

## Wilkin & Sons Ltd Tiptree



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The Wilkin family have farmed at Tiptree since 1757. The jam making business was founded in 1885 and today makes a range of premium food products including jam, jelly, marmalade, chutney, sauces and Christmas puddings.



### The Farm

We farm around 350 hectares (865 acres) in and around Tiptree, growing a range of fruits including, strawberries, plums, cherries, raspberries, mulberries, quince and medlar. The farm also grows 200 hectares of combinable crops which are managed by a neighbouring farmer.

We have established grass strips in the orchards and created wide margins around many of our fields to help reduce runoff, this also helps us conserve moisture for crop development. Farming in an integrated way means that we regularly assess the needs of each individual crop, through careful crop monitoring, cultivations and crop selection; this also helps to keep our soil in good health.

Careful water management is essential for growing fruit in a sustainable way, and particularly so in this part of East Anglia – the driest area in the country. We have invested heavily in highly efficient micro-irrigation systems for monitoring and controlling water and fertiliser use within crops; these allow us to target applications much more accurately ensuring we only use what is needed for each plant. Much of the water we use for irrigation is recycled from our jam factory.



## Crops for Food

We grow a proportion of our fruit under cover, which means we can use biological methods to control pests and diseases. We use natural predators like *Phytoseiulus* and *Amblyseius* on crops to control harmful pests. When crop protection products are thought to be necessary, we will use them sympathetically, always with biodiversity in mind and only ever as a last resort.

## Conservation

Combining responsibility and sensitivity to the environment with producing great tasting fruit is a cornerstone of our business. Just a few practical steps have brought immense benefits to the overall biodiversity of the farm. Over the past few years we have planted thousands of native hardwood trees, several kilometres of native hedging and created scrapes for the benefit of wading birds such as lapwing, redshank and snipe.

## Visits

We have always been passionate about reconnecting people with how their food is grown. We regularly host farm visits for local schools and have been involved in LEAF Open Farm Sunday for the past five years. It is a great way to engage with our local community and gives them an opportunity to develop a greater understanding of the value of the crops grown in their local fields.



## 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](http://www.leafuk.org).