



Profit through Precision Technology



Case Study

PRECISION DECISIONS



Clive Blacker Director Precision Decisions

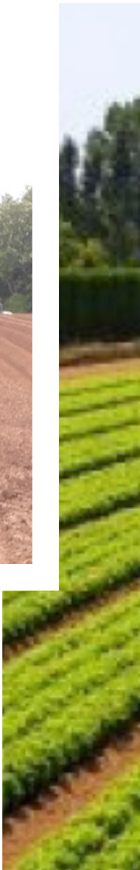
**Agri-Tech Precision Agriculture
Specialist for UKTI at PA
Consulting Group**



Precision Decisions is a family business located near York which offers full precision farming advice with a 'hands on' approach. The business has over 500 customers and employs nine team members. Using GPS signalling and auto steer hardware, Precision Decisions is helping farmers to improve efficiency, reduce costs; increase their crop yield and margins through the latest software and technology systems. Precision Decisions grew out of the family farming business, and offers comprehensive precision farming services based on sound agronomic and practical experience.

Clive Blacker studied for an HND in Agriculture and then undertook a Nuffield Scholarship studying precision farming methods in Australia and the USA. He uses his practical and agronomic knowledge to advise farmers on precision farming techniques on arable farms. Clive has been involved with Precision Farming for over 15 years and was one of the first in the country to use the Yara N Sensor. His keen enthusiasm and knowledge lead him to diversify away from the family farm and start his own business helping farmers around the UK with precision farming techniques and applications. Precision Decisions Ltd has grown rapidly, and now prides itself in being at the leading edge of developments. Clive therefore has a thorough understanding of industry training requirements in precision farming and acted as an industry consultant in the development of the new precision farming qualifications. Clive advised the College in the supply and operation of precision farming equipment for use in training.







MANTERRA



Andrew Manfield

Andrew grows a mix of cereals, peas, oilseed rape and certified seed potatoes on his 200 Hectares in East Yorkshire. Andrew has his own company Manterra that specialises in precision farming research, equipment and acts as UK importer for the Unia Group of companies.

Andrew is a well respected practical farmer who uses precision farming techniques commercially on his own farm. He uses a Controlled Traffic Farming technique which uses GPS technology to create and stick to the same tracks year after year, thus confining traffic in fields to the smallest possible areas. In between the tracks the soil is protected. Controlled Traffic Farming, new crop varieties, renewable energy generation and collaborating with neighbours is Andrews response to the changing political and economic climate.

He is also currently trialing a photo spectrometer which is mounted on the back of a subsoiler leg and is pulled through the soil working at a depth of a few inches. It scans and analyses the soil in real time while logging data into the computer. When combined with the crop sensors it can provide the farmer with the next phase of really high resolution data that will allow for far more economical use of fertilisers and fungicides.

Andrew has been consulted on the development of the new precision farming training units to ensure that they meet the needs of industry. The units that Andrew has helped develop are listed below:

- Level 2 Operate Precision Technologies to Improve Resource Efficiency
- Level 3 Evaluate Precision Technologies to Improve Resource Efficiency
- Level 2 Operate Fertiliser, Chemical and Slurry Equipment using Precision Technology

Many larger farms would now expect their main farm equipment they are seeding, planting and harvesting with to have some form of satellite guidance offering accuracy potentially down to as close as two centimetres. If the full potential of this technology is to be fully realised there is an urgent training need for the people who operate these machines. The Green Pea Company operates a fleet of pea viners in East Yorkshire and there was a need to provide a training programme for 12 viner drivers prior to the 2015 pea harvest. Andrew delivered this programme as a pilot on farm, and was able to combine a powerpoint presentation with individual simulated software and real equipment in place on the pea harvesters.

In 2005, GPS satellite technology was available but had only been taken up by a limited few whereas today it is commonplace. Although there are still many farms that haven't adopted it there are very few large farms that are not using it in some degree.



Quotes from the Employer:

'I'm a firm believer that the big payback from precision farming is still to come'

'Satellite technology, autosteer, increased definition and accuracy over soil type and what amounts should be applied will continue to be adopted by increasing numbers of farmers in this next decade'

'I'm not expecting to save the world, but I do want to run a successful business going forward and there are opportunities to do good things as a business and for the environment.'

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