What is the role of Waitrose in encouraging more sustainable livestock systems within their supply chain?

How has Leckford made its own beef farming system more sustainable?

Andrew Hoad, Head of Leckford, Waitrose Farm
What is the role of Waitrose in encouraging more sustainable livestock systems within its supply chain?

1. Strong welfare focus
2. Dedicated supply chains
3. Longstanding supply relationships
4. Recognise role of livestock in regenerative agriculture
5. Responsibly sourced feed
At Leckford our farming system is focused on producing HIGH QUALITY FOOD that is KINDER TO THE ENVIRONMENT

OUR COMMITMENTS

• We will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions across our farm at Leckford with the aim to be net zero well ahead of our 2035 commitment
• We will encourage biodiversity regeneration through habitat restoration and quantify the impact over time
• We will build soil health and organic matter through low disturbance farming techniques
• We will work with innovators and academics and create a Knowledge Exchange Programme to help Suppliers and Producers make the transition to Regenerative Agricultural practices

“I have always thought that, if my own work for the Partnership has in the end some real importance, it will be because to the problems that it is an attempt to solve, I have brought the mind of a naturalist.”

JOHN SPEDAN LEWIS.
The Gazette of the John Lewis Partnership
2 February 1935, 9.4
WHERE LIVESTOCK FITS WITHIN THE OVERALL REGEN AG PRINCIPLES

6 Core principles of REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE
LIVESTOCK AT LECKFORD

- 450-500 Suckler herd
- Spring and autumn block calving. Finished cattle through Dovecote Park into Waitrose as native breeds
- Sheep - 1,500 Welsh hoggets for winter grazing
- Extensive system
- Summer grazing on water meadows, chalk grassland and herbal leys
- Winter feeding based on all home grown feed: herbal ley silage, whole crop arable silage, rape meal pellets from our own cold pressed rapeseed oil enterprise
INTEGRATING LIVESTOCK PROVIDES MANY WINS FOR LECKFORD AND IS PART OF OUR JOURNEY TO CARBON NET ZERO FARMING
- Conservation Management of water meadows – SSSI
- Conservation Management of chalk grassland, helping fauna and flora and scrub control
- Ecosystem services as part of overall rotation – e.g. herbal leys, cover crops
- Woodland management
HELPING US TO ACHIEVE CNZ

• Growing and grazing herbal leys and cover crops building soil organic matter and soil fertility
• Utilisation of surplus forage in growing season for winter forage removing need to purchase additional supplies
• CNG production onsite is a direct replacement for fossil fuels
• Solids and liquid digestate reduce demand on synthetic fertilisers
• Cattle rations utilise meal from cold pressed rapeseed oil without having to purchase concentrate
• Circular system driving efficiency
• High quality, high welfare beef
• Lower input costs—e.g. less fossil fuel usage and purchased fertilisers
• Livestock as part of our overall move to regenerative farming building commercial resilience through soil health and nature
FUTURE PRIORITIES

- No-fence technology, looking at where this could work effectively for us, particularly if it allows us to mob-graze more efficiently
- Access to woodland grazing to provide better protection in periods of heat
- More effective measurement of enteric methane production and options to reduce overall levels e.g. diet, breeding
- Share evidence-based learnings from Leckford with our wider farming community to inspire change at scale and arm our farmers with practical advice and tools to adopt regenerative practices