



## Set on the goal of sustainable sugar beet

[Home](#) / [Morley Science](#) / [Set on the goal of...](#)



The next in our series on the outcome of TMAF support for younger scientists focusses on the work and ambition of Dr Georgina Barratt. As Head of Crop Production with BBRO her goals are clear, for farming and for her own professional development.

I describe myself as an accidental agricultural researcher. What I mean is I never set out with this role as my career ambition.

At school I wanted to go into the Air Force and become a pilot. My eyesight was not good enough for that so I decided the next best thing would be an engineer working on planes.

When I got to Nottingham University to study engineering, I soon realised I hated it! I loved the student life, and all the sport I could get involved with, so had to look for what else I could study. My Dad was OK with my decision to try to switch courses, very supportive, which was



Dr Georgina Barratt, BBRO

so helpful at the time. The question was what to do? I was interested in economics, and I looked at that. But it was when I talked with Nottingham students of agricultural economics, they were so willing to talk about farming and explain it, that my mindset shifted.

## The pull of agriculture

When out driving I discovered agriculture is everywhere! When I sat down to eat, I started to wonder who grew the grain for this bread, who kept the cows for this milk, and who grew the potatoes for these chips and how?

In some ways, the switch to study agriculture was not an easy time for me at all. I took a bit of time out and worked at a branch of Wickes in Grantham for a few months (that was good experience of another kind) and then, quite soon, I was totally sure I wanted agriculture to be my course – and career.



Dr Georgina Barratt, BBRO Head of Crop Production.

## TMAF influence: from undergrad to PhD

One of my agriculture lecturers was the brilliant Professor Debbie Sparkes. In my last year, when I heard that she was offering a fully funded PhD researching the effect of drought on sugar beet, I plucked up the courage to ask her if she would take me. Getting accepted meant I could continue the student life I loved in Nottingham, including hockey and competitive clay shooting.

Thanks to Debbie Sparkes, as an undergrad and then during my PhD, I came across TMAF. When I finished my PhD, I approached BBRO for a job. I had gained that confidence that if you know what you want, then try and get it. If you don't try, then definitely nothing is going to happen!

The research I wanted to do then was looking at the sustainability of growing sugar beet, of course that includes the economic viability but also the environmental impact of the crop. On a chance visit to the University of Lincoln I saw carbon flux towers but at a cost of £150k per tower. I could see, with the fantastic set up with TMAF of the Morley Farms, that if we could have two we could use them to compare the carbon absorption or emissions of beet under different management systems.





Flux towers at Morley Farms comparing the carbon absorption or emissions of beet under different management systems.

TMAF is an amazing help in that you can go to them with an idea, a proposal – even for a very significant sum of money – and, as with the flux towers, they help with the money and practical help. For example, David Jones Morley Farms Manager has been amazing. TMAF invested over £200,000 in the two towers, allowing me to get on with the work.

TMAF also helps fund the [John Forrest Award \(JFA\) Communication Skills](#) course that I went on 2018. I really enjoy presenting my research and technical advice using the skills gained from the course. It also gave me confidence in addressing questions and debate which leads to some great discussions with others in the industry. I get asked to share my experiences with the next JFA cohorts to show how I put the skills I've learned, thanks to TMAF, into practice in all sorts of situations.

## Setting my goals in work & life

I have recently been promoted to BBRO Head of Crop Production. I have more responsibility, I'm helping to shape the research and other work of [BBRO](#). In sport, to play at a higher level I have moved from Norwich City to [Harleston Magpies Hockey Club](#) where I am goalkeeper in the Womens 1<sup>st</sup> team.



Georgina Barratt, goalkeeper in the Harleston Magpies Womens 1<sup>st</sup> hockey team.

I still love science, of course, but I also really love the people management side of this role in a research organisation. I love going to technical events, working on the trial sites like at Morley Farms and going to meetings, having conversations, being in a team and leading others. It gives me huge satisfaction to do what I can to build the skills and confidence of those who work with me. It's great to see them grow.

My aim is to help farming to be sustainable – financially of course, but also in every other dimension of what it means for a crop such as sugar beet to be sustainable. With TMAF financial support I've studied the impact of drought on beet, I'm analysing what's happening with carbon during cultivation, and we're continually looking at how, for example with cover crops, we can improve soil health and resilience before a beet crop and after it's harvested.

Next aspect to study? It's the effect of sugar beet and its management on water quality. In five- or ten-years' time, I hope you will find I've helped to find answers and practical solutions.

Categories: Morley Science, News 17th September 2025

---

PREVIOUS

TMAF helps youngsters learn at the Aylsham Show

---

## Categories

Events

Flux Towers

Morley Clean Water Project

---

## Archives

---

- September 2025 ➤ August 2025 ➤ July 2025 ➤ June 2025 ➤ May 2025
  - April 2025 ➤ March 2025 ➤ February 2025 ➤ January 2025 ➤ November 2024
  - August 2024 ➤ June 2024 ➤ May 2024 ➤ April 2024 ➤ March 2024
  - February 2024 ➤ January 2024 ➤ December 2023 ➤ November 2023 ➤ October 2023
  - September 2023 ➤ August 2023 ➤ July 2023 ➤ June 2023 ➤ May 2023
  - April 2023 ➤ March 2023 ➤ February 2023 ➤ December 2022 ➤ November 2022
  - October 2022 ➤ September 2022 ➤ August 2022 ➤ June 2022 ➤ May 2022
  - April 2022 ➤ February 2022 ➤ November 2021 ➤ October 2021 ➤ September 2021
  - July 2021 ➤ June 2021 ➤ May 2021 ➤ April 2021 ➤ March 2021
  - February 2021 ➤ January 2021 ➤ December 2020 ➤ November 2020 ➤ September 2020
  - August 2020 ➤ July 2020 ➤ June 2020 ➤ May 2020 ➤ April 2020
  - March 2020 ➤ February 2020 ➤ January 2020 ➤ December 2019 ➤ November 2019
  - October 2019 ➤ September 2019 ➤ August 2019 ➤ July 2019 ➤ June 2019
  - April 2019 ➤ March 2019 ➤ February 2019 ➤ January 2019 ➤ December 2018
  - November 2018 ➤ April 2018 ➤ January 2018 ➤ December 2017 ➤ April 2017
  - February 2017 ➤ December 2016 ➤ November 2016 ➤ July 2016 ➤ May 2016
  - March 2016 ➤ January 2016
- 

---

## Recent Posts

---



Set on the goal of sustainable sugar beet

17th September 2025



TMAF helps youngsters learn at the Aylsham Show

28th August 2025

Rewards of TMAF investment in young science



30th July 2025



Morley Open Day 2025 a great success

11th July 2025



TMAF-supported Saxmundham trials still relevant after 125 years

2nd June 2025

---

TMAF prioritises investment in research and careers of younger scientists.

« Aug

Dr David Clarke  
explains what drew  
him to a career in  
agricultural science  
and how farming,  
farmers and TMAF  
are helping fulfil his  
career ambitions.  
30th July 2025

---

**AGRICULTURAL FOUNDATION**

© 2025 The Morley Agriculture Foundation

Registered Charity No. 1097174

---