

## Rain Rain go away, Give the sun chance to play.

It has been a difficult season to date. During spring, some of the soils prior to being drilled with beetroot, were very compact and hard (due to weather conditions at the back end of 2016). This meant that it took far more time, and a larger variation of different implements, to get the land in a suitable state for sowing. After this we also had pretty long period of dry weather, which certainly didn't help the situation (due to land requiring more working, it had a reduction in moisture content). All the showers we were longing for in spring, have since made a regular appearance from middle of August onwards, just when we wanted a bit of dry weather to help out harvest, ironic I know.

At the moment we are planning ahead, finalising land for this year's beetroot crop. When you are working with such a quantity of landowners (90% of the land we grow beetroot on is rented, to improve crop rotation and soil/ crop health) and different soil types, it's important to secure the fields in advance and have the opportunity to work and prepare the ground when the conditions are right. All the fields we grow beetroot on are independently mapped and tested for their nutritional requirements, this practice helps us to get the most uniform and healthy crop possible.

We are trying to harvest, winter stored buried beetroot at the present, but as the weather has continued to stay miserable and wet, it's making difficult lifting conditions. Tracks and a holding bunker on the harvester help, but when there is little break, in a bad weather pattern, there isn't much that can be done to make harvesting safe and accessible. We turn to our field clamped beetroot, when condition in the buried crop become unsafe. We clamp the beetroot on the headlands, of the field in which it's grown. This practice happens throughout the main harvesting period in autumn. Clamping allows for full traceability of the crop as it's stored in the place in which it originates from. As the beetroot is contained on the headlands of the field it also makes it much easier, practical and safer to handle when the weather is bad.

Myself and Mandy recently went on a Hygiene, HACCP and Worker Health Course day. This course helped to refresh our knowledge on the subject of health, hygiene and the HACCP principles at work, whilst allowing us to learn about any new practices that are up and coming.

Kind Regards

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