



Collaboration for successful agroforestry systems: The alternative multi-partner collaborative working model used at Dartington estate for their agroforestry tenants

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Most existing agroforestry systems on UK farms have been established by the farmer who is also the landowner or tenant. However, many farmers lack both the time and the specialist knowledge to plant and care for trees and the capital to invest in trees. In addition, trees are a long-term investment and the uncertainty of tenure and differences of opinion between farmers and landlords are both known disincentives to establishing new agroforestry systems on tenanted land.

Dartington Estate in south-west England is delivering agroforestry in an innovative way not seen in the UK before, through a multi-tiered arrangement of land owner, farm tenant and tree license holders. In this model, the tenant farmers manage the rows between trees as part of their 7-year silage/arable rotation and are financially compensated for the area lost to the tree rows by the licensees.

The investment in the trees is made by three separate businesses (Luscombe Drinks (1600 elderflower trees), The Apricot Centre (600 apple trees) and Salthouse & Peppermongers (150 Sichuan pepper trees)).

These businesses specialise in tree crops and have a market incentive to make the tree crops work to meet the demands for their products. A licence was granted to the businesses for the tree strips, with the farmers remaining in management control of the land upon which the trees are planted and able to claim basic farm payment on the area. However, the tree licensees needed the security of being able to use the piece of land on which they're planted for a sufficient period to see a return on their investment. The solution was that the land owner, Dartington Hall Trust, provided a separate undertaking to ensure the continuation of the license on the same terms regardless of the tenant.



Figure 1. The Agroforestry Field at Dartington Estate, UK. Photo Harriet Bell

References:

Dartington Estate Agroforestry Blog by Harriet Bell:
<https://www.dartington.org/trust-test-new-multi-agency-agroforestry-model-48-acres/>

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