

# Farming for a Better Climate



## Soil Regenerative Agriculture Group Farmers Supporting Scottish Soils

### Case Study - Hugh Black, Backboath, Near Forfar

Hugh farms in partnership with his father James. The business extends to just under 400 hectares, around 50 ha of which are rented ground. Although there is some variation in soil type, most soils at Backboath are sandy loams.

James and Hugh produce winter wheat, winter and spring barley, oilseed rape and potatoes. They operate a six to seven year rotation with two breaks.

#### Farm soils

Hugh already carries out full GPS soil analysis on a 6 year rotation and uses precision agriculture techniques such as variable rate spreading for lime. Hugh imports manures and digestate, both to supplement inorganic fertilisers and improve soil organic matter.

#### Potatoes

Potatoes are a key aspect of the farm business. Hugh acknowledges that intensive cultivations associated with producing potatoes means farm soils can be more vulnerable to damage. Maintaining and protecting soil health across the farm will be one of the areas Hugh will be focusing on through the group.

#### What's next?

Hugh would like to maintain outputs but cut back on inputs, for example reduce chemical use. Hugh is interested in monitoring the variation in soil health experienced across his rotation, especially before and after the potato crop. Hugh said *"Potatoes are the most invasive crop to the soils here and this means the soils are cultivated more often to establish a good growing environment for the finished fresh potatoes on the shelf. We want to guarantee we are regenerative in our rotation of soil health and structure in order to produce in future"*.

Name:	Hugh Black
Farm:	Backboath
Locality:	Angus
Farm type:	Arable



Hugh is one of five farmers taking part in the Scottish Government funded Farming for a Better Climate Soil Regenerative Agriculture Group. You can read more about the other farmers participating in the initiative and some of the practical ideas they are taking forward at [www.farmingforabetterclimate.org](http://www.farmingforabetterclimate.org), Facebook and Twitter @SACFarm4Climate.



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