

STEPHEN WATKINS

NFST VICE CHAIRMAN

My formal agricultural education was at the Royal Agricultural College, completing a HND followed by the AFM Course. After Cirencester, my gap year was spent working principally in Australia and Canada before returning to the family farm in Worcestershire.

In 1984, I married Sarah. We have three children, Sophie 1990, Piers 1991 and Hugo 1993. Farming in partnership with Sarah, we took over the family farm in 1994, which at that time was 500 acres (owned and tenanted) growing mainly combinable crops with sugar beet.

In 1994, we started to share machinery with a neighbour who was farming a similar area. This has now developed into a business occupying 2,500 acres working with seven main co-partners growing fourteen different crops, and a further eight partners involved with livestock and diversification enterprises.

In 2001, I attended the 'Challenge for Rural Leadership' course at Seale Hayne. A year later, I was awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship. I am now a trustee and selector for the Nuffield Trust.

I am involved with the CLA at county and national level. My NFU involvement is as board member on the National Horticultural & Potato board, with special interest in field vegetables, pesticides and public procurement.

I am a Liveryman with the Worshipful Company of Farmers, and in 2009 was awarded Associateship of the Royal Agricultural Societies.

One of my former claims to fame: In 1978, I established the world record for non-stop ploughing at 68 hours... the only way an agriculture student could think of getting a world record!