

R & P Farming

R&P Farming have been successful arable farmers near Dawlish in Devon for over 20 years. Brothers Matt and Rob Cotton, both agricultural college graduates, came straight from education into the family business. Realising in recent years that mixed farming would offer better productivity, the brothers have been rearing cattle alongside the already established arable business.

Wanting to reduce erosion and decrease soil damage the brothers began to research their options for machinery to assist them with crop establishment and funding to help pay for it. Hearing about the South Devon Coastal Local Action Group (SDCLAG) funding through word of mouth,

in the Spring of 2017 they set about applying for a grant to cover some of the cost of a Sumo DTS Direct Drill. The DR Company who manage the SDCLAG programme assisted Matt and Rob with their application and in May 2017 the amount of £30,800 was approved, match funded by the brothers on a 40/60 split.

The UK manufactured DTS Direct drill has made a significant impact on the running of the farm. In a dry season direct drilling will conserve soil moisture, this will help crop germination. In wet conditions direct drilled crops will have less soil erosion and nutrient run off.

“The direct drill is designed to have a 20 year lifespan, explains Matt, “Our productivity has increased significantly, and because the drill has allowed us to establish our crops more economically, some of these crops can be used by an increased amount of livestock. We will be employing an extra ½ to ¾ of a full time equivalent employee by next summer and the farm is more sustainable, with improved outputs and efficiency. R&P Farming will continue to use new technology and aims to farm sustainably to produce food and to protect and improve soils for the future. This aim will continue even after grant funding has ended.”

