance, still with a lower centre of gravity than its predecessors.

KWS previewed four new winter wheats in the agronomy area, including two high yielding varieties with breadmaking potential and impressive untreated yield performance. Featuring on the 2022 AHDB candidate list, KWS Ultimatum, KWS Wrenum, KWS Webbum and KWS Zealum could all be commercially available for drilling in autumn 2023, said KWS UK wheat breeder Mark Dodds.

“All four varieties follow our sowing for peak performance (SPP) thinking and combine high yields with solid agronomics to form the basis of sustainable production, be it in a more regenerative approach or with conventional input levels.

“Key to this is balancing consistent production in a variety of scenarios and growing conditions with strong trait sets and the reliable achievement of end-market specifications.”

Corteva’s PT303 Protector Sclerotinia is the top winter oilseed rape variety for gross output – 107% in the AHDB UK Recommended List for 2022. It offers a suite of genetic protection against sclerotinia. “Corteva’s trials show that when sclerotinia infection levels are 25% or above the severity of the disease in PT303 is reduced by up to 75%,” said Pioneer brand manager Andy Stainthorpe.

Cereal disease prediction services are advancing rapidly at Microgenetics, which launched its SwiftDetect test for septoria last March. “We now have a test for wheat diseases yellow rust, brown

rust and mildew,” said Chris Steele, crop diagnostics product manager at SwiftDetect. “We also have a test for ramularia in barley. It has gone well. We have doubled last year’s sales.”

The test involves sending a 10-leaf sample of the crop to the company’s lab with results available within one business day, he said. “It gives agronomists and farmers an early warning of disease in a crop, allowing tweaking of the fungicide programme.”

At the National Association of Agricultural Contractors’ Land Drainage Hub, Mastenbroek highlighted the benefits of land forming. “It uses a GPS survey to identify uneven areas of a field,” explained commercial director Christopher Pett. “The survey data is used to scrape the soil from higher areas to produce an optimum surface. When combined with a drainage scheme, the land becomes more productive, generating better yields for farmers.”

The two days at Cereals saw an attendance over 17000 visitors, with 60% of exhibitors already booked for 2023, said event director Alli McEntyre. “The show had a real buzz about it with lots to see and do. Everyone was thrilled to be back and the industry has a really upbeat feel about it.”

Cereals 2023 will take place 14-15 June 2023 at Thoresby Farming, Nottinghamshire.

Editors’ notes

The Cereals Event is the leading technical event for the UK arable industry, with live demonstrations and areas dedicated to agronomy, technology, machinery, business, education, environment and renewable energy. Sister event to Fruit Focus & SIMA, nearly 350 leading suppliers exhibit at Cereals with the very latest products, advice and information. It provides visitors with a complete one-stop service from seeds to sprayers, crop varieties to cultivation equipment, and fertiliser to finance.

Contact:

Marianne Curtis: 07443 747808