



A.J and C.I Snell Ltd



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A. J and C. I Snell is one of the UK's leading fresh and frozen fruit growers. Based near Ross on Wye in South Herefordshire, the 450 acre farm produces nearly 1,300 tonnes of strawberries every year plus raspberries, blackberries, blueberries and redcurrants, along with a further 700 tonnes of conventional and organic blackcurrants. The business also includes retailer packing facilities and a pallet freezer store offering freezer storage, blast freezing and online British Frozen Fruit sales. A. J & C. I Snell became LEAF Marque certified in 2007.



The Farm

Nestled in the hills of Herefordshire, A.J & C.I Snell has been owned and managed by Anthony and Christine Snell since 1989, initially growing vegetables and salad crops. The business changed to specialise in berry fruit production in 1998 and now covers 450 acres of Herefordshire countryside producing, packing and marketing nearly 2,000 tonnes of high quality fresh berries every year. The success of the business is due to the experience and hard work of the growing team, modern technologies and the use of polytunnels, irrigation and crop agronomy advances. The business works closely with Berry Gardens – a farmer owned co-operative which has helped grow the business.

A.J & C.I Snell prides itself in high standards of horticultural growing and innovation farmed in a sustainable way following Integrated Farm Management (IFM) principles.



Crops for Food

At A.J & C.I Snell, the focus has always been on the production of better-flavoured varieties for supermarket premium lines for both fresh and frozen markets. As well as soil grown soft fruit, the business also uses sustainable coir substrate for table-top strawberry production.

A large proportion of the blackcurrants are grown for Suntory Beverage & Food Ltd, producers of Ribena, on contract. In addition, the business also includes an onsite strigging and sorting line producing quality frozen blackcurrants for various outlets. The business also has a range of own branded Windmill Hill Fruits - quality frozen fruit packs aimed specifically at farm shops and independent outlets.

Conservation

Protection and enhancement of the farm's wealth of environmental features is a key objective. Polytunnels are managed sensitively and habitats are often placed to shield them from view in order to enhance the natural landscape and provide vital links between habitat areas. The business is committed to enhancing biodiversity which includes an ongoing hedgerow and tree planting programme and management of bird populations. Over 49 species of birds have been recorded - well above the national average and one of the highest in the county. These include three species of Raptor, Skylark, Little Grebe, Great Spotted Woodpecker and both Little and Tawny Owls.

By farming in an integrated way, A.J and C.I Snell is able to balance the needs of the crop with increasing the biodiversity value of the wider farm environment.

Visits

As a LEAF Demonstration Farm organised visits to A.J and C.I Snell take place throughout the year to a broad range of groups including farmers, schools and a wide range of interest groups. The farm also regularly participates in LEAF Open Farm Sunday – the farming industry's national open day.



About LEAF Demonstration Farms

LEAF Demonstration Farms are commercial farms, which show the beneficial practices of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) to a broad range of audiences, through organised visits. They communicate an understanding of IFM in order to encourage uptake by farmers, support from the industry and political awareness of sustainable food and farming. For more information, visit www.leafuk.org