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**Five pillars of regenerative agriculture explored at Groundswell 2024**

Now in its eighth year, Groundswell has once again been a sell-out event, with close to 8,000 visitors passing through the gates of the two-day regenerative agriculture festival which is rooted in aiding farmers and those curious about regenerative agriculture to discover more, and to build relationships with likeminded people. A group of attending farmers described the speakers as the ‘who’s who’ in the global ‘regen ag’ community, including John Kempf, Joel Williams, Odette Ménard, Josef Holzer and Andy Cato.

Hosted by the Cherry family at Lannock Manor Farm in Hertfordshire on 26 and 27 June, a total of 300 speakers took to the 10 main stages, and event goers joined farm-wide practical demonstrations and walks covering every aspect of agroecological and regenerative farming practices: from mob grazing to hedgerow and dung beetle safaris, truffle hunting and soil water infiltration demonstrations.

Widely considered as THE immersive ‘regen ag’ event, content centred on principles of regenerative agriculture – minimising soil disturbance, keeping the soil surface covered, maintaining living roots, maximising crop diversity, re-introducing livestock to the farm.

Keynote speaker John Kempf is passionate about the potential of well managed agriculture ecosystems to reverse ecological degradation. Speaking early on the opening day, John, who is best known for hosting The Regenerative Agriculture Podcast, explained to a packed seminar tent how plants with abundant health perform differently from common expectations, describing the fundamentals of managing agronomy from a biological perspective, and how to produce exceptional crop responses during a regenerative agriculture transition period,

Event Director, Alex Cherry said of the event, “As a family, we’ve been on an extraordinary journey. My uncle, John, describes it as constantly surfing the groundswell of ideas that have risen up from a farmer-led revolution. The sense of community is what people seem to love about this event. It’s really heartening for us to be playing a part in the sharing of ideas and practices to help farmers change and develop what they are doing. Some are at the start of their regen journey, while others are here to learn how to tweak and improve what’s already working well. The net gain from this gathering is people doing good things to improve soils, their farm’s natural environment, always with profitability at the heart of farm practice.”

Speaking to a large crowd at Affinity Water’s Rainfall Simulator, Odette Ménard, a soil specialist from Canada, emphasised the importance of planting immediately after harvest, how each minute affects germination and the ability for the root system to do its job of minimising soil, water and nutrient losses. Odette spoke about the reinvention of agriculture and the vital roles of above soil plant architecture in supporting insects, and below soil, the beneficial actions of plant roots.

Groundswell visitors included Honorary President of Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh who joined the Cherry family for a tour of the site, meeting speakers, farmers and industry specialists to hear about how British agriculture is changing.

Austrian farmer, Josef Holzer farms steep ground; talking to a packed seminar tent he spoke about the importance of mulching, terracing and the use of plant roots to help with water infiltration and retention through permaculture, and supporting biodiversity, not only for the benefit of farming, but for the life and health of the farmers and their families.

Josef highlighted the need for people to enter the agricultural industry, he said: “The most important number in agriculture is not the size of your farm or the horse power of your tractor, the most important number is brains per hectare, which are developing good, new, innovative ideas, it’s important to have good people in farming, to have good ideas, which is why events like Groundswell are so important, to connect and motivate people.”

The growing awareness of the intricate links between the soil food is grown in, food nutrient density, and human and animal health, was debated by two pioneering doctors Dr David Unwin and Dr Jenny Goodman in a deeply thought-provoking session. The duo connected the ‘dots’ of soil, farming and health, and how good regenerative farming practice ticks all the boxes.

Professional bodybuilder Eddie Abbew has become a champion for real food with nearly four million Instagram followers. Session moderator, Mallika Basu, a food writer, commentator and podcast host probed Abbew for his views on junk food, health, and why. He advocates a diet of home cooked eggs, healthy meat and vegetable choices, urging people to dismiss the advertising of ultra-processed food.

Wildfarmed co-founder Andy Cato gave an honest account of his journey into regenerative farming in conversation with food strategist Henry Dimbleby, author and co-founder of Leon Restaurants. In the evening Andy switched into his better-known role, that of Groove Armada DJ, drawing a huge crowd for a party in the Earthworm Arms bar.

Groundswell’s exhibitors and partners are central to the success of the event. Senior Asset Manager, Alister Leggatt from headline partner Affinity Water who has been working with the Cherry family for more than seven years shared his reflections:

"We’re delighted to continue our partnership with Groundswell for the seventh year. This event is a cornerstone for showcasing sustainable farming practices that align with our commitment to enhancing soil health and protecting water.”

“Looking ahead, we're excited to explore new research and initiatives that further support regenerative practices that can benefit farming, water and the wider environment."

"Groundswell is more than an event—it's a movement towards a more sustainable future. The ongoing trials, initiatives and collaborations, including our own, are paving the way for innovative solutions that will have lasting benefits for our water sources and the agricultural landscape."

Dates for your diary - Groundswell 2025 will be one week later than usual, on Wednesday 2 and Thursday 3 July. This should come as good news for those in East Anglia, as Groundswell will no longer clash with the Norfolk Show.

-Ends-

**NOTES FOR EDITORS:**

Groundswell is an independent event created by the Cherry farming family at Weston Park Farms in Weston, Hertfordshire, it is now in its eighth year. Groundswell 2025 will be held 2-3 July 2025.

The event provides a forum for farmers, and anyone interested in food production or the environment to learn about the theory and practical applications of Conservation Agriculture or regenerative systems, including no-till, cover crops and re-introducing livestock into the arable rotation, with a view to improving soil health.

Groundswell is a practical show aimed at anyone who wants to understand the farmer’s core asset, the soil, and make better informed decisions. It is a two-day event featuring talks, forums and discussions from leading international soil health experts, experienced arable and livestock farmers, agricultural policy experts, direct-drill demonstrations and AgTech innovators.

<https://groundswellag.com/>

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