



Life R4EVER KENT

LIFE R4ever Kent

Event summary

Title: Herbal Leys

Date: 30/05/24

Speakers: James Bretherton (Farm Advisor) & Adrian Bland (Farmer).

Location: Ninezergh Farm, Levens

Programme:

10:15am to 10:30pm – Registration and coffee

10:30am to 10:45pm – Brief introductions by R4ever Kent and TFN

10:45am to 11:30pm – Presentation by James Bretherton

11:30pm to 13:00pm – Discussion in grazing paddock with James Bretherton and Adrian Bland

1:00pm to 1:30pm – Lunch

Purpose:

To promote the benefits of mixed leys as an alternative to a ryegrass or ryegrass and clover sward. Herbal leys include deeper-rooted species that can lead towards better soil health with improved water infiltration and lower fertiliser requirement. One of the 10 water pollution workshops.

The workshop was predominantly funded by LIFE R4ever Kent but undertaken in collaboration with The Farmer Network (TFN) and Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) team. It was one of a series of three that were run by TFN and CSF at several locations around Cumbria.

Promotion:

Event was promoted by TFN to their members and on their social media.



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Due to the potential environmental disadvantages of inappropriate use of herbal leys on un-improved grassland, the workshop was not promoted widely by R4ever Kent. 18 farms were selected and flyers were posted to them. Flyers were also emailed to six of these.

Contacts at the NFU and EA were made aware of the event, though it's not known what onward promotion they undertook.

Bookings were managed by TFN and taken through Eventbrite, though several attendees requested a place by contacting TFN directly.

The event was over-subscribed, and several farmers attended who hadn't booked a place.

Attendees:

- **50+** farmers/land managers
- **4** Organisers/presenters (LIFE R4ever Kent, TFN, CSF and James Bretherton)

Feedback:

Feedback was collated by TFN and was generally positive.

No farmers requested follow-up visits by LIFE R4ever Kent on their feedback forms.

Summary notes and impressions:

The topic was popular, with the workshop over-subscribed and a lot of interest among farmers keen to take advantage of the SFI payments for herbal leys.

During the workshop there was plenty of discussion and a lot of questions.

Contact was made with a dairy farmer in the Kent catchment that has not previously engaged with the project or with CSF in the last 8 years.

The farm venue was suitable, with no issues identified. Had the weather been much windier or colder the barn that the presentations were in would have been too open.



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