



Stratton Farms (incorporating Church Farm and Manor Farm)



Farmer: Jeremy Padfield and Rob Addicott

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Stratton Farms, based in the picturesque Somerset village of Stratton on the Fosse is home for two neighbouring farmers, Jeremy Padfield and Rob Addicott. The farms are primarily arable but also have beef and sheep enterprises. Jeremy operates from Church Farm and Rob from Manor Farm and they are both tenants of the Duchy of Cornwall and have been a LEAF Demonstration Farm since 2006.



The Farms

Working together as neighbouring farmers has brought many benefits to Rob and Jeremy such as shared machinery and investment costs. It has also allowed them to take up a number of precision farming techniques to help their businesses become more sustainable. In addition to this, the partnership runs an arable contracting business within an eight mile radius of the farm. The farms at Stratton are 420 hectares and soil types vary from stony brash, heavy clay to loamy soils.

Crops for Food

Winter wheat (feed and milling), winter barley, spring barley, oilseed rape and spring beans are grown in the rotation as well as an area of linseed and canary seed. Many of the crops are sold and delivered direct to two local feed mills whilst others are sold to premium export markets or grown on contract to a specific end user. All straw is utilised within the livestock enterprises or sold to local farms.

Integrated Farm Management (IFM) is at the heart of all decisions. All fields are broken down into zones and soil tested every three years. In addition, variable rate nutrients are applied using GPS technology to ensure accurate placement.

Stratton Farms also encourages its contracting customers to adopt the principles of IFM whether that is low disturbance establishment of crops to soil zoning and regular testing in order to help make their clients businesses more resilient.



Livestock

The 250 beef heifers are bought in as four week old calves and are reared on farm and sold to a local butcher or to the local livestock market. The breeds are Aberdeen Angus, British Blue, Simmental and Hereford; they are grazed throughout the spring and summer, housed through the winter months and fed home grown silage and barley. The manure from this enterprise, as well as an equine business on the farm, is stockpiled and spread on the arable fields which increases valuable nutrients and organic matter and helps keep soils in good health.

The sheep enterprise has recently started at Manor Farm and the sheep graze virtually all year round; when the cattle are housed in November, they often follow on to the pastures where the cattle have grazed throughout the summer.

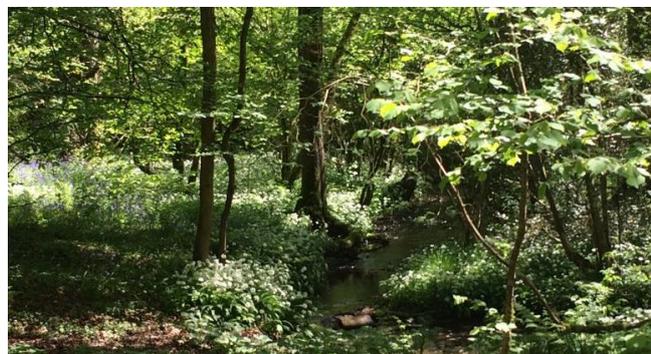
Conservation

Rob and Jeremy share many common interests and conservation is one that they are both passionate about. For many years they have been involved in agri-environment schemes and currently have around 1,000 acres under a Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) agreement of which 8% of the land is in conservation management practices. These range from low input grassland, herbal leys, wild bird seed mixes, conservation headlands and a comprehensive hedgerow management plan. Over 20 acres of trees and 2,000 metres of new hedges have been planted in recent years and an ancient orchard has also been restored.

Rainwater is harvested and used for a variety of uses including drinking water for cattle and for filling the sprayer. Two solar installations on the rooves of farm buildings supply electricity to the farming business and also help to run the grain drier. Another renewable project has been the biomass boiler running off woodchip which provides energy for three houses.

Community and Visits

Stratton Farms have always been keen supporters of LEAF Open Farm Sunday as it provides people with an opportunity to learn more about farming, food production and nature. Since the initiative was launched in 2006, the number of people visiting Stratton Farms has grown from hundreds to thousands. In addition, the partnership welcomes many visits throughout the year from school children, local wildlife groups and farmer groups. An abundance of footpaths and bridleways across much of the farmland allows walkers and riders to be educated along their route with LEAF information boards. Several years ago, Manor Farm converted some traditional cattle buildings into high quality offices where now 50 people are employed in a beautiful rural setting. Manor Farm is also a site for a direct access community, providing a place for change for many rural homeless people, as well as giving them meaningful activity in a newly established community garden as well as woodworking and pottery workshops.



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.