



DEMONSTRATION FARM



BUCCLEUCH

Bowhill Farming Ltd



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Bowhill Farming Ltd is a 5,463 hectare mixed hill/upland enterprise forming part of the wider Borders Estate located in the South of Scotland. Enterprises include a herd of premium health Aberdeen Angus cows, a flock of Scottish Blackfaced breeding ewes, a large free-range poultry unit, as well as a small amount of arable cropping grown mainly for stock feed. Bowhill is an active partner in a number of research projects with the Agricultural and Horticulture Development Board and Sainsbury's; it is also an Agri-EPI Satellite Farm.



The Farm

Located in the breath taking Scottish Borders, Bowhill Farming Ltd forms part of Buccleuch, one of lowland Scotland's largest estates extending to 82,000 hectares.

Bowhill Farming Ltd covers 5,463 hectares with the majority of land lying between the Yarrow and Ettrick Valleys. The farm runs 190 premium health pure Aberdeen Angus cows, producing breeding stock for replacements and selling. The farm also runs a suckler cow herd of 310 cows, a 5,550 ewe hill flock of Scottish Blackfaced/South Country Cheviot and an upland flock of 1,350 breeding ewes, supplying lamb to Sainsbury's. A new addition to the business is 116 Breeding hinds which will be used to produce venison for Dovecote Park.

Arable cropping includes winter barley, spring barley, spring oats and kale, mainly for stock feed.

Bowhill also operates a 200kW Anaerobic Digester and a 32,000 free range hen laying unit which are seen as key business assets with chicken muck manure utilised by the AD plant as well as livestock manures throughout the arable and grassland enterprises.



Livestock

Animal husbandry and comfort is of paramount importance; stringent attention to detail and careful monitoring of herd and stock health ensures optimum performance. The upland flock of 3,950 Scottish Blackfaced and 1,600 South Country Cheviot breeding ewes are maintained on the heather moorland and Bowhill also runs a 1,350 in-bye flock of Pure Abermax, Primera, plus crossbreeds such as Aberfield and Aberdale X Blackfaced ewes. All progeny from the flocks are retained for replacements, sold for breeding or sold fat. The cattle enterprise consists of 500 cows producing replacements and selling store cattle at 12 months of age under a sealed bid auction. Shepherds and Cattlemen are responsible for the overall health and welfare of individual flocks/herds and increasingly the use of precision monitoring techniques are being used, for example electronic boluses for heat and calving detection in cattle and Faecal Egg Counting in both enterprises. All enterprises are costed and benchmarked and the farm has a strong commitment to trialling new techniques and knowledge exchange. It is an active partner in a number of research projects with AHDB and Sainsbury's including the Ram Compare and Rotational Grazing Projects.

Conservation

Maintaining and improving the wealth of wildlife features across the farm and estate has always been a key priority. All farming operations are carried out with sensitivity to the environment and Bowhill includes a large area of heather moor which is managed primarily for biodiversity, including black grouse leks. Hedgerows are being planted, which are managed sensitively to provide food and habitat for insects, birds and small mammals. The wider farmland lends itself to a healthy population of biodiversity due to its inherent heterogeneity of habitats.

Visits

Bowhill has a long tradition of welcoming visitors onto the Estate and offers open access for walkers. It is an active member of RHET (Royal Highland Education Trust) and hosts a number of visits throughout the year. The farm is an excellent example of Integrated Farm Management (IFM) in action, balancing a thriving business with positive environmental management.



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