

ARTIS and G's Growers



John Shropshire
Chairman G's Fresh
Beverly Dixon
Group HR Director, G's



G's Fast Facts



- Established 1952
- £400 m turnover (budget 2014/15)
- 5,000 employees
- 11,450 hectares
- £20 m invested per annum
- Supplying all major UK retailers
- Supplying major supermarkets across the EU and USA

Thank you for attending today to hear about a new programme that will help support the sustainability of agriculture in the UK.

I believe that it's only with cross sector collaboration on innovation and forward-thinking improvement plans that we will step change the competitiveness of arable farming and create a point of difference for UK agriculture.

This will help us retain viable food production in this country, at the same time securing employment, underpinning the UK's biggest industry.



I'm speaking as the Chairman of G's Fresh, an organisation that provides a marketing and sales service to G's Growers which is a co-operative with 23 members and has been operating for 30 years.

G's Growers grows salad and vegetables for all the major supermarkets in UK and many throughout Europe and the USA. This year we will export \$18m of premium added-value beetroot products to the USA and that business has been honoured with a Queen's Award for Innovation.

Sustainability



My father, Guy Shropshire, established G's in East Anglia in 1952 and my brother Peter and I are members of G's Growers.

I'm happy to say that this is very much a family business and the next generation have joined too.

So, I am passionate about supporting UK food production and creating sustainability for farming businesses. Sustainability starts with financial resilience but encompasses the environmental impact and the quality, safety and the traceability of our food. Twice as much food from half the resources – sustainable intensification.

At the same time we are heading into the 3rd Agricultural Revolution.

Professionalism in Agriculture

- People
- Progression
- Profit



Everything starts with people. The people in our business.

We need to head towards a new professionalism.

To quote Richard Longthorpe, being professional is not simply about being competent. It is about being able to demonstrate that competence, its continuous review and ongoing improvement.

This process results not only in a better business but it also helps inspire the confidence of others, including society (our customers!), employers or employees, new entrants and regulators.



Who is involved?

- Why are G's Growers involved in ARTIS?
- Why is it important to G's Growers?

So why did G's Growers decide to lead the ARTIS programme?

As salad and vegetable growers in UK we have a high volume, low margin, labour intensive business model which will not be sustainable in the long run. Taking a helicopter view this business model will simply lead to higher food prices, more waste and could lead to production moving overseas. Not the best outlook for UK plc., or individual businesses.

Some of the business problems we face are:

- A lack of availability of seasonal labour. Political drivers have eradicated the sector specific seasonal labour pipeline, and by doing so have increased the potential immigration statistics at national level and created an imperative for mechanisation at pace.
- Our industry is made up of small to medium sized employers operating on a low margin basis which leaves little headroom for R&D and increased requirement for open innovation.
- Agriculture is renowned to be the most dangerous industry to work and elimination of risk through engineering and training is paramount.
- Our consumer profile is continually changing in the way they shop, how, when and what they choose to eat and increased interest in traceability and food safety.
- Food production is subject to international influences on price, supply and demand, population growth and shifts in demographics. Whether large or small producers, we are all operating in the international market place, and there are some very strong competitors out there. You may think that G's is a big lettuce grower but the biggest salad growers in Holland and Germany are bigger than we are.

So how does that manifest in G's? Well you might ask "what keeps me awake at night?"

G's cannot survive and thrive as an island within the island of the UK. G's can only thrive if the whole of British agriculture is successfully competing in European and world markets, producing food that consumers want to buy in preference to the imported alternative, not just about price.

Can I compete on the European and global market? Being able to continue to produce in the UK in years to come. Will we have enough seasonal labour?

How can I increase the pace of mechanisation?

How can I reduce input costs and waste through better use of precision agriculture, farming techniques and NPD? More for less.

How can I access the latest thinking and build it into the way we work effectively?

Do I have a safe, competent team to develop and adopt new practices, safely and efficiently?

How can I reassure myself that the information I have access to is rigorous, sufficient and sound?

So, that gives you some background information about why we are very keen to support ARTIS, building professionalism in my business and make it available for G's Growers and the wider Agricultural industry.

Because together we will succeed.

Making ARTIS succeed

- Training support
- Technical collaboration
- Getting scientists involved
- Use by Food and Agriculture employers





Why ARTIS?

- Latest on agronomy
- New technologies
- Regulatory/and economic issues

→ Guiding growers' practices

We know there is an enormous amount of scientific and technology research and development available. We also know that we haven't got the time and sometimes expertise to seek it out and if we do get that far it takes further investment to establish the relevance to our farm and then turn it into something practical that we can actually implement.

At worst it's a wasted opportunity and at best we could have made efficiency improvements much quicker.

So, we need help.

ARTIS will coordinate the latest developments from a range of institutions and present them in a way that's useful for farmers, packers and others in the supply chain.

That's not all we need though. We need to be able to access this information in a way that's convenient. That might be on farm, in a classroom or on line. Knowledge transfer is effective when it's relevant and we don't have to sift out the important aspects for us. Sharing ideas with others is helpful too, especially when it comes to innovation.

ARTIS has invested government funding in developing high quality, rigorous material and I for one am prepared to pay for that. Assuming other employers feel the same it means that the programme will be sustainable long after the funding expires.

- What are the measures of success for the programme?
- What are the targets?

So how would I measure the success of ARTIS?

Quality training material and practical solutions available in a way that's convenient for farmers and their teams.

I'd expect to see collaboration across science and technology research institutions as an indication that the material is new and not previously available.

I want to see a range of delivery channels and eminent scientists involved.

Then it comes down to whether employers in Food and Agriculture are using the programme - that's the real measure of success.



Services to Growers

Beverly Dixon
Group HR Director, G's





Our growers are important

- Facilitating best practice
- Improving professionalism
- How G's will support them



Good morning.

As you can tell, our Growers are extremely important to us. Without them, we would not be in the Farming and Food Production business. The 23 members of the cooperative all share the same vision and imperative for change to be able to build financially and socially sustainable businesses. One of the main purposes of the cooperative is to facilitate an exchange of best practice, good ideas and learning.

That may sound a tall order for some employers. I have heard it said 'I don't want to train my team because they'll just leave to get a better job.' One of the most important messages I'd like to convey in this short session is the ARTIS contribution to improving 'professionalism' in our industry and that our competitors are in the global market, not our neighbours.

So let me share with you a brief outline of the ways in which we plan to support and work with our Growers. We aim to raise the standards throughout our industry. We all depend on high levels of skills and a workforce that has the right attitude to ethical food production.

That's what we mean by best practice. So the first step has to be to help everyone to understand and accept the high standards that we must achieve if we are to remain competitive in the market. We cannot depend on customer loyalty just because we produce and offer our products. Customer loyalty has to be earned. As well as high quality produce we need to have the respect of customers because of the way we operate. And because we have knowledgeable, professional staff.

So the next step is to improve the professionalism of every person and at every level in the group. Not only will that improve performance, it will also help us to attract into our industry, talented people who may not have considered a career in agriculture. That's a high target to aim at, but it can be done. And it will involve a planned programme of training – training in specific skills, and also in management, in leadership, in personal and career development.



Values



To supply quality, fresh produce that delights our customers every day

To be recognised as outstanding market-led growers and suppliers of sustainable, healthy, fresh produce, and to be at the forefront of the industry in everything we do



Trust



Efficiency



Quality



Expertise



Can - do

As progressive growers, we make a difference by developing our people, caring for the environment and supporting local communities

Now you may say your company is too small to have an HR department, too small to have full time trainers. And I recognise that the majority of businesses in our industry are small and medium sized, and may not have the necessary training resources. So what's the answer?

Central to the way we work is our set of values. That includes keeping everyone safe, building expertise, continuously improving what we do and how we do it, producing quality fresh produce, never letting a colleague or customer down and having a 'can do' approach to life.

We see the commercial benefits of setting the standards and building a culture that creates shared ownership of the values. And we do this through constant communication, through our performance management system and, critically, through training. We firmly believe in training.



And why? Because training is about developing people – the people on whom our business depends. We employ almost 1,500 people year round in UK which increases by 2,500 seasonal workers in the summer.

The job roles available are vast along all parts of the supply chain and we know it makes great business sense, social responsibility sense and sustainability sense to invest in our people and promote from within.

For example a trained seasonal worker is 5 times more productive at the start of the season than a new starter and that makes a real difference to profitability.

Providing career opportunities for all means that we are more attractive to talented people and stand a chance of competing with other industries especially for engineers, growers, and technical managers.



We introduced **Thrive**. That's our talent management model. We know we can't stand still. The world is changing, and it's changing quickly. People go to work where the opportunity and reward is best and that means anywhere in the world. We operate in a global market and our competition is vast. There's a technology explosion and we need to keep up ... and stay ahead of the game.

Thrive is the home of all those things that we do to support our people to flourish, operate to their full potential and meet their aspirations, providing career plans and preparing them to operate in our businesses of the future. Let me tell you a bit about it.



Thrive relates to Recruitment, Succession and Training.

We create a pipeline of people by recruiting local operatives and apprentices, and we have a management training scheme. Then we work out which of our roles are critical for our future and establish whether we have people ready and prepared now, whether it will take less than three years to prepare them or whether it's a longer term plan. It's a balance between developing people to fill short term gaps and trying to anticipate what's coming down the track.

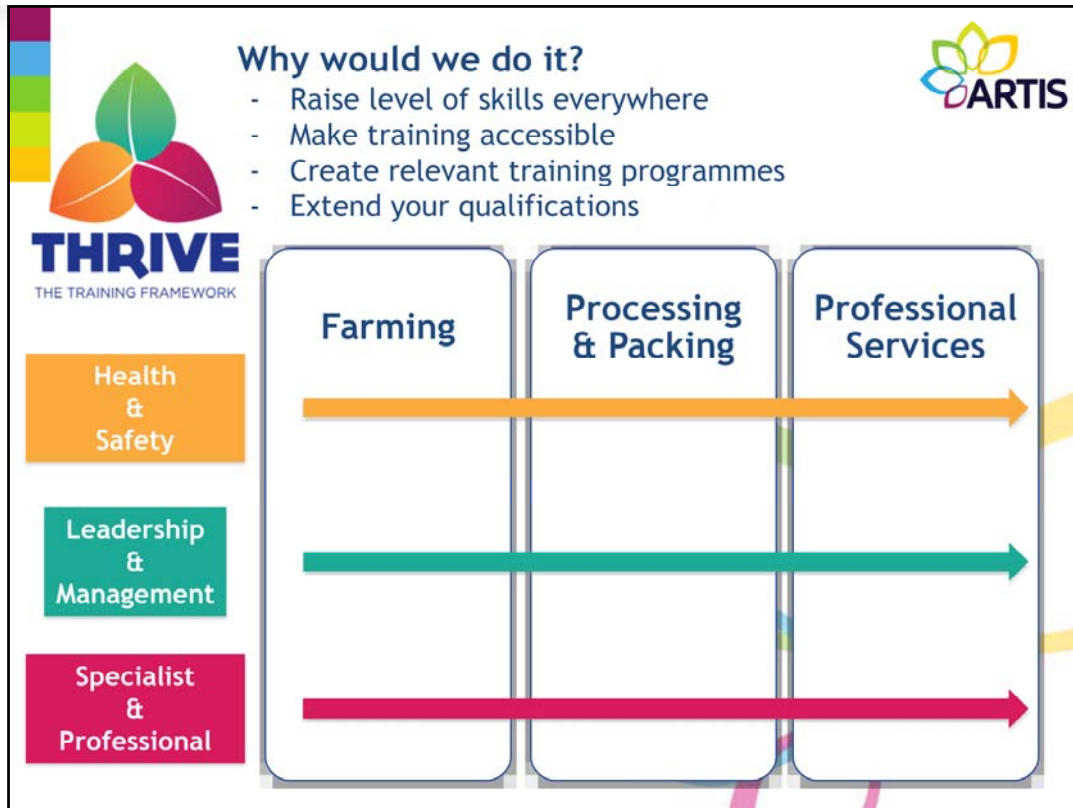
That's probably an area where industry support may be helpful to individual farmers and could save everyone wrestling with the same problem. For example engineering is a well documented skills gap and I would extend that to technically minded machine operators (planters, sprayers and harvesters) of the future.

Then we train people to be compliant the law and our policies, competent in their jobs and provide CPD. Again, an industry recommendation would save all employers spending time thinking about what training is essential for each role and providing a range of accredited local and national providers.

**Our commitment:
Training and Developing our Staff**



We have 20 apprentices in farming, engineering, production and administration and 20 graduates on a 2-year training scheme involving business placements, technical and leadership training



Now you may wonder why we are doing all this.

We are doing it because we want to raise standards throughout the industry. That will depend on training.

ARTIS gives us access to high quality training material delivered by accredited trainers. It takes away the worry of whether the training courses are value for money and whether the delegates may have more experience on the ground than the trainer.

By offering the training through multiple channels it means that it's convenient for busy people, it's accessible and it's likely to appeal to different learning styles. We and you can create training programmes that are directly and specifically relevant to our needs. So the training will be used to better effect.



What's in it for G's?

- We are focused on improving the consistency, quality and accessibility of training
- The focus is on practical skills-based training - delivered by accredited training providers and leading experts in the subject
- ARTIS gives us the freedom to create our own personalised, professional development training programme
- It allows you to build on your existing qualifications and experience, and develop better understanding and skills

And finally it helps build professionalism in our businesses by building on existing qualifications and often a vast amount of experience leading to a deeper understanding of the subject and skills.

What next?

- Work with us
- Create pipeline of available people
- Maintain high standards

So where do we go from here?

I want us all to work together, raising the level of skills everywhere, and creating a pipeline of trained people, not only to meet immediate needs but also to create a career ladder with good people lined up for promotion. And once we get started we should aim to maintain high standards that earn the respect of our customers and of those we wish to attract into the industry.

Growing Together - to be competitive



Let's grow together and we'll be competitive.