THE GRAZING ANIMALS PROJECT

A best practice guide:
A Marketing Guide for Conservation Grazing Schemes

GLOUCESTER CATTLE GRAZING HABITATS FOR LESSER HORSESHOE BATS ARE FINISHED AT 30 MONTHS AND MARKETED VIA A LOCAL BOX SCHEME AND AT FARMERS MARKETS IN THE FOREST OF DEAN, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

A GAP publication intended to promote and assist the development of new and better approaches to marketing produce from conservation grazing systems.

Written by Helen Boothman, a marketing consultant, assisted by Bill Grayson, and revised by Jim Swanson. They have drawn together contributions from a wide range of individuals and organisations already actively engaged in marketing produce with a conservation message.

Copies available to download free from: www.grazinganimalsproject.org.uk

Prepared by the Grazing Animals Project, May 2003
Second edition October 2006
Third edition July 2008

Published by GAP - working with the Forum for the
Application of Conservation Techniques (FACT) Liaison Group

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the contribution made by so many people in the preparation of this Guide.

A Note to the Reader

We hope the information presented in this Guide will be of practical assistance to farmers, site managers and advisers who are active in trying to improve the delivery of truly sustainable grazing systems to provide the full range of public and private goods across the UK. It is accepted that new approaches and ideas will continue to be developed, and so this document is under constant review. Please note that the document was originally based largely on work carried out in England. We welcome any additional information and case studies from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to expand the English examples in future editions.. Advice on any aspect of grazing management, marketing and information contained in this guide is available from GAP staff.

How GAP works

GAP works through its Local Grazing Scheme (LGS) co-ordinators who act as the focus within the wider GAP network. Workshops, conferences and training events demonstrating best practice and bringing different sectors and organisations to encourage partnership working are a key element of their role. GAP is also able to act as a link between the policy and research sectors, and practitioners on the ground in the UK and abroad. Representing a broad range of organisations and interests, GAP is able to identify and react to new and existing problems that constrain grazing management. GAP co-ordinators are able to provide or access specialist advice on any aspect of land management, as well as offering site visits. In addition to this, an e-mail 'Conservation grazing discussion group', Nibblers, has been set up to assist the exchange of information and best practice and to enable problems to be aired. To join contact:
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1. The Purpose of the Guide

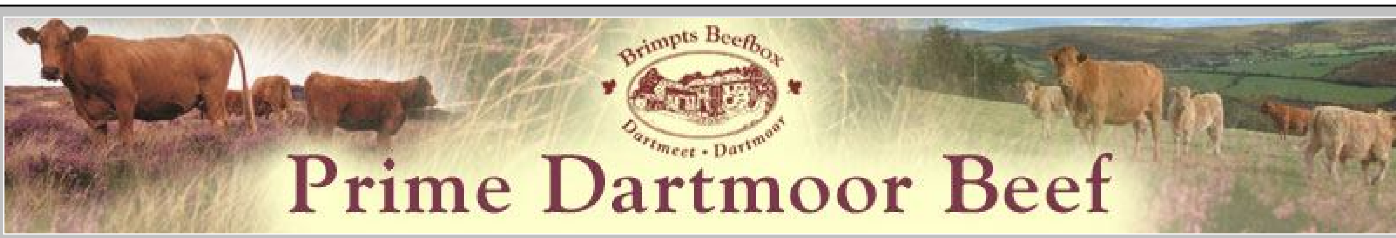
1.1. Background

The UK statutory nature conservation agencies have all set targets to improve biodiversity. For example, Natural England aims to see 95% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs in favourable condition by 2010 and the Countryside Council for Wales wants to see all designated international, Welsh and local sites in favourable condition by 2026. Many of these sites (and semi-natural habitats in the wider countryside) need to be sympathetically grazed if they are to achieve this state.

The Grazing Animals Project (GAP) was set up in 1997 with the objective of promoting and facilitating the appropriate use of livestock in sustaining the management of land for conservation. Local Grazing Schemes (LGS) have subsequently developed as the main delivery mechanism for much of GAP's work. They are based on a philosophy of co-operation and encourage land management organisations within the same geographical locality to liaise with one another and others in the livestock industry, to integrate and rationalise their grazing and management operations. LGSs follow many different models (see GAP's Local Grazing Scheme Best Practice Guide) but all agree about the need to enhance sustainability by improving their financial viability through optimal marketing of grazing livestock, livestock and other business products and indirect public benefits.

Summary: marketing added value products from conservation grazing - why?

- Graziers and conservation grazing schemes produce public and private goods; marketing brings them financial benefits
- Conservation grazing necessarily involves reductions in productivity
- Direct marketing reconnects producers and customers and increases understanding of land management and production systems, for example customers can visit farms / sites where an animal has been raised
- Direct marketing shortens the food supply chain (fewer food miles)
- Conservation grazing can produce a high quality and nutritious product. Recent studies by the University of Exeter have shown that lambs reared on botanically diverse pasture (moorland/heathland/ saltmarsh) have higher omega 3 and Vit E levels than ones reared on agriculturally improved grassland. They also scored higher in taste tests: www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/geography/Eating%20Biodiversity/Index.htm for details.



Case study 1: Producing public and private products - Brimpts Farm, Dartmoor

- Brimpts Farm has been a Duchy farm since 1307. Today managed by Andy Bradford, the farm has seen significant change and developments
- The farm has won several awards for diversification projects, which started with a tea room 30 years ago, and now includes high quality B + B and group accommodation, a climbing wall and conference facilities especially aimed at the *corporate* market
    - How to get clients? With the help of various agencies and with appropriate grant aid, the farm has invested much time, money and effort into creating and maintaining wildlife habitats and encouraging public access on to the farm, with biodiversity, orienteering and history trails
    - A high quality environment attracts customers for other farm enterprises
- The farm produces and sells meat from its South Devon herd, in partnership with other Dartmoor producers, in a box scheme, www.beefbox.co.uk, and collaborates in the Meat Dartmoor farmer group that is looking at collaboration in direct selling

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1.2. Policy influences

Recent reform of the Common Agricultural Policy has lead to the decoupling of subsidies from production. Headage payments based on the number of livestock have been replaced by a single payment. The implementation of the Single Payment Scheme (SPS) within the UK is on a regional basis with the administrations within England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales determining their own arrangements. For example, in England it was initially based mainly on historic payments, but by 2012 payments will be based entirely on the area of eligible land. It is likely that this decoupling will lead farmers to produce according to market demand and encourage the development of farming businesses that are profitable without cross-subsidy from the state. This market demand will include diversified products and services, including environmental land management.

SPS payments are subject to UK and European “modulation” to fund agri-environment schemes. Objectives of agri-environment schemes are the control of diffuse pollution and improved management of biodiversity, landscape and historic assets, including the protection and enhancement of wildlife, landscape quality, public access, and genetic conservation. So in England, for example, Defra’s Higher Level Scheme includes supplements for mixed grazing and for using native mainstream breeds or breeds at risk.

Other relevant funding opportunities are also arising. For example, the new England Rural Development Programme will enable grants to be used to strengthen local linkages between the land-based and other sectors in, for example, collaborative food marketing initiatives linked to landscape conservation

Government support for conservation grazing marketing is implied in the Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food (Defra 2002), which provides the framework for future Government policy. The latest strategy document highlights five priority themes: succeeding in the market; improving the environmental performance of farming; sustainable consumption and production; climate change and agriculture; and animal health and welfare.

1.3. Food market influences

Agriculture in the UK is currently undergoing large-scale change. Although this potentially opens up opportunities in the area of added-value products, marketing solutions for farmers are not simple. While the number of ‘foodies’ has grown to 58% of the population, and British food is now recognised for its high quality, farmers are still seeing little of this benefit. Farming income in real terms reduced by 51% from 1995 to 2004, and the farmer share of a basket of food staples fell by 34% between 1995 and 2004 (Defra, 2006).

The key factors in the market are:

(i) Fundamental shift in delivery of support (as outlined above).
(ii) Economic pressures due to fluctuations in the exchange rate, instability as the UK moves from production based subsidies to market driven systems and declines in profitability.
(iii) Globalisation.
(iv) Changes in the food chain – primary outlets have shifted from being local livestock markets and butchers to large supermarkets, which now control over 70% of the fresh meat trade, sourced through a few large abattoirs and processors. This leads to the disintegration of local infrastructure and places farmers at a disadvantage in terms of market power.

It is likely that these factors will continue the polarisation of agricultural systems between large commodity producers concentrating on efficiency and those looking to differentiate their products and thus add value by concentrating on animal welfare, organic status, and wildlife. The market for differentiated food was worth £4.047 billion per annum in 2004, just 3% of the total grocery market, but this is growing at 7.5% per year, 50% above the rate for the conventional grocery market (www.igd.com, 2006). This represents a significant opportunity for those involved with conservation grazing.

1.4. Hidden Costs

The existing food chain contains many hidden environmental costs so the introduction of local food systems, as the preferred method for marketing products from land managed for conservation can help alleviate some of these to the benefit of the wider environment.

- Cheap food is a myth (Pretty et al. 2000) - we pay three times for our food - in retail outlets, via taxes used as 'subsidies' and to cover the costs of damage to the environment and our health. Pretty has produced a balance sheet for the UK highlighting positive and negative externalities. The negative total of £1.54 billion per year is made up of, for example, the costs of pesticide removal from water and losses of biodiversity, hedgerows and stonewalls. The external costs are calculated from farms, transport, disposal of organic waste to landfill and subsidies

- Sustain's *Eating Oil* report (2001) highlights that the contemporary food system is inherently unsustainable as there is an almost complete dependency on one finite and highly polluting energy source – oil

The recommendation from both these published sources is to encourage sustainable farming, localise food systems, encourage sustainable forms of transport, reduce unnecessary food swap (simultaneously importing and exporting identical products), compost organic wastes and switch subsidies away from a production base.

1.5. Aim of this Guide

The aim of this guide is to provide information to land managers, farmers and advisers dealing with grazing for nature conservation to help them improve the financial viability of their grazing schemes through more effective marketing of their saleable products. The advice given is illustrated using examples of some current conservation grazing projects in the form of case studies.

For the purposes of this guide marketing is defined as *a profitable process of turning raw materials (animal, animal products) into goods and services that customers are willing to buy.*

We focus on meat products but the guidance can be used for the marketing of other products, e.g. Dartmoor ponies for riding.

TEN TORS CHALLENGE, MAY 2006: NEW, VALUE ADDED MARKETS FOR DARTMOOR PONIES

Case study 2: Non – farming system producing public and private products – Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust

Only 400 Dartmoor Ponies now exist, a critical population level. Does it really matter if they die out?

- Foundation Stock of the Dartmoor Pony Breed and the only supply of fresh bloodlines
- A part of Dartmoor's Cultural Heritage that engages local people and farmers
- Contribute to the maintenance of Dartmoor's ecology, with massive support from the public

Why have numbers of these ponies declined?

- Legislation: Introduction of pony passports; ESA agreements required destocking so ponies went as they received no subsidy; live export banned
- Other types of Hill Ponies have sold better at the traditional markets (coloureds and Shetlands)

What are we doing about it?

- Unregistered Dartmoor Pony Preservation Scheme (DPS) started in 2004 with funds from English Nature and the National Park Sustainable Development Fund:
    - Supported 27 pony keepers and 307 ponies (with a payment per breeding mare on the relevant commons of Dartmoor)
    - Stallions and mares are inspected and branded, the emphasis being on producing the right sort of foals
    - The emphasis is on adding value to the young stock (raising the price of a foal from £8 to £100)
        - Establishing new markets – supplying Conservation Grazing animals that can off winter from Dartmoor, put on weight and then be sold on. Some have gone to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust
        - Pony training / handling to create riding ponies
        - Advising land owners and managers on the management of ponies
        - Paying for the gelding of colt foals - castrated & micro-chipped 15 colts
        - *Education Programme* in Partnership with Dartmoor National Park Education Service And Dartmoor Discovery (Devon County Council outward bound)
        - Pack Pony Project – Putting the ponies back to work, a project to show their versatility and temperament. For example using the ponies as pack horses on Brimpts Farm Tin Mine Trail…bringing history alive, and also entering ponies in the Ten Tors challenge in (May 2006) for disabled children

How do we sustain our work? The Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust

- Registered charity in April 2005
- Public campaign to save the Dartmoor Pony raised £33,500 in Year 1
- Built an Interpretation Centre that allows the public to meet ponies up close to help prevent feeding on the Moor
- Launched an adoption scheme – 350 to date
- Advised and supported by the donkey trust (pitfalls to avoid and veterinary advice)

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2. Meat production

Marketing of red meat products is essentially a three-stage process:

- **Production on-farm / site** (Section 3.1.): The marketing process begins with the final stages of production at farm level, when effort is put into ensuring that the animals are in an optimal condition for whichever outlet they are destined for

- **Processing** (Section 3.2.): The intermediate stages of the food chain (slaughter, cutting, packaging) in which the live animal is converted to an appropriate range of products that can be put on display for the customer

- **Retail** (Section 3.3.): The final transaction in which the customer buys the product and decides, on the basis of its eating quality and other factors, whether it is worth coming back for more

2.1. Production on the Farm / Site

This section describes the issues which the grazier / stockperson has to address whilst the animals are still on the holding in order to get them into satisfactory condition for sale.

2.1.1. Selling Stores and Breeding Animals

Farm system effects: The farming system in part determines the range of suitable outlets for stock; holdings with a shortage of good-quality land will usually aim to sell beef cattle and lambs as stores (partly grown animals), having bred them on the farm and grown them to a certain size (depending on the system) before selling them to another farm for finishing (completion of growth and carcase production) or as breeding replacements. Cattle and sheep are sold at almost every stage of the breeding cycle, although the periods immediately preceding and following birth of the young are best avoided for welfare reasons.

Rearing livestock: Most conservation grazing systems will lack the facilities needed for finishing livestock cost-effectively. The animals used for such grazing would normally be capable of growing their frame (skeleton) or maintaining themselves but in most cases would not be expected to reach finished condition. Once their annual grazing regime has been completed then the offspring from breeding herds / flocks will usually have to be sold as stores or breeding females. But see 2.1.2 **Summer Finishing** and **Finishing Hardy Breeds** for examples of livestock finished as part of conservation grazing systems.

Auction marts: They can be sold via a live auction mart at one of the regular store or breeding livestock sales. There are distinct spring and autumn peaks in the level of activity at the auctions which will draw in more buyers and increase the chances of the animals on sale attracting bids. Staff at the livestock mart will advise on the most appropriate sale at which to present a particular class of animal so it is worth consulting them well in advance. The auctioneers can also help generate interest by notifying potential buyers of forthcoming entries. The number of UK livestock markets has gradually declined over the last 50 years. Many have not re-opened after the closure following Foot and Mouth in 2001 and the number of markets is expected to carry on declining. For details of your nearest market and auctioneers: www.laa.co.uk

Livestock Classes: There are approximately 21 million animals auctioned each year, mostly from the red meat sectors. Livestock that are presented at auction usually appear under the following classes:

i) Finished animals fattened and ready for slaughter
ii) Stores to be sold for further fattening
iii) Breeding animals in their productive stage of life, sometimes with young at foot
iv) Cull animals at the end of their productive lives

Pricing: The price secured by the bidding will ultimately depend on the competition amongst the bidders for whatever animals are available on that day, always a difficult matter to predict in advance. Some protection against unrealistically low prices can be provided by fixing a reserve price on the animals, a device for establishing a minimum price that the vendor will accept. Any animals failing to reach their reserve can be returned home, although it is worth noting that this will trigger the 6 day restriction on movements of all livestock off the holding.
Presentation for sale: Successful sales of live animals will be determined largely by their visual appearance on the day of sale. Care should be taken to ensure they look their best; coats dry and free of mud and excrement, feet well trimmed and stomachs well filled.

Estimated Breed Values (EBV): EBV's are a method of rating bulls / rams for a series of variably heritable traits; thus prior to purchase you can assess an animal for your system on it's EBV's, e.g. calving ease, mature size, milk production, prolificacy, birthweight, weaning weight, growth rate, maternal ability, eating quality (reflection of marbling). In the near future, other traits will be included: fertility, temperament, disease resistance, longevity etc. For example 51% of Beef Shorthorn bulls sold at the Perth bull sales in 2005 were EBV recorded. Traits are measured via breed recording schemes and collated by MLC's Signet Breeding Services on behalf of the English Beef and Lamb Executive (EBLEX).

Welfare: It is advisable to allow animals plenty of time to adjust to their new surroundings when being sold through an auction mart; stressed animals seldom look as well as settled ones. Where they have to be transported to a strange environment it is helpful if they can be accompanied by another animal from their own established social group. It is also beneficial at auction marts to sort larger batches of store lambs into smaller pen-sized groups of matched individuals according to size, breed, and stage of finish. One or two poor animals amongst a group of good ones will bring down the price for the whole group.

Electronic auctions: Livestock auctions have attracted criticism in recent years on both welfare and biosecurity grounds. There is a range of alternatives that allows a transaction to be completed before the animals leave their original holding. These include electronic auctions (usually organised by the auction companies) where bids are made on the basis of photographs displayed on screens, either at a specific venue or over the Internet. This allows the sold animals to be transferred directly to the new owner's farm, avoiding potentially dangerous and stressful interactions at the mart. This represents a good compromise, providing an unambiguous mechanism for establishing the sale value of animals, based on competitive bidding but minimizing disease risks.

Private Sales: Animals can also be sold directly to another farmer. Direct negotiation between two private parties does risk errors in pricing of livestock, which may unfairly advantage one side or the other. Help can be obtained from a number of sources in determining fair prices for a particular class of livestock (farming press, breed societies, marketing groups, auction marts) and neither buyer or seller have to commit to anything until they are satisfied with the deal. In especially sensitive or important negotiations the services of a professional valuer can be obtained. Most of the uncertainties in valuing animals will concern pedigree breeding stock.

Advertising: Sellers of livestock who wish to negotiate private deals, thus avoiding paying the auctioneer's commission, usually advertise their animals in classified sections of the general farming press (e.g. Farmers Weekly, Farmers Guardian) or specialist journals (e.g. Organic Farmer, the Ark). A number of Internet based services are also available for advertising livestock electronically (e.g. www.ecolots.co.uk, breed society websites, www.soilassociation.org/organicmarketplace). It is helpful in these situations, if the facility being used allows it, to display a picture of the animals.

Agents: Specialist agents provide livestock selling services in which they actively collate lists of animals available for sale, matching them with enquiries received from potential buyers. Commission is paid by the seller based upon sale price. Such agents regularly advertise their services in the classified pages of the general farming press. Since the FMD crisis a number of livestock marts also maintain registers of stock for sale and wanted.

Repeat transactions: Once a satisfactory deal has been negotiated between two parties it may be appropriate to discuss possibilities for future transactions if similar numbers and types of animals are likely to be produced on a regular basis. This degree of organisation and structure can benefit both sides in allowing more effective planning of their systems, reduction of costs (i.e. no commission to pay), improved bio-security and enhanced operational efficiency.

2.1.2. Selling Finished Animals

Finishing: Finishing is the term given to the particular management routines that will ensure that the animals reach their optimum size and ‘condition’ for slaughter. The finishing system can vary tremendously, with the animals being kept either indoors on a high quality silage / cereal diet or outside on good quality pasture.

Summer finishing: Such pasture is most readily available in early summer when the grass is actively growing and again in the autumn once hay meadow or silage aftermaths have grown back. The best grazing will usually be found where the soils are deeper and more fertile.

Winter finishing: Finishing animals in winter, once grass growth has stopped and pasture quality has declined, is usually done indoors, feeding them a diet of high quality silage and concentrates. Such facilities are expensive to establish and run and require a high volume of output to provide a realistic financial return on the capital investment. Furthermore it may be more difficult to attract a premium for the final product on the basis of conservation gains delivered by such systems.

Finishing hardy breeds: Some producers have developed extensive outdoor systems for finishing the hardier, thriftier breeds of native livestock. Well grown, extensively reared animals will continue to put on condition in winter in an outdoor setting provided they are given an adequate diet. Hay, for example, can be fed on the field, ideally on the same meadows from which it was cut, so that all the nutrients are recycled. If the hay is in small bales it can be spread throughout the field so that the animals do not destroy the vegetation by excessive poaching. Hay usually only has a moderate feed value and would normally (<u>but not always</u>) need some supplementing with concentrates to lift the nutritional content of the diet to a level that allows the animals to lay down sufficient muscle and fat cover. This system has obvious potential for conservation grazing systems that have access to hay meadows and / or pasture for production of winter forage.

Live-weight sales: Finished livestock can be sold live through an auction mart; the fatstock sales are usually held on particular days each week. The animals will normally be purchased by a meat wholesaler and transported onwards to a slaughterhouse for killing and processing so that the meat can be sold on to the retailers after initial breakdown of the carcase. Sometimes, live animals will be bought at the mart by a local butcher who prefers to source ‘on the hoof’. The bids are made on the basis of the animals’ appearance and weight, this last assessed by putting them over a weigh bridge.

Dead-weight sales: With the decline in numbers of livestock marts, an increasing proportion of finished livestock are now being sold ‘deadweight’. Here the farmer takes animals straight to the abattoir and is paid by the processor according to the size and quality of the carcase. Often the intended destination for the carcase will have already been agreed before the animal arrives at the abattoir, if an agent or buyers group is involved. In such cases a professional fieldsman will visit the farm of origin to view the live animals and select the ones that are suitable for the particular outlets he is seeking to supply.

Hygiene: Abattoirs will only accept clean animals for slaughter to minimise the risk of contaminating the carcase with faecal matter. Animals coming straight off the field are usually clean, although the tail area can be soiled with loose faeces if the grass is lush. This is fairly easily removed in most cases using clippers or dagging shears and further problems can be minimised by providing the animals with a diet of hay for 24 hrs prior to going for slaughter. Animals finished indoors may be very dirty and cleaning them is more difficult (and dangerous in the case of cattle!) Ensuring that stock being finished indoors are well bedded every day with clean straw, or wood shavings will help prevent such problems.

2.1.3. Retaining Animals for Retail Sales

Direct sales to public: An increasing proportion of farmers are selling the meat from their livestock directly to the public through a variety of means usually involving off-farm facilities, on a contract basis, to slaughter and butcher the animals. In these cases the farmer has to be able to judge when the animals they are rearing will provide the kind of carcase that will best meet the demands of their own customers.

Minimising stress at slaughter: Although welfare of all slaughter animals is a priority, extra care needs to be taken with animals that are destined for direct sales. Careful handling in the final loading, transport and slaughtering stages will help to ensure that the taste and texture of the meat are not impaired by physiological processes associated with the stress of handling. Stress causes biochemical changes within

the muscle tissue that adversely affects its quality, making it tougher and less attractive visually. Take care to ensure that the animals remain calm and comfortable throughout the final stages of their lives.
Handling routines: It is helpful if the animals are already accustomed to the routines needed for transporting them to the abattoir and for this distance to be as short as possible. It is particularly helpful if they can travel in the company of others from their normal social group. Loading procedures need to be well planned and practised, ideally taking time to put the selected animals through a dummy run a short while in advance of the actual journey. Most livestock that have been involved in conservation grazing will have been transported regularly between sites and will probably be less susceptible to the stresses that transport can generate, provided that their previous experiences have not been traumatic. Some producers will take the animals to the abattoir themselves to supervise handling to minimise stress and aim to avoid long journey times.

Delivery to abattoirs: The pressure of having to meet the abattoir's delivery deadline can act against welfare of the animals; late arrivals can be turned away. It is essential to allow sufficient time for dealing with unexpected problems if the handler(s) is / are to remain calm in any unforeseen crisis. Any anxiety or aggression evident in the handler's behaviour resulting from the need to meet deadlines will add considerably to the stress experienced by the animals. It is advisable for animals that need to be loaded early in the morning to be penned overnight to remove the added stress and uncertainty of gathering them from the field.

Abattoir routines: Some abattoirs request that stock be delivered early in the morning whilst others prefer to receive stock in the afternoon so that they can be rested overnight in the 'lairage' before being killed first thing next day. Opinion is divided about which is kindest for the animals as it often takes some time for them to adapt to their new surroundings although they may benefit from the chance to rest and recuperate after the journey. Each producer will have to decide what suits their animals best on the basis of the length of journey and the lairage facilities provided by the abattoir in question. It is helpful for the producer to have visited the abattoir previously so they are familiar with the routines for unloading and penning newly arrived animals.

Maintaining supplies – lamb: Continuity of supply can be a serious problem for farms selling direct. Keeping regular customers supplied throughout the year is important if they are to remain loyal. Maintaining supply is particularly difficult in lamb production, which tends to be highly seasonal, especially in the more extensive grazing systems which predominate on grazing land of high wildlife value. It is possible to get round this by growing some lambs more slowly during their first winter, giving them fewer concentrates so that they finish as 'hoggets' in the spring and summer following their first birthday. Hogget is considered to be a tastier meat than lamb but its tougher texture makes it less valued by the wholesalers relative to new season lamb which begins to appear around Easter time. The texture of the meat can be greatly improved by hanging the carcase for 7 - 10 days after slaughter (2-3 weeks for beef). This needs to be organised in advance with the abattoir or butcher so they can plan their own storage needs. Remember that the longer a carcass is hung the more it will shrink causing some loss of product. All sheep older than one year (or with permanent incisor erupted) are subject to Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE) controls. This means extra work for the abattoir and results in higher charges to the producer.

Maintaining supplies – beef: Cattle will breed at any time of year, making it easier to organise a finishing programme that covers the whole year.

Over thirty months scheme: Over 30 month beef started to enter the food chain on 7th November 2005, in principle a massive step forward for the beef industry, however requirements are that:

- Abattoirs wanting to process older cattle for the food chain have to pass a 2 day trial conducted by the Meat Hygiene Service
- Older cattle are tested for BSE , and if cleared, carcasses can be processed the following day, but animals have to be slaughtered separately from other cattle, i.e. on separate production runs
- The Older Cattle Destruction Scheme (OCDS) for cattle born before 31st July, 1996 replaces the Over Thirty Months Scheme (OTMS) and pays compensation for animals
- Specified Risk Material regulations remain in place

Disposing of the whole carcass: It is important to consider where the less desirable cuts from a carcass will be sold, i.e. the hindquarter cuts will be more in demand and a surplus of less desirable cuts could easily build up; these can be turned in to mince or diced steak, or for those with the facilities used in pies, pasties etc.

Killing out percentage: A measure of the volume of carcass meat recovered from the live animal, typically in the region of 45 – 55%. Varies with breed, sex and to some degree, individuals.

Horns and skins: Skins, (whether dyed or naturally coloured) and horns can be sold for good prices: e.g. www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/by-prods/guidance/hides-skins.pdf

Case Study 3: Direct marketing of finished animals to staff and refectory - Lackham College, Wiltshire

The college beef system

- Only recently converted from milk production, now running Limousin suckler herd producing breeding animals and finished cattle at 18-24 months old at 600 – 650 liveweight, with carcasses 4L and below, with a killing out percentage of 60%. Also rearing Holstein calves under contract (paid £30 / head)

Direct marketing

- **Costs / recording**
    - They record:
        - Meat to bone ratio for carcass overall and for individual cuts e.g. brisket, fillet etc
        - Finishing time
        - Daily liveweight gain
        - Production costs
        - They also compare financial performance of bulls, heifers, and cross bred males and females (bulls can suffer a taste taint so will be phased out as a system)
    - *Majority* are *currently* sold to Southern Counties meat, via Blade for £2/kg (deadweight); any price above this is shared equally between Blade and the college
    - Some animals also go to a local independent butcher and are retailed to college staff and through the refectory, (aim is to increase this to four animals per week). Orders are taken by email before animals slaughtered so that they know if there will be a surplus of any particular cuts and measures can be taken accordingly, e.g. mince and stewing steak can be prepared by the butcher instead of producing unwanted cuts that will be surplus to requirements
    - Charge for slaughter, butchery and vacuum packing = £250 per animal
    - Average gross returns per animal are:
        - Bulls £1,697
        - Heifers £1,428
        - x bred males £1,309
        - x bred females £1,104

- **Return customers** – currently 250 from 1500 regularly buy:
    - Special offers to attract and retain customers.
    - Policy of total free replacement of meat if genuine complaints received.

- **Lower quality cuts?**
    - Mince is a good way to sell unwanted cuts – it sells well and is good for catering in the college.
    - Customer perception is key – diced meat sells, stewing steak doesn't…it's the same thing!

- **Practicalities**
    - Meat is delivered to the college where it is stored in a chilling room for pick up by staff.
    - Consistency of supply is key.
    - The individual butcher is important – their expertise, enthusiasm and skills vary!
    - Joint size is important – large animals produce large joints etc, which aren't popular with customers.
    - Meat is vacuum packed, labelled and sold in Lackham College Limousin plastic bag.
    - College lamb is also sold.

- **Future developments:**
    - Farm shop.
    - Increased proportion of finished stock sold direct.
    - Establishment of similar system using a native breed.

Contact:

Lackham College

2.1.4. Cull or Worn-out Animals

Old age: All breeding livestock will reach an age where they are no longer viable, due to infertility, disease or other infirmity. Even non-breeding animals kept for grazing conservation land will eventually wear out and become unable to maintain themselves, although they will probably continue for rather longer than ones that have to breed every year. The difference in value between the outgoing culls and their incoming replacements represents an ongoing cost termed 'herd/flock depreciation' which will be spread over the lifetime of the animals concerned (e.g. 3-4 years for a bull).

Sheep culls: It is normal for breeding sheep to remain in the flock for 4-6 years, and most flockmasters will need to recruit about 20% of the total flock numbers as new replacements each year. This means that 20 ewes out of every 100 will be 'culled' annually by being sold, usually through an auction mart but sometimes directly to the processor/wholesaler abattoirs.

Halal sales: Some animals will be used for Halal meat – consider the welfare issues associated with this.

Goat sales: Goats are a minority red-meat species, of no value to the main processors although around cities with ethnic populations they may be in demand from Halal communities. It should be borne in mind that animals being sold this way will normally be subject to ritual slaughter that requires that they are not stunned prior to being killed.

Dairy culls: Dairy cows may only last three to four years in the herd, because of the intensity of most milk production systems. This means that 25-33 cows will be culled each year from a herd of 100.

Suckler culls: Suckler cows usually last longer than dairy cows, anything between 6-10 years, depending on breed and system so that normally 10-15 replacements will be needed each year to maintain a herd of 100. Bulls can remain fertile for 10 years or more but are usually removed from the herd after three years once their own daughters are being recruited.

Cattle Rendering: Since 1996, cull cows and bulls born before 31st July, 1996 have not been able to enter the food chain because of the threat of BSE and have all been slaughtered in special facilities where the carcasses are rendered down into meat and bone meal (MBM). Through the OCDS the government pays compensation for these cull cows (360 Euros per head in 2006).

Marketing: The cash value of worn-out cattle has significantly declined since the OTM ban was introduced. Opportunities for securing income from marketing them as meat will now need to be fully exploited. The meat from these animals would normally enter the processing chain for conversion into manufactured foods, an outlet that used to generate significant income prior to OTMS. This 'processing beef' is now sourced from overseas and regaining the domestic market may not be easy although meat from extensive systems could have some marketing advantage wherever its provenance can be assured

Direct sales, e.g. Mutton: Farmers who retail their meat directly to the public have often been able to develop specialist markets for cull stock by promoting their distinctive eating qualities. Many animals that are no longer fit for breeding are still able to put on condition and produce a carcase with plenty of meat on it. If the carcase is stored and butchered appropriately it will yield some very tasty cuts of meat, often much sought after by older members of the community, many of whom can remember when mutton, for example, was readily available. Further processing such as curing and/or smoking the meat can succeed in securing significant extra value. Cow beef could enjoy something of a renaissance if treated similarly.

2.2. Processing

2.2.1. Carcass Quality

Finishing targets: The precise finishing targets for cattle and sheep will depend on the ultimate destinations of the retail product but the following guidelines usually apply for the supermarket and general catering trades:

Class of Livestock	Size Range (kg liveweight)	Size Range (kg deadweight)	Conformation	Fat Class
Lambs	30-40	15-20	R grade (or better)	3
Beef cattle	450-650	240-350	R grade (or better)	4L

Table 3: N.B. For explanation see text below

Size: Experienced stockpersons can assess this sufficiently well by eye, given the fairly wide range of tolerance in the specifications. Weighing machines are available for both sheep and cattle, working on a mechanical spring or electronically, but can be expensive to buy and cumbersome to use. For cattle, the Dalton 'Weightape' provides a cheap and serviceable alternative. It is a plastic measuring tape that, when pulled tightly round the animal's chest will provide an estimate of its live and deadweights with 5-10% accuracy.

Conformation: The shape of the carcase determines its value once it has been butchered into saleable meat. This is scored according to the European classification system based on five grades:

Increasing fatness

	1	2	3L	3H	4L	4H	5
E							
U							
R							
O							
P							

Table 4: Carcase condition and conformation (the O score is further subdivided into O+ and O-). EUROP measures the conformation grade.

Conformation is visually assessed by an accredited 'grader' who inspects the hung carcase after slaughter for the depth of flesh around the haunches and loins. The more popular continental breeds of cattle and sheep will regularly gain E and U grades whilst the native breeds will usually achieve lower scores. Conformation is mainly determined by breed genetics but the rate of growth and its continuity can also affect the outcome.

Condition: Fat is regarded as a waste product for most meat retail outlets and over-fat carcases are heavily penalised, although a certain minimum covering is important for achieving taste and cookability. Fat cover, or 'condition', is scored on a scale of 0 (no fat) to 5 (grossly fat), with grades 3 and 4 subdivided into 'light' and 'heavy' subcategories (L and H).

Condition Assessment: This can be made in live animals by feeling the depth of flesh covering the loin bones (section of the spine behind the last rib and in front of the hip bone) or the vertebrae at the base of the tail. These checks need to be done on a regular basis to ensure that the animals finish with the optimum grade, usually 3 or 4L. This is particularly important with lambs where the fleece impairs visual monitoring; weekly gathering of the flock and condition scoring by manual handling is advisable when lambs are being finished at grass in the autumn to ensure that they do not get too fat.

Specialist retail outlets: Some retail outlets have different carcase specifications to the usual ones outlined above. Butchers accredited with the RBST's Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme (TBMMS) for example, may have less exacting requirements in terms of size and conformation although they may demand a higher degree of finish (fat cover). This could present problems for animals finished under extensive conservation grazing regimes where the lower nutritional value of unimproved pasture reduces the ability to lay down fat.

Planning: It is therefore essential to know in advance where and how the finished animal is going to be sold so that it can be utilised as soon as it is ready. Any delay risks animals becoming over-fat and losing value, whilst at the same time incurring extra feeding and labour costs; conversely marketing too early means they will be thin and undersized.

2.2.2. Abattoirs

Decline in abattoirs: The number of abattoirs is decreasing year on year but those remaining tend to be the larger plants with higher throughputs of animals. In 2000/01 there were 290 abattoirs slaughtering cattle and 310 slaughtering sheep (over the last 15 years 1,000 abattoirs have closed). Industry experts expect this trend to continue with the small and medium sized abattoirs continuing to disappear. It seems that there are a few small abattoirs being built specifically to provide slaughtering as a service to the smaller and more specialised producer rather than as commercially viable operations in their own right. Two new abattoirs opened in 2002 and others are occasionally proposed (e.g. Isle of Wight and Penrith in Cumbria). For comprehensive information on all aspects of the meat food chain: www.mlc.org.uk

Locating abattoirs: A list of registered abattoirs is held by the Food Standards Agency: www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/meat/meatplantsprems/meatpremlicence. Contact the Soil Association (www.soilassociation.org) for organically certified abattoirs (meat cannot be sold as organic unless it has been slaughtered and processed at premises that have a current organic certificate).

Humane operations: It is the stockperson's responsibility to their animals to ensure that slaughter is made as humane and stress-free as possible. There is a duty of care upon each handler to satisfy themselves that the procedures at the abattoir are appropriate for the animals that they are consigning into their care. Whilst all abattoirs are subject to official veterinary inspection on a daily basis there can be variation in the quality and efficiency of operation, depending on the experience and attitude of the staff and the design of the facilities. Any concerns for the welfare of livestock should be raised with abattoir officials or the veterinary inspector.

2.3. Retail Sales

2.3.1. Supermarkets

Large supermarkets: A few large supermarkets dominate the retail sector which between them control over 70% of the fresh meat trade. Over half of the beef cattle and lambs entering the UK food chain are moved directly to fewer than 100 major abattoirs (i.e. less than one third of the total) that concentrate on servicing the supermarkets.

Supermarket contracts: Whilst there are many benefits of winning a contract with a major supermarket, such as the volume and regular supply, there are also downsides including meeting the exact standards set down, getting locked into a pricing structure, distribution to central distribution points, having to use the supermarket's abattoir or approved suppliers for feed, etc. There are, however, signs that supermarkets are reviewing this stance and it will be advisable to watch for any new strategy developing.

Supermarket labels: For some time the major supermarkets have concentrated on developing their own-label quality brands, (e.g. Tesco's *Finest)* sourced through their dedicated supply chains working to very exacting specifications. Supermarkets like Waitrose have initiated their own breed and provenance schemes through, for example, the Hereford Cattle Society: www.herefordcattle.org/beefscheme.php

Local sourcing: A survey by CPRE (Council for Protection of Rural England) questioned 10 supermarket chains about their policy on local foods - all appeared to recognise local food as a sector with potential and most said they wanted to increase the amount of local food they sold. Some had strategies setting out how they expected to achieve increased levels of local food sourcing, for others this was just a general wish.

(NB: CPRE has challenged supermarkets to recognise a definition of a local food as one where the main ingredient has been grown and processed within 30 miles of the store, and to set a target for sourcing 5% of their food lines as 'local food' and to aim for 5% of sales to be 'local food' by 2005). Contact: www.cpre.org.uk

i. Both Waitrose and the Co-op have a dedicated local sourcing manager who develops the retailers range
ii. Booths, a regional supermarket, with outlets throughout NW England, sources 25% of its range from the four counties in which it operates

iii. Somerfield is trying to differentiate itself through regional sourcing policies, it is testing some local meat supply chains in particular geographic areas, including for Cotswold lamb sourced from the Cotswold sheep group
iv. Safeway has launched a branded Scottish Blackface lamb product to sit alongside Welsh Mountain lamb, English lamb, West Country lamb and Northumberland lamb. This is a classic case of what the supermarkets call 'local', which at best, only has regional provenance

Centralised buying: The main reasons why the supermarkets are not doing more to boost local products are the more efficient logistics of centralised buying and distribution and a perceived lack of consumer demand.

Producers clubs: Supermarkets have taken the initiative of setting up 'producer clubs' in conjunction with their main abattoir suppliers, as for example, Sainsbury and ABP have done, Waitrose and Chittys. These clubs comprise groups of farmers, usually the larger units, who are prepared to contract their production to a specific processor in return for a secure outlet, often with a small price premium.

2.3.2. Retail Butchers

Contract butchers: High capital costs will be incurred if setting up a dedicated cutting plant that meets all the regulations so using a butcher to provide these services on a contract basis will usually be more cost-efficient, at least initially. Care should be taken in selecting a contract butcher as the quality of service they provide will be a key determinant of the success of the direct meat sales, and they vary! There might, in particular, be conflicts between the needs of their own business and yours; most retail butchers will prefer to give priority to their own customers and the quality of the work done for you may suffer at busy times, like Christmas. The relationship depends on trust and good communication so it is worth discussing your needs in some detail well in advance of the work. You should make all your requirements clear, preferably writing them down. These should include time for hanging the carcase, style of butchery, specific cuts and preparations, packaging, labelling, expected yields, and charging scales. If possible you should contact other users of any potential contract butchers to help assess the standard of service. You can assess their level of professional expertise from the quality of the produce on sale in their own shop.

Q Guild of Butchers: The number of high street butchers' shops has been declining and it is estimated that there are about 8,000 butchers currently. The Q Guild of Butchers represents the UK's independent butchers, who voluntarily submit their businesses to annual independent inspections for quality assurance purposes. The Guild is committed to sourcing from local producers: www.guildofqbutchers.com/about.html.

Other accredited butchers: The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST): www.rbst.org.uk/rare-breeds-meat/accredited.php and the organic movement have lists of accredited butchers.

2.3.3. Food Service Sector

Sector value: The catering or food service industry is a large component of the meat market, taking more than 25% of all meat sales. The sector is made up of restaurants, of which there were over 25,000 outlets serving over 680 million meals, and contract catering where 1.5 billion meals were served in 2001 (source: Food Service Intelligence). Buyers at the wholesale / processing end of the market are usually looking for the cheapest suppliers whilst at the top end, for the independent caterers, quality and taste are important and only the best cuts of the carcass are usually required. This may make it more difficult to get a fair return on cheaper cuts.

Restaurants: These can be divided into independents and the big chains (e.g. TGI Fridays). The independent trade offers some scope for accepting local products and this is demonstrated in one of the case studies described in this publication. The chains of restaurants operate a central buying policy and price, volume and consistency of supply tend to be the key factors. Unfortunately restaurant trends and wants can be faddish and buying policies inconsistent, which can be difficult for those looking for regular outlets. They will also tend to want the better quality cuts from the animal, thus producers can be left with excess lower quality cuts to sell.

Public procurement: Within the public sector catering, the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, is backing plans to make schools, hospitals and local councils spend more on British food. Exact targets have not yet been announced but negotiations are already under way. Don Curry, who leads the implementation group for Food Sustainability said 'Work on setting targets for the amount of home-produced food used by local authorities in meals in schools, hospitals, and local government offices has already begun'. Mr Blair has also made the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit available to help monitor the progress towards achieving the targets.

Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming maintain a public procurement news round up: www.sustainweb.org.

Organic food: Government policy is to encourage public sector caterers to offer more organic food on their menus. The aim is that organic food availability in canteens corresponds with its sales in the retail sector.

2.3.4. Direct Sales (Farmer / Producer selling direct to the Public)

Direct sales: If selling directly to private customers, it will take time and investment to build up the business and gain regular customers. It is important to make contact with the local authority environmental health, planning and trading standards inspectors (www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/) at an early stage in planning a direct sales enterprise to avoid costly mistakes in setting up the operation.

If a database of customers names and addresses is to be kept knowledge and awareness of the Data Protection Act is required. There is a new Distant Selling Directive in place for Internet and Direct Mail sales. This gives protection to consumers who shop by telephone, mail order or via the Internet or digital television:

i. Right to receive clear information about goods and services before deciding to buy
ii. Confirmation of this information in writing
iii. Cooling off period of seven working days - consumer can withdraw from contract
iv. Protection from credit card fraud

For more information: www.dti.gov.uk/

The beef labelling regulations

Since 1 September 2000, all meat offered for sale must be labelled with certain compulsory information and since 1997 any other claims made about the origin, characteristics or production methods of the beef must be approved under the Beef Labelling Scheme. The following information is sourced from Defra's 'Beef Labelling Guide':

The compulsory information that must be provided is:

1. A reference number or code to provide traceability back to the animal slaughtered.
2 The country(ies) in which the animal was born and raised (required since 1/1/02).
3 The country in which the animal was slaughtered and the abattoir licence number.
4 The country in which the carcass was cut and the cutting plant licence number.

Other claims that require approval under the Beef Labelling Scheme include:

• The region where the animal was born and reared
• The breed or cross breed
• The age or gender of animal
• The method of production (e.g. organic, farm assured, grass-fed)
• The method or length of maturation

The Beef Labelling Scheme is administered by Defra. Members of the scheme must pay one of the five approved verification bodies (who are themselves certified under European Standard EN 45011) to inspect their claims annually.

Types of information that do not require approval include:

• The name of the product or cut (e.g. brisket)
• Instructions for use (e.g. cooking instructions)
• The name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller
• Statements in accordance with the carcass classification grid
• EU protected food names (PDO and PGI) which are subject to their own regulations

See www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/regulat/forms/Livestock_schemes/bovineschemes/bL1.pdf

A series of leaflets *Selling BEEF, PORK, LAMB direct to the Customer* are available from the Meat and Livestock Commission (MLC): www.mlc.org.uk (the information includes packaging for direct sales)

Method of Direct Selling	*Description*	*Benefits*	*Areas to Watch*
1. Farm Gate/ Farm Shop	Farm shops may be situated on any type of farm; they can vary from a simple roadside stall to the prestigious Chatsworth Farm Shop	• Direct contact with customers; understand their wants and needs in order to improve the quality of product offered • Environmental benefits; cut down on food miles as customers are local • No middle man; offer competitive pricing for customers without affecting profit margin - hopefully will improve it! • Helps to sustain other local food chain businesses such as abattoirs and butchers • Farm Retail Association is a central body set up to help farm shops	• Finding a nearby abattoir may prove to be difficult • If butchering on site, considerable investment is required for cold storage equipment and premises suitable for cutting and packing • Charges made by abattoirs and butchers need to be factored into the cost structure, (e.g. £120-300 per beast)
2. Farmers' Markets	"A Farmers' Market is one in which farmers, growers or producers from a defined local area are present in person to sell their own produce, direct to the public. All products sold should have been grown, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, baked or smoked or processed by the stallholder" (source: National Association of Farmers' Markets, NAFM)	• Direct contact with customers; understand their wants and needs in order to improve the quality of the offer • Environmental benefits; cut down on food miles as customers are local • No middle man; offer competitive pricing for customers without affecting profit margin - hopefully will improve it! • Helps to sustain other local food chain businesses such as abattoirs and butchers • Training is available via 'f3 The Foundation' for Local Food Initiatives	• Extra costs and time involved by the primary producer for selling at Farmers Markets (which may threaten the business if the extra income is not sufficient) • Need to develop selling skills and knowledge of how best to display produce to entice customer purchasing • Whole carcase issues - how to sell the less popular cuts of meat (may need other options to provide longer term flexibility of supply e.g. frozen meat)
3. Internet/ Direct Mail Sales	Direct Mail or Sales via the Internet relies on building long lasting relationships with the customer through quality, value and service	• You are master of your own destiny! • Easily integrates with other direct sales initiatives without significant extra capital • Successful trading is based on: ease of ordering; range offered; price; delivery costs; speed and quality of delivery; payment method and overall transaction experience; quality of product	• Costs of recruiting your customers, advertising your website • Whole carcase issues, how do you sell the less popular cuts of meat • Slow build up of sales as the word spreads and customers return • Continuous supply - ensure that you can supply throughout the year • Legislation that you need to be aware of is the Data protection Act and the Distant Selling directive • Setting up a secure handling and banking over the Internet can be expensive • Select your courier service with care

4. Product Directories: www.bigbarn.co.uk; www.tasteof england.co.uk; f3 - the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives (www.localfood.org.uk/), has compiled a database of current local produce directories and contact details)	Local food directories or product directories are listings, whether in booklet form or on the Internet of local produce available, generally, direct from the producer. Directories offer consumers the chance to find out about the local food producers in their area	• Often an inexpensive way of advertising • The Forest Food Directory in Glos. reported an increase in turnover for the businesses listed of up to 25% in one year (source: Local Food Works - Local Food Directories)	• Establish the costs and any inclusion criteria for entry before committing • Establish clear objectives • Ensure funding and sponsorship is available for the whole directory to ensure enough copies are printed and distributed
5. Food Co-operatives	A food co-operative is a group of consumers, usually in a localised area, who want to obtain good quality, healthy food at the lowest price and get together to take advantage of combining their buying power in bulk	• Regular demand with a minimum order size	• Establish a minimum order size • Agree the delivery location
6. Box Schemes	Today over 300 box schemes deliver organic produce in a box or bag either direct to customers or to community distribution points. At the moment it is mainly horticultural products but many are diversifying into meat products	• Reliable outlets with regular repeat orders • Good contact with customers to help respond to their needs and build trading relationships	• Must be well organised • Delivering direct is expensive and time-consuming
7. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)	"A partnership between farmers and consumers where the responsibilities and rewards of farming are shared" (The Soil Association). Although the financial arrangements vary the main principle is based on the customer purchasing an advance stake in the farming business in return for an agreed share of the produce	• CSA gives farmers and growers the fairest and most reliable return on their products, often in advance, easing cash-flow concerns • Growers and farmers receive a guaranteed market for their produce, saving time and effort in looking for outlets • The grower is part of the community	• No two CSA schemes are the same • The relationship is a two-way one which demands solid commitments from the farmer as well, particularly in maintaining quality and continuity of supply • The relationship is usually underpinned by providing some regular access to the farm premises for the stakeholders

Case Study 4 - Walsingham Estate farm shop

Introduction

- Part funded by Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme, the Estate have established a farm shop and direct sales operation that is a partnership with estate tenants and farmers in Norfolk. They also have a fish and chip shop, bakery, restaurant and delivery service
- A few key investors put capital in to the scheme and own it, and producers / suppliers pay to become shareholders; once the operation becomes profitable, the main investors are paid back and everyone who is a partner profit shares
- The aim is to recoup some of the net cumulative profit in the food chain which is 15%; retailers get 12% leaving 3% to be shared between primary producers, abattoirs, wholesalers, distributors etc!
- Initially the estate will pay about a 10% premium for products

Principles behind establishing a direct marketing business

- Abandon the idea of producing commodities, we are producing and selling food now; don't accept commodity prices
- Aim for quality, not quantity
- The site must be convenient to your customers, i.e. will they come? The setting can be important; having nice surroundings presents an image, and other activities can bring people in

Selling options

- Internet
- Mail order
- Farmers markets
- Catalogues / distributors
- Box schemes

Create your own identity – brand

- Indirect sales? No, as you lose control… retailer always want to put their brand on the product

What resources does the business have?

- Brand: What can you sell? E.g. wildlife, personality, local food, local economy, etc
- Production resources, i.e. grow the right product in the right soils, climate, etc
- People – their skills, passions and abilities
- New projects and enterprises that might develop, not just food
- Physical assets, e.g. visitors, access, education, etc

Personal skills

- You need to like people; if you don't, employ someone who does!
- Need to be passionate about what you are doing

Opportunities

- Collaboration with other farmers and organisations, partnerships (not just with neighbours) and joint ventures
- Co-ops… unwieldy but good for groups with clear, simple objectives, e.g. Made in Norfolk, buying groups, grain marketing, etc

Economics

- Funding only arrives if you demonstrate a need (i.e. the business needs it to be viable) but you shouldn't set something up that needs funding! In reality though often it's just start up capital costs that are needed to pump prime a new venture
- Remember indirect income, e.g. the new business might not be massively profitable on its own, but it might employ people locally, bring customers to other attractions or services that are offered and could secure viability of tenants who can then pay their rents!

Other notes

- If you are the only shop in a village, then you might get concessionary business rates as an 'essential' service
- All shop staff will visit the producers so that they can answer simple questions from customers

Contact:

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A local grazing scheme - key questions to ask yourself when considering direct marketing

General

- Who are we trying to benefit?
- Which sector of business – wholesale, catering or retail (added value direct or via shop)?
- Who are the customers?
- Who is presently supplying them?

Market information

- What do our customers want – specification-wise can you supply?
- Carcass or cuts?
- Religious slaughter?
- Livestock specification – sex, breed, weight, fat colour, assurance details / organic?
- What are the unique selling points of your product? Can you differentiate your product from others?
- Why should customers change suppliers? What can you offer that is different or assures them of your skills?
- Continuity and consistency of supply

Management

- Who will manage cash flow and the supply chain?
- Who will sort out the logistics?
- Who will manage the problems?
- How will you price your livestock – live weight or deadweight?
- How will you market and promote the product – is there a budget available?

Local facilities

- Where are your local abattoirs?
- Do they contract kill and deliver?
- Can they EUROP grade cattle?
- What are their killing, hanging and packaging costs?

Returns

- What margin do you want to have?
- Cost of production+ processing +? %

Funding

- Do you require local or national grant funding to establish this supply chain?
- Who will be the applicant? How?

Next Steps

- Full Costings – information gathering
- Identify market needs and preference to changing
- Identify a project leader (managerial, physical and financial)
- Make a Business Plan to consider the sustainable costs of management with or without funding support

Contact
Produced by Dan Weston, Rural Regeneration Cumbria: www.**ruralcumbria**.co.uk

3. Essentials for Successful Marketing

This chapter looks at the marketing required to sell to the end customer and is based loosely on marketing theory, using the Five Principles of Marketing, namely:

- **Person** (Section 3.1) including market research
- **Place** (Section 3.2)
- **Price** (Section 3.3)
- **Promotion** (Section 3.4)
- **Positioning** (Section 3.5)

Overview of the National Meat Market

It is important to consider the key consumer influences and purchasing trends impacting on the market place when considering a marketing scheme. The market place for meat is a dynamic one, so it is essential for anyone involved in any aspect of the marketing process to keep in touch with what is going on. There are a lot of new local marketing initiatives starting across the country, so doing some initial research and talking to others might save time in the long term. Facilitating this process is one of GAP's core aims. Managing the countryside, tourism, food and farming are all high on the rural agenda. It is essential for new players to talk with other stakeholders to find and share the common agenda and agree a joint strategy for its delivery. Value-added products must primarily meet the prime consumer expectations of freshness, quality and value for money if they are to succeed.

The Five Principles of Marketing

3.1. Person

The person in question here is the customer who is hopefully going to buy the product. The dictionary definition of a customer is "someone who buys". In reality customers are far from straightforward, they can be demanding, discerning and very astute. In this fast-changing world customers' needs and attitudes are constantly changing in line with their dynamic lifestyles. The successful businesses are those who work hard to understand their customers better and adapt their product offering to meet their needs.

Market Research is the process of acquiring information that can improve your understanding of the customer or market in which you desire to operate. It is usually paid for but need not cost the earth; there is a lot of market research already available, much of it free of charge.

3.1.1. Market Information and Trends

There are research agencies who specialise in providing particular market information, for example, Mintel (a leading Market Research Company): www.mintel.com/frontpage/ but the reports they produce can be expensive. Alternatively, the MLC provides generalised information related to meat and meat products free on the website of the Red Meat Industry Forum (RMIF): www.redmeatindustryforum.org.uk . It provides accurate, up to date information on the market, in-depth analysis of trends and insights into consumer preferences and buying habits.

Sources of more specific market information are also available. The Soil Association and The Rare Breeds Survival Trust both offer information relating to their particular areas of interest. *The Grocer Magazine*, whilst not free, can provide up-to-date news and useful facts and figures about the general meat retail sector.

3.1.2. Previous Feasibility Work

Interest in the practicalities of starting up regional / local branding schemes appears to be increasing at all levels of government and society. The best starting point for investigating such schemes is a feasibility study - if you know of an existing scheme, ask for information direct.

3.1.3. Demographics and Lifestyles

It is useful to identify your target customer precisely, so that you can improve the focus of any marketing effort according to their particular preferences and habits. Knowing what cultural values you are hoping to appeal to helps in identifying those aspects of the product that can be most effectively promoted. MLC has recently completed some Cluster Group Analysis, (market research questionnaire responses which are classified into 10 distinct 'stereotypes' of meat consumers compared with traditional demographic information) to provide a better understanding of what motivates the meat consumer. For instance, 'The Roasting Ramblers' are characterised by their preference for roasting joints; 'Convenience with Kids' is the largest cluster of consumers, composed typically of younger households with medium sized families where convenience is key.

Other potential sources of information about customer likes and dislikes include:

- Food from Britain: www.foodfrombritain.co.uk
- The Consumers Association: www.which.co.uk/
- Institute of Grocery Distribution (www.igd.com) recently commissioned a study to find out what consumers most wanted to know about meat production. Their top 5 questions were:

a) Are animals fed or injected with anything?
b) What are animals fed to make them grow faster?
c) For how long and in what conditions are live animals transported?
d) What hygiene standards exist?
e) What sort of living conditions do animals have?

3.1.4. Geography

Geographical methods of market research classify and cluster customers by their postcode, which is vital if distributing leaflets or other mail to advertise or promote your products. One example is ACORN, which stands for A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods. There are 1.7 million postcodes in the UK with the average postcode being shared by around 14 or 15 addresses. The basic idea is that streets of broadly similar people are grouped together into 17 groups which, in turn, contain 54 'typical' ACORN neighbourhood categories. These classifications have been developed using more than 250 pieces of information drawn from the National Census and various market research and lifestyle databases. To have a dedicated piece of research undertaken could be extremely expensive but there are websites which use the same classifications as ACORN like the 'upmystreet' website to help plan your local marketing campaign.

These include:

- Neighbourhood searches like www.upmystreet.com, which includes an ACORN profile
- Neighbourhood statistics, based upon electoral register information e.g. www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
- Local authorities provide a lot of information by ward, for example: how many company directors there are in a given area?

3.2. Place

The point at which the product is sold to the customer. Methods of distributing the product to the target consumer need to be identified and costed. The choices (shown below) have already been described in section 3:

i. Supermarkets
ii. Independent grocers / speciality shops
iii. Butchers (independent or wholesale)
iv. Catering industry (independent or processors)
v. Farm gate, farm shop and farmers' markets
vi. Box schemes
vii. Direct mail / Internet
viii. Community supported schemes
ix. Co-operatives

x. Public procurement contracts

3.3. Price

Any successful marketing strategy aims to restore much more control of price to the supplier as opposed to the forces of the market. Working out the right pricing strategy needs to be a combination of:

i. Working out your costs in setting up and running the operation plus adding a mark-up which represents the profit that is needed to sustain the business and the livelihood/s of its operator (s)
ii. Reviewing what the customer is willing to pay by checking out the existing competition
iii. Assessing prices for other similar products (e.g. direct survey of other retail outlets from published sources) and adjusting your own accordingly

Direct and hidden costs: As well as the obvious direct costs (buying and rearing the animals for wholesale markets, plus slaughtering and butchering charges, packaging and labelling, storage and transport of the products for selling meat directly to the consumer) make sure that the hidden costs are accounted for as well, including: all salaries plus National Insurance Contributions, car expenses, telephone expenses, office costs and overheads, marketing materials like website design, point of sale and other publicity materials, advertising, packaging, accountancy, audits, consultancy charges, rent and rates, insurance, including public liability.

Sourcing pricing information: Price is a fundamental issue in determining marketing success, particularly in these times of 'cheap food'. For wholesale outlets, the market prices for livestock, sold live- and deadweight are available on a weekly basis from a wide range of sources, (farming press, local press, MLC). These sources seldom reflect the prices for specialist products such as organics or rare breeds; here the premiums are usually more stable from week to week and averaged deadweight prices (£ / kg DW) can be sourced from the RBST (www.rbst.org.uk) or the Soil Association, based on a standard carcass quality. For direct sales, the MLC publish weekly statistics for the average retail prices of the different types of meat, broken down into the principle saleable cuts and these can provide a useful benchmark against which to assess the viability of any proposed new venture. They can be obtained directly from MLC or via the business pages of Farmers Weekly.

3.4. Promotion

In order to be successful it is essential that the product stands out to the target customer. Sometimes it is being in the right place at the right time, e.g. the producers who were selected to be part of the BBC TV's Rick Stein's Local Food Heroes. More often it is a well planned and costed promotion that will achieve results.

Public Relations (PR): Defined by the Institute of Public Relations "as the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics". PR is about ensuring the target customer becomes aware of your product, perhaps through articles / features in the local or national press. The down side of PR is that whilst a lot of time and effort may be put into sending out Press Releases, or getting to know journalists, there is no guarantee that your story will be covered, and the publication might change the angle of the story to suit their needs. Most local news outlets are keen to support local initiatives, particularly if there is an environmental or wildlife theme. Joining forces with conservation organisations promoting nature reserves and grazing might be a good way to publicise the products from these sites.

Advertising: Advertising design and media space can be expensive but *you* manage the message. It is advisable to try and include some form of evaluation within the advertisement to measure its impact. This could be in the form of a coupon or by presenting the advertisement at point of purchase. For major advertising campaigns some form of market research is used to track pre- and post-awareness of the product.

Listings in Directories: 'f3' - the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives have compiled a list of Product Directories and who to contact: For example www.BigBarn.co.uk, www.organicsa2z.com and www.ecolots.co.uk

Point of Sale (POS): One third of shoppers make up their minds once inside the store, which is why things like recipe cards and leaflets work so well. 'White & Wild' milk has successfully used volunteers to carry out tastings in the stores where it is stocked and to hand out promotional material. The producer selling at a farmers market is well placed to present their products well and encourage repeat custom. NB: it is vital that where added value products are being marketed, all involved in the chain of production, and especially the person who ultimately

deals with the customer (for example the waiter in the restaurant), knows about and believes in that product, i.e. they can answer questions and be enthusiastic about it!
Food Fairs, **County Shows and Exhibitions:** These, for example the Good Food Show or the Country Living Fair, can be expensive but are well established and are an easy way to reach a large number of your target customers in one hit. The stands (and costs) may be shared with another organisation or business. The smaller agricultural shows offer cheaper and more localised venues. Details can be obtained from the Local Tourist Board, county Agricultural Society or food group: www.foodlinks-uk.org

Celebrity Endorsements / Listings: These are valuable if they can be achieved. Rick Stein, Delia Smith, Henrietta Green are all celebrities who value local, specialist suppliers. The use of English Nature’s logo on bat friendly milk is a specific example of an endorsement of a product that is known to benefit nature conservation.

3.5. Positioning

Trying to differentiate your products and develop a unique selling proposition (USP) to command an added value premium is perhaps the hardest task of all. The obvious way to differentiate a product is through:

i. Geographical provenance of the product
ii. Product quality, including maturity, fat content, taste
iii. Animal welfare standards, e.g. RSPCA Freedom Foods
iv. Assurance scheme recognition e.g. FABBL
v. Method of production, e.g. organic
vi. Type of breed
vii. Environmental benefits, e.g. grazing an SSSI
viii. Food miles
ix. Health benefits, e.g. grass fed as opposed to cereal fed beef is higher in Vitamin E and Omega 3 fatty acids
x. Personality of producer

FOOD MILES DISPLAYED ON ALL PRODUCTS IN A FARM SHOP

All of the above can be adopted by others who wish to take your market share so it is important to have clearly understood criteria against which to assess the particular benefits being claimed. Consumers can, for example, have considerable confidence in organic produce because the system of production has a statutory basis established by the EC. Similarly, the role of the RSPCA in inspection of farm animal welfare gives great credibility to the Freedom Foods brand. Such well established systems of quality assurance carry great integrity with customers and farms entitled to use the appropriate logo on their produce or display the relevant certificates will enjoy a strong initial advantage over any competing products. Having attracted the consumers attention and gained their confidence in the product, it is important to retain their loyalty especially when being sold alongside competing products.

These marketing processes will all be helped if the product has a strong identity. The best ‘differentiator’ is through developing your own unique brand that is immediately recognized and reinforces key messages about the product’s identity and origin. Interbrand’s (www.interbrand.com) defines a brand as “a mixture of tangible and intangible attributes symbolised in a trademark which if properly managed creates influence and generates value.”

In a study of successful brands the three features they had in common were:
i. Clarity
ii. Consistency
iii. Leadership

A registered trade mark: is a sign, logo, or word which has been registered by a company so that it cannot be used by other companies in relation to certain goods and / or services. In other words, it protects your company against others who may try to profit from your reputation or brand, by providing you with the exclusive right to use the word or logo that is the subject of the Trade Mark (TM). A registered TM is one which has successfully passed through the formal process of registration and has been entered onto the Trade Marks Register. A typical UK registration can take six to nine months before registration is granted and may cost £700-800.

The best process is likely to be:

i. Finalise and agree your logo and name
ii. Appoint a solicitor with expertise in trade marks (can be through the web e.g. www.trademarksolicitors.biz)
iii. Solicitors confirm which classes you want to register under (Class 29 is for meat, fish, poultry and game, Class 31 for agricultural and forestry products) and will undertake "a search" to see if there are any products already using your name or that have a similar logo
iv. If all clear the solicitors will register your name and logo and after confirmation of registration you will be able to use TM against your logo

E.U. Protection of Food Names: Criteria for the PDO, PGI and TSG designations

Since 1993, foods can be registered under specific names that are protected from imitation throughout the EU. There are three types of protected designation: according to origins (PDO), geographical indications (PGI) or specific character of the foods in question (TSG). The application process is lengthy and complex but research indicates that products bearing the designations have a significant market advantage because of the customer's preference for foods with local / regional identity.

a.) PDO – Protected Designation of Origin for products closely associated with the area whose name they bear

To be eligible to use a protected designation of origin (PDO), a product must meet two conditions, as defined in the European Commission's Guide to Community Regulations (August 2004, 2nd edition):

- The quality or characteristics of the product must be essentially or exclusively due to the particular geographical environment of the place of origin; the geographical environment is taken to include inherent natural and human factors, such as climate, soil quality, and local know-how
- The production and processing of the raw materials, up to the stage of the finished product, must take place in the defined geographical area whose name the product bears

Examples: Orkney Beef and Lamb, Cornish Clotted Cream and Stilton Blue Cheese.

b.) PGI – Protected Geographical Indication

This designation is less strict than the PDO - the link may consist simply in the reputation of the product, if it is owed to its geographical origin. In this case, the actual characteristics of the product are not the determining factor for registration; it is enough for the name of the product to enjoy an individual reputation based specifically on its origin at the time the application for registration is lodged. To be eligible to use a product, the following conditions must be met:

- It must have been produced in the geographical area whose name it bears. Unlike the protected designation of origin, it is sufficient that only one of the stages of production has taken place in the defined area. For example, the raw materials used in production may have come from another region
- There must also be a link between the product and the area which gives its name. However, this feature need not be, as in the case of the PDO, essential or exclusive, but it allows a more flexible objective link. It is sufficient that a specific quality, reputation or other characteristic be attributable to the geographical origin

Examples: Scotch beef, Newcastle brown ale, Exmoor Blue cheese.

c.) TSG - Traditional Speciality Guaranteed

The TSG designation is open to products that have a traditional name or a name established by custom that is specific to the feature or set of features that distinguishes them from other similar products. The product must either be produced using traditional raw materials, or be characterised by a traditional composition or a mode of production and/or processing that reflects a traditional type of production and / or processing. Names registered for a TSG must be specific or express the characteristic of the product (e.g. corn fed chicken). The name must not be misleading about the food's specific features.

Because a TSG is of a general nature, it is possible for products with a TSG to make a subsequent application for a PDO/PGI. Taking the example of a TSG for corn fed chicken, it would be possible to also have a PDO or PGI for Hampshire Corn Fed Chicken if this met the PDO or PGI criteria.

Examples: Traditional farm fresh turkeys

Other points

A name cannot be registered for a PDO or PGI if a similar **Trademark** already exists which, because of its reputation and renown or the length of time it has been used, might lead to confusion as to the true identity of the product.
All the designations require a precise product **specification.** This must include information about the method of production including the origin, nature and characteristics of the raw materials. Historical evidence linking the product to the geographical area or to substantiate the specific character of the product will also be required.
More information on the scheme is available on the Defra website or the European Commission's (www.europea.eu.int/comm/agriculture/foodqual/quali1-en.htm)

United Biscuits who own ‘Penguin’ biscuits successfully stopped Asda from launching an identical product called ‘Puffin’ because of their Trade Mark Registration. Cornish Yarg is now registered and will be able to stop any of the large cheese producers from manufacturing a similar cheese.

Many conservation organisations have brands that are well known to the general public and are uniquely associated with their activities and aims (e.g. the National Trust, RSPB). Whilst these could provide a useful association with which to help new ventures to establish themselves, the conservation organisations are likely to be reluctant to offer such direct endorsement. This is in case there is any customer dissatisfaction with the product or service which could reflect badly on the host organisation and could result in the loss of membership and support.

Developing and maintaining the brand are critical to the success of the product. Very often resources are limited but the development of the brand is one where professional advice can be usefully employed. Once the brand is launched it must be carefully managed since any changes to the product can lead to changes in perception of the brand by customers and a possible loss of customer loyalty.

EU state aid rules

European Union state aid rules place strict requirements on Governments and their agencies and authorities to notify the European Commission about publicly funded or controlled assistance to businesses. This is to ensure a ‘level playing field’ so that trade between EU Member States is not distorted and businesses and consumers in other regions are not disadvantaged. This is particularly important in the agricultural sector because of the wide range of measures that are already in place through the Common Agricultural Policy to provide a common platform for the trade in agricultural products.

An agricultural state aid can be defined as assistance from public sector bodies relating to the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products. In this context, ‘production’ can be taken to include all land management activities that involve the keeping of farmed livestock or the growing of crops (as defined in Annex 1 to the treaty establishing the European Community). With regard to ‘processing’, for the activity to be agricultural under official definitions, the product at the end of processing must remain an 'agricultural product' as defined in Annex 1 to the Treaty.

‘Marketing’ is defined as placing agricultural products on the market and includes promotion of products to consumers and other buyers.

The generic promotion of agricultural products is a particularly sensitive issue and is currently excluded from the simplified notification procedures available through block exemptions of agricultural state aids to the European Commission. Furthermore, the EC guidelines for the advertising of agricultural products (EC 2001/C 252/03) make clear that state funding may not be used to promote sales of products solely on the basis of their origin in the region where they are produced, but can be promoted in other regions (since this seeks to open up trade between regions and reduce barriers). In this respect, adding locally distinctive quality criteria (such as those reflecting local landscape characteristics) make it more likely that approval would be given for state aided support.

<u>Case Study 5 – Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, Conservation grazing products from Blakehill Farm nature reserve</u>

Paul Hill, grazing manager of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is overseeing the largest neutral grassland restoration project in England at Blakehill Farm (whilst also managing several other high biodiversity holdings and sites for the Trust), a LEAF demonstration unit and within a Countryside Stewardship Scheme agreement. Paul manages three new suckler herds – Luing, Belted Galloway and Beef Shorthorn, with the financial performance of each monitored. Key objectives of the project include the marketing of finished animals through a box scheme and involving the farming community in collaborative grazing and marketing work (to demonstrate that this is an economically and environmentally viable option for them).

a.) Marketing Professionally - Peter Staff, (Chairman of Xograph Imaging Systems Ltd) is helping Paul to market beef from Blakehill farm as Blakehill Fine Foods ('Sustainable conservation together with food production – respecting the environment as well as the animal').

Just a few reasons to do marketing (Marketing isn't selling!)

- To get a new message, design or way of doing things across to existing customers (or stakeholders)
- To get your product or service in front of new customers
- To change the focus of your business
- To generally 'kick start' enthusiasm or generate awareness or renewed interest

There are several key things to do and think about before you start to sell the product:

- Marketing needs planning, preparation and specialist advice…fail to plan, plan to fail
- Ask questions – who are the opposition (already doing it) and what / how are they selling?
- To be successful you need a passion to be the best and attention to detail from field to fork
- Direct marketing offers a product to a select, discerning and loyal customer, <u>not</u> everybody
- You have to integrate stock production and marketing with the nature reserve objectives

Objectives for Blakehill Farm:

- Develop a viable commercial enterprise without the subsidy of Countryside Stewardship or Single Payment Scheme money; this will need to achieve the sale of 500 boxes per annum within 5 to 6 years (currently sell about 50)!
- To build a top class brand with high standards and a loyal customer base
- To respect the environment and animal welfare (paramount importance)
- To work together with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and neighbouring landowners
- To demonstrate to others
- Keep message to customers simple

So the farm needed a growth plan; market themselves first (i.e. what is Blakehill farm, why is it important ecologically, why are animals grazed, how are they cared for? etc), <u>then</u> followed by marketing of the product (many producers finish their animals and then put up a meat for sale sign – will this be successful in the long-term? Will it build customer loyalty once the initial enthusiasm wanes?)

The marketing strategy

- Design in success (design out failure!)…keep it simple?
- Start simply with a phased approach…thus you can make mistakes without too much riding on it, and you avoid customer disappoint and maintain the support of your employers and anyone else involved, e.g. butchers
- Maintain a professional attitude to all things…remember passion to be the best selling point together with attention to detail
- Quality of the product and customer satisfaction are paramount…the customer is king
- Economic and practical sustainability is key as this will facilitate the ***Growth plan***

Growth Plan - Building the brand

What do we want Blakehill to mean to our customers? (and thus they will keep coming back for more)

- Blakehill = a quality product at fair prices… *need consistency and not cheap food*
- Blakehill = the animal has been treated with respect for its complete life cycle… *customers can come and see the animals and meet staff and volunteers, see the reserve*
- Blakehill = the customer comes first… need to develop the trust of our customers – *if customers have a problem then it will be dealt with*

What about the future?

- More of the same with planned long term growth
- Must continue to be sustainable
- Want to increase the level of customer satisfaction
- Need a better distribution process
- More information: packaging / leaflets / recipes
- Need to set up systems (checklists) to enable continuity and ease of management

b.) Finishing and marketing stock at Blakehill Farm

Cattle herds - Three breeds: all easy calving and thrifty

Luing (highland x shorthorn): hardy good frame and finisher.

Belted Galloway - hardy, best meat to bone ratio, slower maturing

Beef Shorthorn - hardy, fast finisher

- All suckler herds are costed and performance monitored and animals are on a grass only diet (grazing and hay)
- Stock kept outside all year round (healthier and produces less FYM. The farm is within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone which limits amounts that can be spread and the timing of application)
- Target date for financial sustainability for the grazing system / reserve is 5 years from start date, but farm income will not include agri-environment grant aid or Single Payment Scheme monies

Marketing

- All stock finished by 30 months and as early as possible (costs 96p / animal / day so the quicker the finish the better), e.g. Beef Shorthorn achieves 650+ kg liveweight at 20 – 24 months; Belted Galloway achieves 500 kg liveweight at 28 months; and Luing 500 kg at 25 months
- Breeding purebreds at present, but could run Simmental x Luing
- Tend to be O + 4 – R, but not too worried with this system, as the meat goes in to boxes, not conventional market
- Important to use a butcher who understands what you want and can deliver it… they vary!
- Paul always takes the animals to the abattoir himself, so that he knows that they are not being stressed, and visits the butcher afterwards
- Get 10 boxes per animal slaughtered, all individual cuts and joints are priced by the butcher
- Considering a cold store (£1,000) or on-farm butchery
- Bone to meat ratio is better in the Belted Galloway (i.e. more meat from the carcass), but the Beef Shorthorn is more profitable, as it finishes quicker (5 months +)
- In boxes, no differentiation is made between breeds
- Retains the Belted Galloway as better at taking coarser and rougher vegetation, so Paul uses them as pioneer / restoration grazers and follows with Luing and / or Shorthorns

4 Added value

4.1. Introduction

The expression ‘adding value’ can refer to almost any initiative that generates extra income for a business on sales of a given product. Here it is used more precisely to describe the financial benefits generated from a marketing scheme over and above the weekly average prices for cattle, sheep and milk listed in the pages of the farming press (e.g. *Farmers Weekly*). New ways are constantly being found of attracting premium prices for livestock products reflecting characteristics that specific groups of customers find desirable. The opportunities described here appear most relevant to the needs of the conservation grazing community generally.

4.2. Quality Assurance Schemes

Quality assurance is the process by which particular standards for the product of the system of production can be validated within the food chain. Its importance as a tool for creating confidence throughout the food chain has increased significantly in recent years. It has been driven forward by public concern over health issues (e.g. BSE), chemical residues and microbiological contamination in food as well as animal welfare and environmental impacts. A wide range of quality assurance schemes are now available for assessing and certifying farming systems and most of them attract farmer members because they can offer ‘added value’ in the shape of better prices or more secure outlets for the final products than are available to ‘unassured’ farms. These commercial benefits come from the extra confidence that the customer can then enjoy that the food being bought is safe, wholesome and ethically sound. The most significant and relevant of these schemes are described below:

4.2.1. Organic Farming

Organic farming is probably the most prominent food assurance scheme anywhere in the world. It is also unique amongst QA schemes in the EU in that its rules are defined under EU regulations (numbers 2092 / 91 and 1804 / 99). These rules, known as standards, have thus been harmonised amongst EU member states. Each country in the Union is responsible for implementing a system of inspection and certification that guarantees adherence to these common standards for all certified organic produce. Imported produce must also satisfy the same criteria of production before they can be presented for sale as organic.

The standards are a complex and detailed set of stipulations that together are designed to safeguard the principles of organic agriculture. They can be summarised as:

i. Striving to work in harmony with nature rather than seeking to dominate it
ii. Promoting biological cycles involving soil, plants and animals
iii. Protecting and encouraging natural features e.g. landscape, wildlife, particularly endangered species
iv. Avoiding pollution
v. Safeguarding animal welfare
vi. Having concern for wider ecological and social implications of the system of production

4.2.1.1. The Market

- During 2005, organic sales grew by 30% at almost £7 million a week and between 2004 and 2005, sales of organic products through the multiple retailers increased by 31% to £1.2 billion. It is estimated that 76% of all organic products purchased in the UK are brought through the multiple retailers
- Retail sales made through producer owned outlets, such as box schemes, mail order, shops and farmers markets, increased by approximately 11% to £125 million in 2005. Over the same period, retail sales of organic products through non-producer owned box schemes, mail order and shops increased by 38% to £259 million
- In 2005, the number of organic beef cattle slaughtered increased by 42%, lamb by 29%, and pigs by 20%
- Nearly one in three shoppers knowingly buys organic food, with four out of ten people buying organic food at least once a month

4.2.1.2. Marketing and Distribution

These usually follow the same basic supply chain as conventional foods.

Individual selling to processor or wholesaler increasingly on contract, often on an *ad hoc* basis. Prices are variable depending on the circumstances for the buyer and seller but would normally provide a premium.

Producer Groups (co-operative, farmer-led organisations) usually selling wholesale on a pre-arranged basis to particular outlets. The wholesaler is often prepared to pay extra for reliability and continuity of supply.

Direct sales to the consumer (e.g. farmers markets, mail-order sales). Usually on an individual product basis but sometimes offering a larger range of goods through formation of a wider retail network. The price obtained by selling meat directly is likely to be two or three times the price paid to the farmer by the processor for the equivalent carcass sold on a wholesale basis but has to cover additional costs such as slaughtering, butchering, packing, transportation, storage and handling.

Online sales As it has grown in popularity the internet has emerged as a viable and low-cost means of marketing produce from conservation grazing schemes. An example of this is www.riversidebeef.co.uk

Farm-farm sales (breeding and store animals). The standards require that all store animals being sold for organic finishing should be fully certified on their farm of origin. All animals going into the organic food chain need to have been born into an organic system. It is possible to convert non-organic breeding stock within a single breeding cycle but the dams themselves will never be eligible as organic meat. Premium prices for organic stores are much less reliable than for finished stock. The premiums for organic breeding stock are even less certain because many organic farms keep closed herds / flocks for health reasons and the standards still make some allowance for sourcing non-organic replacements. Advertising organic stock for sale can be through the Internet (www.soilassociation.org/organicmarketplace), specialist journals (Organic Farming), certification newsletters and the conventional farming press. Some auctioneers keep special registers of organic livestock for sale and wanted.

Auctions to date, these have been reserved for sales of store and breeding livestock and have been few in number. The standards do not allow finished livestock to enter the organic food chain through an auction mart.

4.2.1.3. Support

Government Action Plan: The Action Plan to develop organic food and farming in England was published in July 2002, and reviewed two years later (August 2004), aiming to help create a sustainable and competitive organic food and farming sector. The Welsh and Scottish Assemblies have also created their own proposals.

ORGANNRS: English Nature, the Elm Farm Research Centre (www.efrc.com) the Soil Association, have developed a targeted programme of assistance for nature conservation site managers who are considering organic conversion. This includes access to ORGANNRS, an email discussion group used to transfer knowledge and experience within a network of site managers who have already begun to explore the opportunities it represents for improving the sustainability of their management systems. Demonstration visits to organic or converting National Nature Reserves have been held and others. OCIS Advisers with specialist knowledge of conservation grazing systems, the implications of organic standards and marketing can carry out the free visits for reserve managers. Plans are afoot in Natural England to expand the scope of this discussion group to cover all aspects of sustainable land management on the NNR Estate in England. Further information from the GAP office.

Technical information: Most of the larger certifying bodies (e.g. The Soil Association) provide technical information, briefing sheets, policy updates, standards review and consultation, training and demonstration events through their respective producer services networks.

Organic Conversion Information Scheme (OCIS) (www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/convert/ocis.htm)**:** England: 0117 922 7707;Wales: 029 2082 5776;Scotland: 0131 244 4177; Northern Ireland: charlotte.moore@dardni.gov.uk (sheep and beef). In most cases publications, advisory visits and technical assessments of each farms' prospects for successfully converting are offered free of charge.

Help / Advice: Many certifying bodies provide help and advice in sourcing inputs and finding outlets for produce (e.g. www.soilassociation.org/organicmarketplace) to help producers to locate organic breeding and store stock. Organic Centre Wales: www.organic.aber.ac.uk

Case Study 6 - Public procurement and working with schools - Stephen Briggs, Abacus Organic Services Ltd and adviser to Ashlyns Organic Farms Ltd

Summarised from a presentation given by Stephen Briggs at GAP Economic Grazing Conference at Easton College on June 8th 2006

Ashlyns Organic Farm Ltd

- A 1,500 acre family-run organic farm in West Essex
- We work with nature, animals and people
- Lincoln Red Cows, Suffolk Sheep, pedigree Essex Pigs, Black Rock Free Range Chickens
- Shops


- *Aims & Achievements in the last 10 years (previously a cereal farm).*
    - Converted the farm to Organic production
    - Embraced Conservation: CSS, OELS, HLS
    - Developed alternate markets (Box Scheme, shops, schools, etc)
    - Developed a public food supply training and support model
    - Added value to farm products
    - Quality food to schools with enhanced awareness and skills of children, staff, governors, parents and teachers

1st Step - Define your Customers

- *Main focus* – schools in the Essex, London and Eastern region
- *Potential* – supply to private schools, care homes, nurseries, hospitals, prisons, government offices, etc
- *Longer term* – restaurants, businesses and the general public

Food to Schools – logistical challenges?

- Some schools don't have kitchens
- Continuity of supply is crucial – little mouths to feed every day
- 38 weeks per year only so need alternate markets for 14 wks per year
- Deliveries – 1 per day or 3 per wk – limited storage at schools & health / safety delivery issues
- All schools requirements delivered prior to 7am (all at same time!)
- Price is important but not making schools a dumping ground for poor quality

Some other challenges?

- Training kitchen, pack house, etc must be registered as a food premises
- Environmental Health and associated costs
- Equipment Costs & Maintenance Agreements
- High Level of Cleanliness
- High Level Pest Control
- Services / infrastructure – i.e. electricity, gas, etc
- Administration burden

How Can A School Afford To Do It?

- How can they NOT afford to do it!
- Take a phased approach
- Make parents aware of benefits
- Sourcing locally can be cheaper
- Increase in uptake will spread overheads
- Help plan school budgets
- Affordable contracts
- Typical a £1.70 meal will contain 70p for ingredients (and this is what the Ashlyns are aiming to get)

The Ashlyns' training kitchen

- Practical catering staff training within a typical school kitchen environment (training also at schools)… it was a cattle shed! It's booked for the next 18 months!
- Fresh local and organic produce
- Reconnect farm to fork - children learning where their food comes from - chicken is not a dinosaur!!!
- Connecting schools with the local economy
- Use the Soil Association, Food For Life standards
    - ***Food for Life project*** has set achievable goals in it's quest for better school meals
    - 30% organic, 50% local and 75% unprocessed
    - Ashlyns Organics has adopted these targets for the schools to work towards

- Senior Citizens and local citizenship.

Pupils in the community

Ashlyns will help schools adapt to future food standards:

Future Food-Based Standard Drivers

- Introduction of 9 food-based standards by September 2006

This means:-

- ✓ not less than 2 portions per day per child of fruit and vegetables
- ✓ oily fish on the menu at least once every three weeks
- ✓ no more than 2 deep fried products a week
- ✓ processed food - should not be reformed/reconstituted foods made from meat slurry

Future Food Based Standards

✓Bread without spread available unrestricted throughout lunch
✓No sweets and savoury snacks
✓No salt at the lunch table or at the service counter
✓The only drinks available should be water (still or fizzy) skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, pure fruit juice, yoghurt and milk drinks with less than 10% added sugar
✓Easy access to free fresh, chilled drinking water

Future Nutrient Based Standards

Case Study 7 - Ashlyns Growers and producers – linking production and supply

Summarised from a presentation given by Stephen Briggs at GAP Economic Grazing Conference at Easton College on June 8th 2006, and including excerpts from the AGAP website.

Ashlyns Growers And Producers (AGAP) is a farmer led co-operative supplying quality food from the Eastern region. From its centre at Ashlyns Organic Farm in Essex, it provides a range of foods from a carefully selected number of local & regional growers and producers. They offer a full range of products, both organic and conventional. AGAP provides its customers with quality controlled, fully traceable foods directly from the farm, opening up new markets to farmers and producers and giving them a fairer price for their produce.

HOW IT WORKS FOR THE FARMER / PRODUCER

Ashlyns Growers and Producers offer an alternative market for farmers, giving a fairer price, where they have a real stake in the enterprise rather than being at the mercy of the supermarkets. AGAP is run by an elected board for the benefit of its members. Growers and producers will not only get a fair price, but also a dividend at the end of each year.

HOW IT WORKS FOR THE CUSTOMER

Ashlyns Growers and Producers source their produce direct from the farmer or producer so that the customer knows where each and every product comes from. This also keeps the supply chain to a minimum, helping keep the price down, the produce fresher and food miles lower. AGAP is able to source a wide range of produce, thus enabling the customer to have a one-stop policy, saving both time and effort on ordering.

Investor-Owned Company

- Company limited by shares and run by a board of Directors
- A number of investors own AGAP , ('A' shareholders)
- Suppliers to AGAP are 'B' shareholders
- Each supplier purchases 1 x £1 'B' share which provides a mechanism to return a dividend (profit shares) back to them. The 'B' shareholding would not carry voting rights
- Supplier representation on AGAP board

Investor-Owned Company advantages

- Simplicity
- Transparency - price, profits, management
- Flexibility - in product sourcing and marketing

Operation & logistic Challenges

- Ashlyns packhouse
  - Storage, cleaning, grading, packing, distribution
  - Processing
- Chilled distribution & delivery
- Continuity and production programming
- Product and order management systems
- Distribution
- Personnel
  - Supply chain co-coordinator / manager
  - Administration
  - Food processing, packing, distribution

Continuity Distribution

- Seasonality emphasized to customers
- Require a range of production timing from suppliers
- Forecast of demand from school menus and continuity and production programming

Meat Supply Challenges

- Consistent Quality – producer variability?
- Producer supply programs – matching to market
- Front end versus Prime Cuts
- Meat needs slaughter, butchering, packing, storing, and delivering to meet customer requirements
- It would be no good turning up at school with 20 sides of beef!

Timescales & Milestones

- AGAP operational from March 2006
- Supply schools, public bodies, business, retailers and consumers from April 2006
- From April 2006 - supply to 67 schools, 11 care homes, 9 YHA and 1 hospital
- By March 2008 (end of year 2) supply to 127 schools, 11 care homes, 9 YHA & 1 hospital
- *Potential to supply many more schools, public bodies, business, retailers and consumers*

Timescales & Milestones

4.2.1.4. Certification Bodies

Under EC and UK law, foods can only be labelled as organic if they and their systems of production have been independently certified and inspected at every stage of the food chain. There are currently ten certifying bodies in the UK (www.defra.gov.uk/farm/organic/standards/certbodies/approved.htm). Each is approved, inspected and regulated by the Advisory Committee on Organic Standards together with an Organic Certification Committee, with executive functions passing to Defra. This allows the independent inspection bodies to continue to function much as previously; they are:

- The Soil Association – www.soilassociation.org.uk/certification
- Organic Farmers and Growers Ltd – www.organicfarmers.org.uk
- The Organic Food Federation – www.orgfoodfed.com
- Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association – www.biodynamic.org.uk/
- Irish Organic Farmers and Growers Association – iofga@eircom.ne
- The Scottish Organic Producers Association – www.sopa.org.uk
- Organic Trust Ltd – organic@iol.ie
- Cmi Certification – enquiries@cmicertification.com
- Quality Welsh Food Certification Ltd – mossj@wfsagri.net
- Ascisco Ltd – Dpeace@soilassociation.org

4.2.1.5. Costs

The inspection bodies all charge for their certification services. Usually there is an initial registration / membership fee followed by an annual charge for inspection / certification. It can be difficult to compare their costs, although each certifying body provides the same certification service, they all offer rather different charging structures and support packages. Certification costs amount to a significant sum and will need to be built into the overall business plan. Some inspection bodies such as The Soil Association offer a more economic group rate for several small producers within the same locality who can all be inspected together. Most organic products can command a premium price but this has to meet all additional expenditure. Besides certification charges, labour and machinery costs are frequently higher than on equivalent non- organic farms since organic systems depend more on mechanical and cultural methods of husbandry. Most organic inputs are significantly dearer but this is often offset by the lower rates of usage.

4.2.2 Assured Food Standards (AFS) - The Little Red Tractor Logo: www.redtractor.org.uk

The AFS is an umbrella organisation representing separate farm assurance schemes, (including assured British meat) that between them certify the full range of farm enterprises.

4.2.3. Farm Assured British Beef and Lamb (FABBL): www.fabbl.co.uk

FABBL is a non-profit-making organisation and is self financed. Membership of FABBL automatically secures the use of the Little Red Tractor Logo on products. The membership fee covers the cost of independent inspections (both routine and spot), costs of administration and membership paperwork, newsletters and other membership products. Currently the costs are £85.00 for a new member and £75 for a renewal.

4.2.4. The LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) Marque: www.leafuk.org/leaf

a) Launched in November 2002, Leaf marqued produce became available in shops during summer 2003. It is based on a philosophy of carefully matching farm inputs to meet the particular needs of the farm's circumstances in an attempt to maximise the agronomic effect and minimise environmental harm. It is based on an approach that has been developing since the early 1990s, termed Integrated Farm Management (IFM)
b) The arrival of the LEAF Marque enables farmers to demonstrate these environmental credentials to consumers
c) The LEAF Marque is additional and complementary to the farm assurance schemes that represent British Farm Standards
d) LEAF is liaising with other assurance schemes (e.g. FABBL) in sharing costs for the independent inspections to minimise costs for farmers requiring membership of more than one scheme.

4.2.5. Freedom Foods: www.freedomfood.co.uk

This is an independent, non-profit-making organisation set up by the RSPCA to improve farm animal welfare in the UK, covering meat, eggs and dairy products. The scheme currently has more than 3,000 members - farmers, hauliers and abattoirs, who are independently inspected by Freedom Food assessors to ascertain whether they meet the RSPCA's welfare standards. Each member must be re-inspected every year and the RSPCA also carries our random spot checks. Farmers cannot display the Freedom Food label on their products unless they use an accredited haulier and abattoir and all Freedom Foods are fully traceable. The standards set by Freedom foods are based on the 'Five Freedoms'. The costs are:

a) An annual fee of £107 which includes membership for 12 months, the assessment itself and the issuing of the certificate
b) A licence fee, currently 0.3% of the wholesale value, payable by retailers and caterers using the logo

4.2.6. EBLEX Quality Standard: www.eblex.org.uk

The English Beef and Lamb Executive established its Quality Standard in 2004 to provide the red meat industry (from producers to retailers) with a way of assuring the eating quality of their products. The scheme covers the whole food chain and each sector participating in the Quality Standard must already be assured by the appropriate baseline scheme (such as FABBL). The standards cover issues such as the age and type (whether males are castrated and females are prime) of animals at slaughter and hanging of carcasses before retail sale.

4.3. Provenance Assurance

Many customers make choices according to the origins of the food they buy based on its geographical or genetic provenance or both. Today, meat passes down a much longer chain of processing before it reaches the end consumer, often travelling well beyond the confines of its farm of origin. It is vital for its original identity to remain intact if it is to retain consumer confidence.

4.3.1. The Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme (TBMMS)

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) is an organisation dedicated to protecting Britain's native farm animals from extinction. Many of the breeds threatened by this are suitable for conservation grazing but have suffered from a perceived lack of commercially desirable attributes. The Trust has largely resolved this problem by establishing and developing the Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme which links breeders with approved finishing units. These units have the facilities and experience to convert young store animals into well finished specimens that meet the requirements of the accredited butchers who buy them. Customers are prepared to pay a premium retail price for 'rare breed' meat which is reflected in the higher wholesale prices paid to the finisher.

More information is available from: Tel: 01285 869666 E-mail: greatmeat@aol.com

4.3.2. Other Breeds Schemes

An increasing number of breed societies have become interested in trying to promote their breed as a brand following the success of the Aberdeen Angus in establishing a differentiated beef product that commands a premium price. One of the downsides is the clash that sometimes occurs between the values of the 'true' breed society members and the more commercial needs of developing a brand. Such differences became evident between the Cotswold Sheep Society and the procurement group, Cotswold Quality Lamb, who wanted to widen the remit to include any breed provided it had been reared in the Cotswolds. Some of the leading supermarkets have established schemes based on beef from cross-bred animals sired by a specific breed of bull:

a) Waitrose are working with the Hereford Cattle Society in delivering meat from pure and cross-bred Herefords in selected outlets. They also run the Waitrose Aberdeen Angus Beef Scheme where all producers must be registered members of the scheme, supplying under contract. As such they are subject to continually meeting a series of exacting quality and production controls

b) Marks and Spencer offer a similar scheme for Shorthorn Beef

4.3.3. Specially Selected Scotch Beef, Lamb and Pork

Meat bearing these logos has been produced under an assurance scheme approved by Quality Meat Scotland (QMS). Each part of the supply chain is governed by the standards set by QMS and are independently audited. QMS has taken the decision to begin the move towards ensuring that Scotch beef and lamb is 100% born, raised, and slaughtered in Scotland, having previously only required animals to be reared in Scotland for a minimum finishing period of 90 days. Most of the premium markets for 'Scotch' meat have been south of the border.

4.3.4. Regional and Local Schemes

The meaning of 'local': Local Food Works (a partnership between the Soil Association and The Countryside Agency) define Local Food as: "Food that is grown, harvested and traded all in one area. The production and processing of the food normally involves sustainable methods. All this brings health, economic and environmental and social benefits to the local area".

Flair (the Food and Local Agriculture Information Resource) led by f3, the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives, define local as: "Local means the shortest and simplest route from field to plate. In some cases a set distance defines this. In all cases it suggests a self contained local trading area, with close contact between all parties and few middlemen".

The local food sector remains under-developed with great potential for growth, evidenced by the interest that major supermarkets are now beginning to show in sourcing regional and local food. To date the local food sector has relied on the 'alternative' market of producers selling either directly to the customer or to the traditional independent high street outlets which have declined over recent years due to the rise of the major multiples.

Benefits: As well as the generic benefits of local food economies, the schemes to date have demonstrated the specific benefits of:

a) Reducing food miles and cutting down on costs, pollution (especially greenhouse gases) and traffic congestion
b) Building direct links between producers and consumers that will help create loyalty to the product and system of production
c) Enabling farmers to secure fairer returns from sales of their produce by shortening the supply chain
d) Providing events and activities that bring members of the community together which can foster a stronger local identity
e) Allowing greater access to fresh produce
f) Allowing farmers to control the quality of their produce to meet the needs of the customer whilst giving them greater job satisfaction and more control
g) Less packaging is often needed for food sold close to where it is produced than food that is transported a long distance
h) A regional food market may help to stop traditional products from disappearing

Making it Happen: (please refer to Chapter 4: The Essentials of Marketing)

a) Communication - take an inclusive approach from the start of the project. Bring all interested parties of the supply chain together to get their support and involvement; they will need to work strategically and to have a single voice and clear objectives. Effective communication is needed in order to build co-operation, a founding principle for the Local Grazing Scheme concept (GAP 2002). This will help to increases opportunities for collaborative production, processing, distribution, marketing and sales

b) Identify the market and market requirements - only through having a clear view of the target market and potential competitor products in the market can the best branding and marketing strategy be developed and maintained. A mistake made by some early local food initiatives has been to develop a scheme with the assumption that a market will automatically exist for the product - only to find this is not the case. The hard lesson to learn is that there are no new markets, the development of a new product or brand will be at the expense of an existing one

c) Make it commercially viable - prepare a business plan, including all costs and up front investment. Seek professional help e.g. Farm Business Advisory Service (FBAS): www.farmbusinessadvice.co.uk or Businesslink: www.businesslink.gov.uk, Farming Connect: www.wales.gov.uk/farmingconnect

d) Develop a strong brand image for the product focusing on tangible and intangible benefits - identify the specific quality criteria that will appeal to the target customer and assurance schemes that will validate them

e) Ensure the brand is adequately supported following the launch in both human and financial resource -Money needs to be set aside for ongoing promotion and advertising of the product as well as potentially developing line extensions or new products. Having the right person (with an array of talents) to lead / manage the development and growth of the initiative is equally crucial to the long term success of the scheme

Support and other advisory organisations:

a) f3 - the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives, is a not-for-profit organisation providing advisory services to help develop local food solutions: www.localfood.org.uk
b) English Food and Farming Partnerships gives advice on collaboration: www.effp.com
c) Community Supported Agriculture: www.soilassociation.org/web/sa/psweb.nsf/A4/community_supported_agriculture.html
d) Food Link organisations have emerged as a way of supporting the development and expansion of all aspects of the local food sector within their designated region (www.foodlinks-uk.org/index.asp
e) 'Tastes of…' Regional or county-based initiatives have developed through funding from Food from Britain as a way of raising awareness and promoting the region's local food and drink (www.tasteofengland.co.uk; www.regionalfoodanddrink.co.uk; www.foodfrombritain.com)
f) Farmers retail and markets association: www.farma.org.uk; www.farmshopping.com
g) National Federation of meat and food traders: www.nfmft.co.uk/index.html
h) National Association of Farmers Markets: www.farmersmarkets.net
i) Big Barn: www.bigbarn.co.uk
j) Local Food Web: www.localfoodweb.co.uk
k) Food Standards Agency: www.food.gov.uk
l) Graig Farm Organics: www.graigfarm.co.uk
m) Meat matters: www.meatmatters.com
n) The Consumer Gateway: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk
o) Farm Direct: www.farm-direct.co.uk
p) ADAS: www.adas.co.uk
q) Country Land and Business Association: www.cla.org.uk
r) Lantra: www.lantra.co.uk
s) National Beef Association: www.nationalbeefassociation.co.uk
t) National Farmers Union: www.nfu.org.uk
u) National Sheep Association: www.nationalsheep.org.uk
v) Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS): www.rics.org
w) Scottish Agricultural College: www.sac.ac.uk

Funding for Local Initiatives: fundraising is a specialist area – employ a consultant and work with other organisations! The Government state, in their Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food that they will assist small regional food producers to develop their markets by channelling additional financial support via Food from Britain, who will work closely with:

a) National Lottery: There is potential for grant aid for local food projects via national lottery grants as part of broader project applications: www.hlf.org.uk
b) The Regional Development Agencies (though at time of writing the final structure and administration of ERDP grants had not been finalised): www.englandsrdas.com/home.aspx
c) Businesslinks and Farming Connect in Wales can advise on sources of grant aid : www.businesslink.gov.uk; www.wales.gov.uk/farmingconnect
d) Web based grant searching sites – www.grantsnet.co.uk; www.grantscape.org.uk; www.grantsonline.org.uk; www.fundinginformation.org.uk
e) Esmee Fairbairn Foundation is a charitable trust and has funded several local food projects that support sustainable development - www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

4.4. Nature Conservation Brands

There is no general scheme or label which yet indicates that products are 'wildlife friendly'. However, a few of the national environmental charities are looking at this area and have launched some initiatives:

4.4.1. White & Wild - www.whiteandwild.co.uk

'Milk on the wild side', was launched by The Wildlife Trusts and Wild Care Dairy Group Ltd in April 2002. Currently, it is sold through J. Sainsbury, BP forecourts, Budgens and some Co-op outlets and costs 6p per litre more than normal milk; 3p of this premium goes to the farmer to help fund wildlife-friendly improvements on their land and 2p goes to the Wildlife Trusts. An organic variety is also available and has generated a particularly strong demand amongst customers in south-east England where it is available. To qualify for the White & Wild initiative, a farmer must draw up a wildlife action plan for their farm with the help of the local Wildlife Trust and an advisor from the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). They must put the plan into action using money from the marketing initiative. PLEASE NOTE: this scheme is no longer operational since 2006.

4.4.2 Ribena & The Wildlife Trusts
Since 2005 The Wildlife Trusts have had a partnership with Ribena's 41 blackcurrant growers throughout the UK. They have worked together to develop bespoke Biodiversity Action Plans for each farm to help native British Wildlife. Action taken includes the erection of bird and bat boxes, the creation of rough grass margins around fields and ponds and the sowing of wild bird seed mixtures. From January 2007 Ribena products will diplay the Wildlife Trusts logo in recognition of this partnership and of Ribena's pledge to wildlife friendly farming. For further information please visit www.ribena.co.uk or www.wildlifetrusts.org

4.4.3. 'Bird Friendly'
From the RSPB. Lamb is being sold from the Lake Vyrnwy Farm in Powys, run by the RSPB with partner and owner Severn Trent Water, as organic and bird friendly. RSPB is putting its name to the meat because it meets strict criteria where birds, like the black grouse, and Merlin, benefit from the moorland management. The lamb is being sold through Graig Farm Organics, a locally based company with links into the supermarket food chain. (See Case Study 1)

4.4.4. The National Trust
The National Trust opened its first purpose built farm shop in July 2002 at Wallington, Northumberland. The shop sells meat produced by Trust tenants, as well as other local foods. Other initiatives the National Trust are looking at include developing and promoting Herdwick sheep in Cumbria, Welsh Mountain Lamb in Snowdonia: www.heritagemeats.co.uk and www.hadrians-wall-beef-lamb.co.uk

4.5. Government Schemes
Currently there are a lot of changes within this sector and the best advice is to keep in touch with developments through the farming press or directly through the relevant websites. England: www.defra.gov.uk/erdp; Scotland: www.scotland.gov.uk; Wales: www.wefo.wales.gov.uk; N Ireland: www.dardni.gov.uk

4.5.1. Agri-environment Schemes (See also section 1.2.2. Agri-environment schemes)
Agri-environment schemes across the UK and the local and specialist meat markets can easily be made to complement each other by combining to add value in an entirely positive 'win-win' way. Conservation grazing systems that are able to benefit from both will be significantly better off financially than those that have access to just one source of added value.

Case study 8: **Limestone Country Beef – meat-marketing and agri-environment schemes working together**
The Limestone Country Project aims to protect and improve some of England's most important wildlife sites by promoting the re-introduction of native cattle breeds across the Malham and Ingleborough areas of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. One of the projects successes has been the development of a local brand for meat products – Limestone Country Beef. In order for the meat to qualify as Limestone Country Beef and benefit from promotion of the brand there are guidelines participating farms have to follow. For example: all participating farms have to be in an agri-environment scheme and cattle have to spend at least half their life on grazing land within agri-environment schemes in order for the meat to be marketed as 'Limestone Country'. For further information visit: www.limestone-country.org.uk

4.5.2. Rural Development Programme (See also section 1.2.3. Rural Development Programme)
In England, the new ERDP will bring support for various elements of added value food marketing. Axis 1, 3 and 4 will be administered by the Regional Development Agencies, Axis 2 by Natural England. The final details of implementation are yet to be finalised, so keep in touch with NE and the RDAs for more advice. Overall objectives are:

- Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by supporting restructuring, development and innovation
- Improving the environment and the countryside by supporting land management

- Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity

ERDP Axis 1: Agri-food economy – improving competitiveness:

- Knowledge transfer in the food chain.
- Innovation in the food chain.
- Quality production.
    - Facilitate innovation, access to research and development, new forms of co-operation
    - Improved integration in the food chain, new products, local marketing and raising global awareness of products
    - Uptake of information technology
    - Fostering dynamic entrepreneurship, development of skills
    - New outlets for added value products, training in the non-food sector, renewable energy
    - Improved environmental performance of farms and production (leading to efficiency gains)
    - Restructuring of the agricultural sector to improve competitiveness and environmental, social and economic sustainability, training and retraining
    - Young farmers, farmer retirements, farm relief, advisory and management services

Axis 2: Environment and land management:

- Protection of natural resources and cultural landscapes.
- Biodiversity, high nature value farming systems.
- Climate change.
- Integration with Natura 2000 network, commitments to reverse biodiversity declines by 2010, Kyoto protocol, Water Framework Directive.
    - Promoting environmental and animal friendly farming practices, e.g. for protection of soil and water
    - Preserving farmed (cultural) landscape of value for wildlife
    - Combating climate change
    - Support for organic farming
    - Linking and promoting environmental management with marketing of 'products' (food, tourism, business, training, community)
    - Using agri-environment measures to promote rural growth

Axis 3: Broader rural economy and population – quality of life and diversification:

- Improved infrastructure.
- Investment in human capital.
- Capacity building.
- Skills acquisition and organisation.
- Encouraging entrepreneurship.
- Job creation.
- Especially for young people and women.
    - Diversification both on farm and in wider rural sector (e.g. new micro-businesses)
    - Encouraging women in to the labour market
    - New micro-businesses
    - Training young people
    - Encouraging uptake of information technology, especially community initiatives / networks
    - Developing renewable energy sources
    - Tourism development and facilitation
    - New infrastructure, especially in the new member states
    - Improving local governance
    - Networking with other projects

Axis 4: Leader – local, bottom-up innovation

- Should help facilitate axes 1, 2 and 3.
- Improved governance.
- Facilitating the development potential that already exists in rural areas.
- Sustainability – competitiveness, environment and quality of life.
- Must build on Local Development Strategy building on local needs and strengths and integrating different sectors to help safeguard natural and cultural heritage, raise environmental awareness, invest and promote speciality products, tourism and renewable energy.
    - Building multi-sectoral co-operative local partnerships
    - Promoting public – private partnership and innovative approaches
    - Improving local governance

4.5.3. Other Initiatives - Tourism

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) demonstrated the importance of the rural area to the tourism market, estimate to be worth £13 billion. At the height of the outbreak losses from the countryside were estimated at £100 million per week due to the closure of the tourism industry.

In some countries, there are strong perceptual links between food, drink and cultural tourism. In France, Italy and Scotland, tourists closely integrate the experience of food and drink within the wider holiday experience. Local food and drink can play different roles in visitors' holiday experience ranging from 'gastro-tourism' at one end of the scale to the simple satisfaction of the physical need to eat and drink at the other.

- Research conducted by Enteleca Research & Consultancy Ltd on behalf of MAFF and the Countryside Agency (2001) concluded that there is a significant tourist market for local foods and meals based on local ingredients. Between 61- 69% of holiday makers and visitors to four researched regions recognised that food makes a positive contribution to their holiday/visit.
- An example of linking to tourism is 'Peak Eats' Ready Meals, where a heat and eat ready meals service is available for holiday cottage guests in the Peak District. The dishes are sourced as locally as possible and from environmentally sensitive farming methods. They are cooked locally and stocked in the freezer of the cottage owner or in nearby shops.
- According to the Countryside Agency there were 1,253 million day-visits to the English countryside in 1998. Grazing animals in conservation areas can be an attraction for these visitors for example, the indigenous, free-roaming ponies of the New Forest, Dartmoor and Exmoor. Once these visitors are in the area, the aim is to encourage them to try the local produce and to take some home, together with a mail order form. The National Trust is successfully achieving this with Herdwick lamb at Borrowdale

Case study 9 - tourism opportunities for local meat – linking grazing and tourism

Summary of a workshop run by the Countryside Agency as part of GAP Economic Grazing Conference at Easton College June 8th 2006

Lound Farm on Hickling Broad, owned by the Deane family since 1947, covers 360 acres of environmentally managed grazing marshes and arable land. Although this is still a working farm they no longer keep any cattle and the former milking parlour and dairy have beenconverted into high quality bed & breakfast accommodation – Dairy Barns. The farm is now part of the Farmstay network that provides accommodation nationwide. Due to a lack of cattle they, and other farms in the region, are now facing the problem of undergrazing and land owned by the farm is mechanically managed. There is an acute lack of local livestock and graziers. They also make high quality small bale hay which is sold locally to the equine market.

The East of England Grazing Group is working to raise awareness of undergrazing in this region and this workshop was designed by the Group to look at the ways in which grazing, and the wider landscape, can be linked together with a view to benefiting tourism and local meat producers.

A leaflet 'Let's Go' has been produced by the East of England Tourist board showing where they are linking days out by train with the grazed landscape of the Broads, here are some excerpts:

"*Plan a family day out at Marsh Farm country Park at South Woodham Ferrers, a good example of Essex grazing marshes. Sheep can be seen grazing on the sea walls and dykes during the summer months, helping to create a unique habitat for rare coastal plants, water beetles and the scarce emerald damselfly*".

"*Take a day out on the Lee Valley Line or on the Crouch Valley Line and see the landscape as you never could by car. Take a break for lunch and sample local produce coming from animals which may have been grazing the land you have just discovered*"

5. Further Case Studies

Case Study A: Severn Trent Water/RSPB, Lake Vyrnwy Farm, mid Wales

The Farm

The 11,250 acre farm is owned by Severn Trent Water and managed by the RSPB for the quality of its habitats and bird life (wheatears, ring ouzels, curlews and black grouse). It is managed in a commercial manner. The livestock are Welsh Black cattle and sheep - breeds vary but include Welsh Mountain sheep.

The Situation

Changes in farming techniques have caused serious declines in many farmland species (declines over 30 years - skylarks 75%, song thrushes 66% and grey partridges 78%). The RSPB has been keen to encourage widespread adoption of ‘wildlife friendly’ farming. This started ‘at home’ by increasing the area of grazed RSPB nature reserves registered as organic. Whilst the scale of food production from the nature reserves will never be great, ‘doing something’ can send important signals to farmers, policy makers and consumers. Lake Vyrnwy previously sold animals as ‘conventional’ stock through the local livestock market.

Adding Value

In conjunction with Severn Trent Water, the RSPB reviewed the possibility of using the RSPB logo on lamb from Lake Vyrnwy in order to reconnect more consumers with the countryside. The biggest risk to the RSPB is upsetting and losing its membership base, therefore market research was conducted amongst potential and actual members to explore the appeal of ‘wildlife friendly’ food and the impact of RSPB branding. A feasibility study was conducted by the GFA- RACE on how RSPB could enter the meat market. Findings suggested that the best way forward was through partnership with an existing player in the meat market. Graig Farm Organics was selected as they are a growing, local, organic food business who value the concept of ‘wildlife friendly’ farming. The lamb is promoted on the RSPB website with orders placed through the Graig Farm website.

Results To Date

- In the first year, 121 carcases have been sold against a target of 100
- Anticipated growth with increase of member awareness and meat purchases on internet
- Even if direct sales slower than expected, demand through the supermarkets as unbranded organic lamb will exist - an added value outlet but with less profit margin

Strengths

- The product is a link between the countryside (especially wild birds) and the food we eat.
- Working with an established partner who has established its distribution chain
- Working within the local economy, i.e. using the local abattoir

Downsides

- Volume of meat is limited - the scheme is unlikely to have massive impact on consumers
- Lake Vyrnwy cannot supply all year round - lack of continuity may mean some lost sales
- Severn-Trent have a huge customer database but sensitivity about the impact on their core business has inhibited active promotion

Key Message to Others

“Working with Graig Farm, an existing player in the meat market, enabled the RSPB to get this initiative off the ground”. Ian Baker, RSPB.

For more information please contact: Ian Baker / Hannah Bartram. Tel: 01767 680551
www.rspb.org.uk/supporting/shopping/food/organiclamb.asp

Case Study B: Chilterns Choice

The Site

The Chiltern Hills AONB covers 833 square kilometres. The area provides a living for over 200 farmers and about 100,000 people live in the region.

The Situation

The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) co-ordinates the conservation of the AONB. The Board consists of representatives from all tiers of local government plus organisations such as Countryside Agency, National Trust, RSPB and the Chiltern Society. The idea of Chilterns Choice has been driven by this board as a means of sustaining the chalk downland habitat. Livestock farmers used to sell their lamb at livestock auctions and beef farmers were either contracted to supply supermarket schemes e.g. Waitrose or sold directly to the abattoirs. The remaining butchers in the area used mainly to buy their meat from wholesalers like Mutch Meats at Witney. Only around 10% sourced animals direct from farms.

The Search for a Solution

CCB, supported by English Nature and the Countryside Agency's 'Eat the View', commissioned GFA-RACE to undertake a feasibility study to assess opportunities for operating a local meat marketing scheme. The study involved making contact with potential key stakeholders to establish the level of interest and to identify guidelines. The reaction from livestock farmers was enthusiastic: around 80% indicated they would be likely or very likely to join such a scheme. Specialist butchers in the region were also in favour with 50-60% indicating that they would be very likely or likely to buy meat, whilst 30% indicated that they would be willing to actively promote it. The response of local food service outlets to the concept was also positive with around 55-60% indicating that they would be likely buy the meat. One abattoir indicated a willingness to play an active role in developing the scheme.

The proposal was to establish a producers group, as an independent company - both English Nature and the Countryside Agency were prepared to invest 'share capital'. In the favoured scheme, countryside and environmental organisations would play a key role in establishing and lending credibility to the standards being applied in the production and marketing of the meat from the Chilterns scheme. Each participant has to agree to a Green Farm Plan, administered through FWAG, and they have to be a member of the Farm Assurance Scheme to verify compliance with the EU Codes of Good Farming Practice.

The Results

Chilterns Choice branded meat products were launched in Autumn 2002, there are currently 15 producers on board, using one abattoir and processing unit and selling through over six independent butchers. A 12% added premium to the retail price is currently being achieved.

Strengths

- The financial support of the Countryside Agency and English Nature
- Having the support of GFA-RACE to design the project

Downsides

Chilterns is a difficult area for finishing animals.

Message to others

"Don't make life too difficult - have simple, straightforward eligibility criteria for the producers to join the scheme". Simon Fisher, English Nature.

For more information contact: www.chilternschoice.co.uk Tel: 01296 614403

Case Study C: Whiteholme Farm, Cumbria

The Site

Whiteholme Farm, combined with the adjoining Low Luckens Farm, makes up a 90 ha upland organic holding recently taken on by Jon and Lynne Perkin, a young couple starting out as tenant farmers on their own. They have taken over a very demanding business with the majority of the produce being sold directly to members of the public, serving customers from all over the north of England. This clientele has been built up during the last 8 years by the farms owners, Mike and Ruth Downham, who have just retired from farming.

The Situation

Meat from the farm's herd of Galloway and Blue-grey cattle (a popular cross-bred cow produced by putting a White-bred Shorthorn bull on the Galloway cow) is sold, together with its own lamb and pork, partly as door step deliveries and partly at farmers markets. All of the animals are slaughtered locally and the bodies cut up in the farm's own cutting room by a butcher contracted in for the work. There is a large cold store in which the carcasses can be hung for up to three weeks to improve the taste and texture of the meat. As much as possible is sold fresh, although additional freezer space allows storage of short term surpluses if and when they occur.

The farm has thus taken control of its marketing in the most positive of ways helping to maximise the income generated. The downside of this however is that it does make considerable demands on the available resources. Manning stalls at farmers markets is particularly expensive in terms of time, time which could otherwise be spent managing the farm and enhancing operational aspects of the livestock system.

Search for a Solution

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) (Cultivating communities www.cuco.org.uk) offers an obvious solution to this problem in which the farm's customers are being offered a new deal in which they can opt to commit to buying from the farm on an ongoing basis, paying a pre-agreed amount each month by standing order and having regular door-step deliveries of meat that they have ordered in advance. This would give Jon and Lynne a much more secure financial future, knowing how much money would be coming into the business from month to month and getting it 'upfront' helping to minimise bank borrowings. The customers meanwhile are able to rely on regular supplies of all their preferred cuts of meat and can budget for it accordingly. Discrepancies in the money paid and the value of meat supplied would be made good after some mutually agreed time interval.

Benefits

These novel financial arrangements have much in common with stakeholder principles; the customers are purchasing an advance share in the farm's production and at the same time committing to supporting its wider environmental objectives They are encouraged to experience and enjoy these at first hand, with access to the farm's nature trail and invitations to various social events and open days.

The buildings at Low Luckens have been converted into an organic resource centre that Mike and Ruth manage as an educational facility and the whole unit belongs to the Soil Association demonstration farm network
Hitherto the farm's conservation aims have all been focused on the main holding where a Countryside Stewardship Agreement has helped to fund restoration of walls, hedges, ponds and field copses as well as new public access. The ancient woodlands in the river valleys are designated SSSI.

There can be little doubt that these wider environmental and social benefits add significantly to the farm's appeal and will play an important part in attracting stakeholders to the proposed CSA scheme.

Epilogue

A new conservation initiative linking Whiteholme with sustainable management of limestone grassland SAC in the Yorkshire Dales has recently been developed. Ingleborough NNR has large areas that require grazing by cattle in order to achieve favourable condition. Local graziers prefer to use sheep so English Nature have had to take the initiative by purchasing their own cattle. The project will be sourcing suitably hardy cattle from Whiteholme Farm, and 26 of their blue-grey and beef shorthorn heifers will be summering at Ingleborough, starting in 2003. English Nature will keep the animals for a couple of years during which time they will mature sufficiently to run with a bull. Once safely in calf they will be ready for sale, with Whiteholme Farm being given first pick, giving them the chance to buy back their own home-bred females to replace older, worn-out cows. Sending the best breeding replacements back to their farm of origin will benefit both parties by automatically ensuring that the fittest genotypes are retained within the system.

Negotiating the financial arrangements for securing these two-way transfers of stock need not generate any tension; a simple ‘price per kilogram of liveweight’ applied to both incoming and outgoing animals will benefit both parties equally, along ‘swings and roundabouts’ lines. This should make organising the annual transactions much more straightforward, convenient and reliable, helping to foster better understanding and co-operation between the individuals involved.

Successfully linking the Ingleborough NNR with an organic holding in this way does depend on being able to convert the new land so that the heifers retain their organic status for when they re-enter the breeding herd at Whiteholme. Planning for possible changes to the management of the land and the livestock and the impact that these may have on the achievement of favourable condition are, therefore, important prerequisites for successfully converting NNRs to organic standards.

An Organic NNRs network has been established by English Nature to assist with this process and can be contacted through the GAP office. The annual area-based payments from Defra’s Organic Farming Scheme will be important in helping to meet the significant costs of managing the grazing system specifically for nature conservation. Government sourced funding is a particular issue on English Nature-owned NNRs, where access to other agri-environment schemes is not allowed.

It is hoped that these special conservation benefits being achieved by cattle from Whiteholme can help attract more interest in the farm’s meat products.

For more information contact: Jon Perkin, Whiteholme Farm. Tel: 01697 748058
www.whiteholmefarm.co.uk

Case Study D: Bat Friendly Milk

The Site

The Watson family have farmed at Riverford Farm since 1951. A 350 hectare farm located in Devon, it gained full organic status in 1988 and the dairy herd was certified later, in 1995. In 1999 a purpose built micro milk processing plant was built on the farm. The Watson family have a mission to produce the food naturally and to sell the product locally, they give proper regard to animal welfare and use no artificial fertilisers, pesticides or GM crops.

The Situation

Organic management and the Watson's strong principles towards conservation provide an abundance of dung beetles - the main food source for an internationally important population of greater horseshoe bats which feed on the farm. This bat has declined in numbers by 99% during the 20th century, English Nature have identified five major maternity roosts in Devon.

Searching for a Solution

Using the Countryside Stewardship as the main funding mechanism English Nature worked with the farmers in the area by encouraging favourable management of the bat's feeding areas on agricultural land. Both parties agreed to the concept of promoting the partnership on the back of the milk cartons, which also helped raise awareness about the greater horseshoe's bat. Riverford Farm were pleased because it gave 'English Nature endorsement' to the farming methods undertaken on the farm; the promotion suited English Nature because of the increased awareness the milk cartons would bring for the bats, as well as the farm management Riverford were undertaking to benefit the bats and wildlife in general.

Results

Bat populations in Devon appear to be increasing and thriving at Riverford.

Strengths

- Easy and simple to administer; simple changes were made to the milk packaging
- Trusted organic 'brand' with interested customers and innovative producers
- Produced and sold locally - simple message connected to local landscape
- Highly 'visible' product with 7,500 cartons distributed per week, across Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Avon, Gloucestershire, Hampshire and London
- Extra publicity via farm's own website, local papers, Devon Life Magazine, Radio 4

Downsides

- Risk to English Nature's name and reputation if quality problems with the product. This is minimised by English Nature endorsement being restricted to providing wildlife information
- 'English Nature' is not a well known 'brand', so public awareness is likely to be very low, although the link to their website is given on the cartons
- Conservation message on the pack needs updating occasionally, at a small cost

Key Message for Others

The bat milk marketing initiative has been a great win-win situation for both Riverford Farm and English Nature. Both have gained good publicity from the exercise and other entrepreneurial farms have followed the example and included wildlife messages on their milk cartons. Consumers of organic foods are often well educated in terms of wildlife conservation and animal welfare; additional messages linking wildlife benefits with their local landscape have been well received.

Fore more information contact: Martin Longley, English Nature. Tel: 01392 889770
www.riverfordfarmshop.co.uk

Case Study E: Paul Coppen and Rules Restaurant

The Site

Paul has managed 67 hectares of upland in Barnard Castle, County Durham for just under 30 years. Starting as a 'lifestyle farmer', his full time career ended with early retirement in order to concentrate on running his beloved hill farm above the village of Gilmonby. The herd of Gilmonby 'Belties' graze the rambling moors that make up the border between North Yorks and County Durham. Paul established the 100 strong herd from six calves in 1987.

The Situation

Recently much of the farm has been registered with Defra's Countryside Stewardship Scheme, providing opportunities to increase the area of herb-rich meadows and pastures. With the cattle foraging outside for all or much of the year this scheme offers an incentive to continue maintaining and improving hedges and stone walls to create shelter for the stock. The grass-fed only herd have never been fed animal protein feed additives (i.e. meat and bone meal) so the risk of BSE is negligible. As a result, the herd has qualified for Defra's Beef Assurance Scheme - one of only 60 herds in the UK to be registered with this scheme.

Adding Value

The age of the cattle has important implications for meat quality. In former times, beef produced from our native breeds of cattle gained an international reputation for its excellence. Hardy breeds like the Galloway were matured slowly on a forage diet (mainly grass) and they were often four to five years of age before slaughter, followed by three to four weeks hanging. This combination of breed, maturity, system and treatment produces a beef dark in colour, incorporating thin marbling layers of fat and which imparts excellent cooking and eating qualities such as flavour, texture, succulence and tenderness.

Results

- Paul sells exclusively all he produces to the award winning Rules of Covent Garden. Rules is the oldest restaurant in London (1798) whose interior was described by John Betjeman as 'unique and irreplaceable, a part of literary and theatrical London.' For two centuries Rules has been famous for its in-house specialities of game, oysters, pies and puddings. To quote from Rules own newsletter "… we are fortunate in being the only restaurant in England to secure supplies from this rare herd. Paul has the largest herd of 'Belties' in the country and the uniquely flavoured meat stands head and shoulders above all others in our blind tastings"
- Some pedigree breeding heifers are sold to LGSs e.g. Limestone Country, Yorks Dales

Strengths

- Belted Galloways - the breed characteristics of hardiness, longevity and conversion efficiency produce more high grade meat from low quality forage than continental breeds

Lessons Learned

- 'Belties' have a reputation for being wild but learning how to work with them and winning their trust they become a joy to work with. Keeping them content and stress free is a priority to keep immune systems and disease resistance high. Paul's calves are left with their mothers until the arrival of the next calf, giving them the best start. Care is taken to minimise travel and keep animals calm prior to slaughter by delivering stock direct to a small local abattoir

Key Message to Others

'Belties' live on poor forage but give exceptional meat quality i.e. ideal conservation grazers.

For more information contact: Paul Coppen, 'Belties' farmer. Tel: 01833 628309.
www.rules.co.uk/est/belted.html

Case Study F: Traditional Cattle at Work!

The Site

Robert Williams of Maydencroft Farm in Hertfordshire grazes approximately 90 hectares with his Longhorn Cattle and other traditional cattle breeds. The grazing includes self owned land as well as conservation grazing. Robert is a committed and very passionate member of the Traditional Breeds Meat Marketing Scheme and an early member and advocate of GAP.

The Situation

About 20 years ago Robert went to one of the early RBST's show and sale and purchased a single in-calf Longhorn cow to run alongside his cross bred fattening cattle. From this start the Longhorns increased in numbers until now the herd sometimes totals over 100 head. He has recently been President of the Longhorn Society and is totally committed to the breed. Following the BSE crisis, the farm became financially untenable due to falling prices, Robert realised he had to do something different so he sold all his cross breeds and focused all his attention on the pure traditional breeds, especially Longhorns. Robert is a strong believer that our future countryside is dependent on farmers being paid, not just for producing food, but will be rewarded for providing a landscape that is rich in diversity and aesthetically valuable. It is this strong conviction which has motivated Bob to work, tirelessly, with other organisations to find mutually beneficial solutions that benefit our countryside.

Adding Value

The relationships Robert has developed have ensured that his Longhorns are a well known sight. He has worked for several years with Welwyn Garden City Council, North Hertfordshire District Council and The Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust in delivering biodiversity targets through grazing Longhorns and other breeds at Oughtonhead Common Nature Reserve (Hitchin), St Ibbs Park (St Ippolyts) and on fields along the A1 at Welwyn.

In 1996 The Rare Breeds Survival Trust accredited Maydencroft Farm for the production of finished cattle to be sold through The Traditional Breeds Marketing Scheme. Initially Robert sold meat from the cattle to friends and family by having his own animals prepared for home consumption but now demand is increasing and as well as supplying Chiltern Meat, a local wholesaler butcher he supplies two or three other outlets.

Results

- Relationships leading to the grazing systems have become a 'win-win' for both parties
- Additional benefit comes from 'educating' the public who have access to many sites
- Demand for the meat is increasing

Benefits

- Breed characteristics suitable for low maintenance diet and conservation grazing regimes
- Robert Williams' passion in maintaining old traditional breeds for future generations

Lessons Learned

- Buying the animals at the right but fair price is key to producers making the right margin
- Develop enormous patience to deal with the public using access points on grazing sites
- Diligent husbandry can never be underestimated
- Safety is a key priority - maintaining good fencing is a pre-requisite!

Key Message to Others

"You can learn a lot through experience but don't start without talking to the experienced"

For more information contact: Robert Williams, Maydencroft Farm. Tel: 01462 434762.

6. References

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- Countryside Agency, (October 2004): *Protected Areas Branding Forum October 2004: making links between local products and landscapes, Conference Report*

7. Further Resources and Useful Links

ADAS – environmental advice and consultancy service: www.adas.co.uk
Big Barn - local food website: www.BigBarn.co.uk
British Wool Marketing Board – central marketing system for UK fleece wool: www.britishwool.org.uk
Consumer Direct - consumer gateway organisation: www.consumerdirect.gov.uk
CPRE - Council for the Protection of Rural England: www.cpre.gov.uk
Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru / Countryside Council for Wales – www.ccw.gov.uk
Cyulliad Cenediaethol Cymru / National Assembly for Wales: www.wales.gov.uk
DARDNI – Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Northern Ireland – www.dardni.gov.uk
Defra – Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (England): www.defra.gov.uk
DTI – Department of Trade and Industry: www.dti.gov.uk
EBLEX – English Beef and Lamb Executive: www.eblex.org.uk
Eco-Lots - online exchange & mart for agriculture and forestry sectors: www.ecolots.co.uk
EFFP - English Food and Farming Partnerships gives advice on collaboration: www.effp.com
f3 - the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives, is a not-for-profit organisation providing advisory services to help develop local food solutions: www.localfood.org.uk
Farm Assured British Beef and Lamb – farm assurance scheme: www.fabbl.co.uk
Farma – National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association co-operative of farmers, producers selling on a local scale and farmers' market organisers: www.farma.org.uk
Farm Business Advice Service: www.farmbusinessadvice.co.uk
Farming Connect - farm advice service covering Wales: www.wales.gov.uk/farmingconnect
Farm Direct – advertising and email service for farmers: www.farm-direct.co.uk
FEAST - organisation working to promote the best of British Food and Drink from the region of origin. Have promoted produce from conservation grazing schemes: www.feastnet.net
Food From Britain marketing consultancy for British food and drink: www.foodfrombritain.co.uk
Food Links UK network of organisations supporting the local food sector: www.foodlinks-uk.org
Freedom Foods - an independent organisation set up by the RSPCA to improve farm animal welfare in the UK covering meat, eggs and dairy products: www.freedomfood.co.uk
FSA – Food Standards Agency: www.food.gov.uk
GAP - Grazing Animals Project facilitating and supporting conservation grazing in the UK www.grazinganimalsproject.org.uk
Graig Farm Organics – pioneering organic co-operative system and on-line organic food shop: www.graigfarm.co.uk
Guild of Q Butchers – Many of Britain's leading and award-winning independent butchers are members of the Guild of Q Butchers. www.guildofqbutchers.com
Hybu Cig Cymru - Meat Promotion Wales: www.hybucigcymru.org
IGD - Institute of Grocery Distribution - research organisation for the Food and Drink sector: www.igd.com
Interbrand - information on branding of products: www.interbrand.com
LEAF – Linking Environment and Farming: www.leafuk.org
LMCNI - Meat and Livestock Commission for Northern Ireland: www.lmcni.com
Local Food Web – online local produce directory: www.localfoodweb.co.uk
Meat Matters - website about everything meat-related: www.meatmatters.com
Meat and Livestock Commission: www.mlc.org.uk
Mutton Renaissance – organisation dedicated to the promotion of mutton, providing detailed information for farmers, abattoirs and butchers: www.muttonrenaissance.org.uk
National Association of Farmers Markets: www.farmersmarkets.net
National Beef Association: www.nationalbeefassociation.co.uk
NFU - National Farmers Union: www.nfu.org.uk
National Federation of meat and food traders: www.nfmft.co.uk
National Sheep Association: www.nationalsheep.org.uk
Natural England – www.naturalengland.org.uk
Organicsa2z – organic living website with local food guides: www.organicsa2z.com
Organic Centre Wales: www.organic.aber.ac.uk
Quality Low Input Foods - a pan-European project aiming to improve quality and safety and reduce costs along the organic and low input food supply chain: www.qlif.com

Quality Meat Scotland - QMS's core function is to work with the Scottish red meat industry to improve its efficiency and profitability and to maximise its contribution to Scotland's economy: www.qmscotland.co.uk
Rare Breeds Survival Trust – for information on rare and traditional breed meat marketing schemes: www.rbst.org.uk
Red Tractor – information on the red tractor mark: www.redtractor.org.uk
Red Meat Industry Forum: www.redmeatindustryforum.org.uk
Scottish Agricultural College: www.sac.ac.uk
Scottish Natural Heritage: www.snh.gov.uk
SEERAD - Scottish Executive Environment and Rural Affairs Department: www.scotland.gov.uk/About/Departments/ERAD
Soil Association promotes sustainable organic farming and human health. Also accreditation for organic farming: www.soilassociation.org
Sustain – Alliance for Better Food and Farming: www.sustainweb.org
'Tastes of….' - Regional or county-based initiatives have developed through funding from Food from Britain as a way of raising awareness and promoting the region's local food and drink: www.tasteofengland.co.uk
Trading Standards: www.tradingstandards.gov.uk