

The Institution of Agricultural Engineers

Founded 1938 – Incorporated 1960

Award for Contribution to the Land Based Sector

Ben Taylor-Davies

“Regen Ben”

Ben is a true pioneer in the ‘regen ag’ movement which is gaining so much interest and traction lately. His ethos is to use sound biological, peer-reviewed methods to produce crops in a way that doesn’t require huge amounts of artificial input.

One of Ben’s significant contributions to the land based sector is to cut through some of the scepticism associated with regenerative, biodynamic or biological agronomy.

Describing himself as a ‘bioagrieologist’, Ben began to understand the benefits of integrating the environment with farming under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, by planting new farm hedges and creating 6-meter margins for grey partridge and brown hares.

Other ‘win-win’ options included planting coppices, and seeding pollen, nectar and wild bird mixes. Ben has demonstrated how it is possible to achieve similar profits with far fewer inputs, or as he puts it “Yield is very much vanity and profit is very much sanity” – a very apt phrase, especially nowadays with the increasing costs of agricultural inputs.

Ben is an exemplar in practicing what he preaches on his family farm in Ross on Wye. He carries out on-farm trials to demonstrate to others that new ideas and concepts can be easily adapted and implemented on-farm for achieving results. He has amassed a large data base of regenerative and diverse farming practices and their outcomes for different soils and climates.

As well as sound practical knowledge and experience, Ben holds many formal qualifications including BASIS IPM, FACTS, PPA and BETA. Ben was a Nuffield Scholar in 2016 (studying agricultural systems throughout the world, specifically around the control



of blackgrass) and is an Oxford Farming Conference director 2022-2024. He is passionate about his approach to modern agriculture, not only from an economic and environmental point of view, but also regarding the mental health and well-being issues associated with farming.

His enthusiasm is infectious wherever he speaks, and the Institution wish to recognise how Ben promotes more sustainable farming practices based on both scientific principles and practical experience.

