### Aberdeenshire HGCA Arable Monitor Farm project

**George and Andrew Booth, Savock Farm, Foveran.**  
Father and son, George and Andrew (36) farm a total of 345ha (852 ac) across 4 blocks. Although both operate separate businesses, effectively the land is farmed as one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Farms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owned</td>
<td>Savock, Ardgill &amp; Westfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Tenancy</td>
<td>Bucksburn Fm (12m away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term tenancy</td>
<td>Mundurno (8m away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>345ha (852 ac)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Cropping 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Varieties</th>
<th>Av 3-yr yield (t/ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W OSR</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>Cracker</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Barley</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>Retriever &amp; Sequel</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Wheat</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>Alchemy &amp; Viscount</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Oats</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>Dalguise</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp Barley</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>Belgravia</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp Oats</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td>Firth</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grass</td>
<td>48.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fallow</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>340.6</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Rotations

The farm operates a number of rotations depending on the land & situation. The land at Bucksburn and Mundurno tends to be in a simple spring crop rotation. Oats are grown due to the pH levels on temporary rented land.

#### Labour & Contractors

One full time staff - Brian Birnie  
Last year employed a combine driver instead of a harvest student, plan to repeat this year (2011)  
Contractors are used for muck spreading, lime spreading and any other specialised jobs.

In addition, the business also carries out a fair bit of contracting work themselves. The aim is to make better use of machinery, to spread the cost.  
This includes: 200 acres stubble – stubble contract  
Contract combining 400-500 ac  
Big baling (5,000 bales)
Main Machinery
John Deere 7530 (200hp)  2008
John Deere 6920 (160hp)  2006
Merlo Telehandler (120hp)  2002
NH CX8060 Combine, 24 ft header  2010
KV 5-F Rev Plough & press  2003
Amazone harrow & Airstar drill 4m  2009/00
Vaderstaed rollers & paddle boards  2008
Amazone Fert spreader  2000
Cleanacres Airtec mounted sprayer, 24M  1999
Vicon big baler  2004

Livestock
Finish 250-300 cattle per year, all AA crosses.
Purchase yearlings which are kept for 6-12 mths
Need to kill finished animals every fortnight for the Farmshop
Cattle are wintered inside at Savock in two cattle courts plus a dutch barn (hold 200+ hd)
Winter rations are silage plus barley fed through a Keenan wagon in a centre pass.
Also winter some cattle on B&B basis.
Two silage pits (700t) at Ardgill will be stopped - so have to replaced in 2011.
Normally make 30ac 1st cut silage with 2nd cut depending on grass growth.

In past, had Mule ewe flock (250) put to texel tup which has now been sold.
In future plan to finish store lambs.

Soils and cultivations
A range of soils generally on heavy side with clay – can be unforgiving
Natural drainage is poor. Need extra power to make good seedbeds, some spring cereals
will be power harrowed in front of the one-pass drill.
The grass weed sterile brome is increasingly common in some fields.
The uncertain future of some of the tenanted land has precluded lime applications so
necessitated growing oats.

Normal cultivations:
• Plough & furrow press
• Power harrow & paddle boards – some spring crops
• One-pass harrow & drill (4m)
• Cambridge roller
• Fertiliser broadcast

Operate 24m tramlines. Seed is a mixture of home-saved and purchased.
Utilise an independent agronomist (Ian Dalley)
Have started to invest in Precision Farming. One tractor has John Deere’s Green Stars Auto
Trac Guidance system and the combine is capable of GPS yield mapping. Approx 30% of the
farm is GPS soil mapped and are currently looking at a variable rate manure spreader.
Grain Drying & Storage
Grain was dried by a 10t mobile drier before it went up in flames last harvest!
Currently have a SRDP Grant application in for 2 x 100t tray driers with stirrers plus 400t of storage.
In addition, have 600t of on-farm storage at Savock & 300t of short to medium term storage at Westfield. Make use of popcorn for the barley.

Crop Marketing
All crops are grown for the open market except for a small tonnage saved for own use and seed. Nothing is grown on contract although a percentage of the crops are forward sold. Oats are grown for the premium milling market. Due to the high fertility, no low N malting barley is grown. Instead, spring barley is normally propcorned (last 5-yrs) for the feed market. OSR is marketed through the local co-op - Aberdeen Grain.

Average Prices (£/t)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSR</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td>£190</td>
<td>£225</td>
<td>£370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malting barley</td>
<td>£194</td>
<td>£182</td>
<td>£80</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prop Barley</td>
<td>£126</td>
<td>£101</td>
<td>£80</td>
<td>£140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed Barley</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>£130</td>
<td>£106</td>
<td>£96</td>
<td>£128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milling Oats</td>
<td>£139</td>
<td>£115</td>
<td>£83</td>
<td>£140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feed Oats</td>
<td>£0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Diversification – creating ‘The Store’
Based at Westfield, ‘The Store’ farm shop and butchery was established in 2000 to supply consumers with beef and lamb grown on the farm as well as sourcing other local produce to sell through the shop. In July 2010, moved to a new building at Westfield with the introduction of a coffee shop/restaurant with 45 covers and a larger retail space.

Today the business has grown to employ 22 staff, comprising a farm shop, coffee shop and butchery. In terms of retail outlets, supply not only the farm & coffee shop but also 4 farmers markets, three Waitrose stores, local hotels and restaurants, internet/mail order business, other local deli’s and specialised food retailers.

Main Challenges for the business:
- Improving the farm profitability
- What is the optimum grain drying & storage option for the business?
- Controlling production costs, particularly machinery costs
- Crop marketing, coping with market volatility
- Farming heavy land – how best establish crops?
- Adopting new technology (GPS)
- Improving record keeping and business analysis.
- To future proof the business - designing a system for the next 10-yrs.