



Talking sustainability

“This year's programme is bigger and better than ever.”

With a jam-packed schedule planned over the two days, CPM takes a look at some key themes of the seminar programme at this year's Groundswell event.

By Charlotte Cunningham

Not often at events do questions from the audience spark such thought-provoking discussions that the idea sharing continues long after the chairman wraps up a seminar session. But Groundswell is very much the exception.

And bringing together the very best brains of regenerative farming, the scope of this year's seminar programme is somehow bigger and better than ever before. It covers a range of topics from carbon farming, soil health, the importance of linking arable and livestock production, the role of policy in the future of regenerative farming, and how farmers can better communicate with consumers.

The format is a mixture of seminars, demonstrations, panel sessions and workshops, taking place across a whopping eight stages: the Agricolgy Discussion tent; the Barenbrug Grass tent; Big Top; the Breakout tent; the Kellogg's Origins Soil tent; the NIAB seminar tent; Speaker's Corner and the Yeo Valley Old Dairy tent.

Host farmer John Cherry will be among those stepping into the spotlight as he takes part in a panel discussion about what regenerative really

means — beyond farming practices — and explores how farmers, producers, brands and businesses can adopt a truly regenerative mindset and approach to healing people and the land. John will be joined by Abby Rose, farmer, physicist, and soil health advocate, as well as Dee Woods — an award-winning cook, broadcaster and researcher with over 25 years experience.

Visitors will also get the chance to quiz George Eustice once again this year, with the Secretary of State making two appearances in the seminar schedule. On day two (23 June) he'll be joined by other leading industry figures, including Rosie Boycott and Minette Batters, for a panel session in the Big Top at 10:45am.

The environment secretary will also be in the spotlight later in the day in the Agricolgy Discussion Tent to tackle the all-important question: what can policy makers do to support regenerative farming? He'll be joined by Henry Dimbleby and MPs Ruth Edwards and Oliver Heald, as well as beef farmer, Ian Davis.

With industry-wide collaboration often highlighted as fundamental for driving change, visitors will also be treated to an insight into regen from a global perspective through Dwayne Beck, in the Kellogg's Origins Soil tent. He will be asking the question: are we doing the 'right things' or only doing the wrong things better?

Dwayne is a professor in plant science and well-known in the regen world. He's also currently the research manager at Dakota Lakes Research Farm in Pierre, South Dakota.

His emphasis is on developing no-till systems for irrigated and dryland areas in central South Dakota, and says his primary

achievements deal with development of programmes that have allowed producers to profitably adopt no-till techniques in a large portion of central South Dakota. The identification of the extremely important role played by crop rotation in minimising weed, disease, and insect problems while increasing potential profitability was the key contribution of this project.

The Dakota Lakes Research Farm consists of 324ha of land, of which about 101ha is irrigated, and the entire operation is managed using no-till techniques.

For those looking for a more interactive discussion, a must-see is the rainfall simulator in the Big Top, led by Dr Jill Clapperton of Rhizoterra, which will showcase the dramatic effect of 5cm of rainfall on soils under different management regimes: no-till and cultivated, with and without cover and under permanent pasture.

And for the younger generation, or those looking for a way into the industry, the NIAB Seminar Tent will be hosting a session on removing barriers for young people in farming. Hosted by David Fursdon, farmer and consultant, this session will delve deeper into the work of the Prince's Countryside Fund in supporting succession, progression and new entrants into farming. Visitors will hear from Liz King, project officer, about the opportunities for young people, as well as two young farmers — Liz Tree and Chris Woodhead — who will share their experiences.

Groundswell afterhours

For those looking to continue the conversations into the wee hours, this year's event will see the return of the famous Earthworm Arms bar, plus an array of independent food and drink traders serving the night before and during the event, with live music playing into the evening on the 22 June. On site camping is available via advanced booking.

The SSAW Collective are also hosting a three-course long table banquet on both the 21 and 22 June and tickets can be reserved online. ■



Visitors will have the opportunity to put their questions to George Eustice as he takes part in a panel session on day two of the event.

The line-up

To help visitors plan their time at Groundswell, *CPM* has picked-out some of the most inspiring seminars and talks from across the two days. The full seminar programme can be found online.

	When?	Where?	What?	Speakers?
The symbiotic benefits from the co-operation between research and practice	22 June 10:00-11:00	Kellogg's Origins Soil Tent	A discussion session on how Grand Farm was developed into a research and demonstration farm and the regenerative methods which are applied on the organic arable field farm based near Vienna in Austria. Covering using organic, reduced tillage and no-till, crop rotation, perennial crops, cover crops, flower strips, agroforestry, zero pesticide, compost, vermicompost, compost tea, seed inoculation, transfer mulch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alfred Grand, Grand Farm
Carbon question time	22 June 16:00 – 17:00	Big Top	Opinions from four industry experts on how farm businesses go about 'de-carbonising' UK agriculture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Liz Bowles, Farm Carbon Toolkit ● Professor John Gilliland, Queens University ● Janet Hughes, Defra ● Dr Jude Capper, Harper Adams and independent consultant ● Alex Robinson, Natural Capital ● Johann Tasker, Farmers Weekly
Regenerate your mind	23 June 11:00-12:00	Kellogg's Origins Soil Tent	A session hosted by farm advisor Ben Taylor-Davies looking at the social aspects of regenerative agriculture and delve into why it was fundamental in helping him overcome his mental health issues and opened his mind to a world of people, places and partnerships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ben Taylor-Davies, independent advisor
Do potatoes have a place in a regen system?	23 June 13:00-14:00	Speaker's Corner	Drawing on a range of real-world examples this session will explore how no-till potatoes have a place in a regenerative farming system and also poses the question: 'What should be the most sustainable carbohydrate source in our diet today?'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Richard Harding, agronomist
The threat of weeds for regenerative agriculture	23 June 16:30 – 17:30	NIAB Seminar Tent	The key components of regen ag are predicted to select for a different selection of weed species to those that we are currently dealing with – particularly those associated with less soil disturbance and/or perennial components. This session will discuss these possibilities, using case-studies from the UK and France.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Will Smith, NIAB ● John Cussans, NIAB

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