

SENTRY CROP MARKETING

Robert Kilby, Sentry Director & Grain Marketing Expert



Robert joined Sentry in 1985 as a tractor driver/shepherd and progressed quickly up the career ladder, and in 1992 moved to his third Sentry farm on the Kent/Surrey border, where he has remained as the business manager of the South East farms overseeing 14 farms covering over 4000 hectares on a wide range of soil types and cropping. In 2006 he started to develop a grain marketing strategy for the company and this has evolved over the last 10 years with over 100,000 tonnes of grain to sell per annum. Good contacts and relationships have been made during this time and this has culminated into a defined marketing link between Sentry and Gleadell this year. Robert's role continues to move forward and he has recently become a director of the company.

2016/2017 Marketing

This whole year of grain marketing sums up the unenviable task a farmer, merchant and consumer has when trying to sell or buy grain. It has been illogical and unpredictable to say the least and that is the most difficult aspect of marketing a product that is so dependent on so many things, and a lot of them unforeseen or out of our control. The weather, yields, exchange rates, political elections and consumer trends have all been thrown at us in the last year. The coldest spring for 100 years, poor prices, an unexpected Brexit, the pound falls out of bed, grain prices improve, desperate yields for the majority of the UK, Trump wins the American elections and that is only the headlines! I don't believe that anyone did or could have predicted this at the beginning of the year and confirms

and strengthens my view that you cannot try and play or predict the market for much more than a month at a time, there are just too many factors to consider. This is why we at Sentry have a strong view that a considered strategic plan of marketing built around calculated risk management but based on a deep knowledge of our costs and likely returns is the foundation to our sales. We are not, and cannot be, in the game of high risk with other people's money and grain. We also believe that over a period of time we have actually performed in the top quartile in the industry. The next year or so is unlikely to be any different as we have the negotiations of Brexit and the first year of Trump as President to contend with and what that may throw up. Oh and by the way the world has plenty of food stocks, I nearly forgot to mention food!