

The Institution of Agricultural Engineers

Founded 1938 – Incorporated 1960

The President's Award

Nick August

Chair, The Douglas Bomford Trust

Nick August is a Cotswold farmer who has extended his activities and interests well beyond the boundaries of the land that he farms directly and in so doing is now an excellent candidate for the award of Contribution to the Land-based sector from the Institution of Agricultural Engineers.

Nick farms some 350 ha of land that is mainly in-hand and produces wheat with a range of break crops. As part of his commercial farming operation, he has strong interests in Precision Farming, Conservation Agriculture, Consultancy and Contracting. He began his farming career by studying at Seale Hayne agricultural college followed by work on farms in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and in Australia before taking on running the family-owned farming business in the Cotswolds. The Cotswold farm has

hosted experiments and field trials for a range of organisations including Agri, ADAS, AGCO and the RAU. Nick is chair of the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster that is now leading “The Evenlode Landscape Recovery project” – the UK’s biggest ever farmer-led nature recovery project restoring more than 3,000 ha of habitat while continuing to produce food. Backed by a £100m blended public and private finance model, the scheme aims to slow water flows, improve river health, restore soils and reconnect habitats under Defra’s Landscape Recovery programme.

Nick joined the Board of Trustees of The Douglas Bomford Trust in 2015, became deputy chair in 2016 and in 2018 became its chair – a position that he continues to hold at the current time. While he is passionate about the technical issues with which The Trust is concerned, a major reward from his roles with The Trust is the stimulating interactions he has with young people starting out at early stages of their careers.

Nick was a pioneer of Precision Farming in the UK. In 2016, he was involved with a Dr Timothy Chou from



Stamford California who wrote a book detailing how Precision and the “Internet of Things” could be used to deliver precise solutions across a range of industries. This used Nick’s farm as an agricultural case study showing how the complexity of using multiple machines from multiple generations of technology and multiple sensors could deliver precision farming products. In his approach to his own farming enterprise, Nick recognises the importance of spatially variable data relating to factors such crop yield and quality distributions, terrain features, moisture and nutrient levels, light reflectance for chlorophyll levels and NDVI maps when designing spatially variable management strategies for optimised crop performance. He has worked with ADAS on Defra and HGCA funded projects examining nitrogen responses in cereal crops that have increased the understanding of how soil variability effects husbandry outcomes and he always seeks to implement the findings from such studies.

Controlled traffic farming involves leaving 80 to 90% of field areas without traffic induced compaction and is an approach that Nick adopted in 2008 and that he has promoted by working with research teams in the UK and in countries worldwide. Combined with his interest in Precision Farming, he has given presentations to technical groups and workshops on

these subjects including being a keynote speaker at the European Conference on Precision Agriculture in 2017.

In 1994, Nick was appointed company secretary for the Cotswold Machinery Ring which then merged with Mid Tak and later with 7Y services and where he was a director before its sale to Countrywide Farmers in 2013. 7Y services had spinout companies concerned with training, energy, software and cleaning as well as core machinery ring services with an annual turnover of £3m.

Despite a very busy life with his farming and associated interests, Nick still finds time for other activities. He is a hockey player - Burford hockey club restarted in 2024 after nearly 150 years of inactivity and Nick is both chair and treasurer. He is a partner in the Little Barrington Shoot, Oxfordshire where he both contributes to the management of shoots as well as doing some shooting himself.

With his high profile in practicing and promoting all aspects of mechanised farming and particularly those relating to conservation agriculture, precision farming and controlled traffic farming, Nick August is an ideal candidate to receive the award of “contribution to the land-based sector” from The Institution of Agricultural Engineers in 2016.

