



Upper Beult Farmer Cluster



'Soil Your Undies' - Test your soil health with pants!

Soil is so much more than the sum of its parts, a complex web of minerals, fungi, nutrients such as Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium (NPK), bacteria, insects and organic matter.

Farmers in the Upper Beult contend with heavy clay soils, prone to be waterlogged in winter and cracked in summer. However, the clay also provides vital minerals, and often helps to maintain moisture during dry summers. With the right management, the Beult catchment can provide great growing conditions for livestock and arable.

Farmers are familiar with the chemistry of soils and feeding crops with NPK. But building organic matter and encouraging a strong network of life underground, could help even further in reducing some of the negative consequences of heavy clay. So how do you test how healthy your soil biology is?

'Soil your undies' is a simple test, which looks at decomposition rates of a pair of cotton pants, to help assess the microbiological activity in the soil. We're asking Beult farmers to take part and choose their best field to test its soil health, follow the instructions below to try out the 'soil your undies' test!

How to #soilmyundies

- **Bury a pair of white 100% cotton briefs in the top six inches of soil**
- **Leave the waistband showing and mark the location with a marker flag**
- **After eight weeks, extract the underwear carefully and hand wash them in a bucket of water**
- **Photograph the results and share them with the Upper Beult Farmer Cluster, to compare with other farmers in the catchment**

