



CASE STUDY: IMPLEMENTING CLIMATE-SMART FARMING TECHNIQUES ON A FAMILY FARM

Treflech Farm

INTRODUCTION

Treflech has been in the family for three generations, the farm spans 40 hectares of beautiful countryside in North Shropshire, Ian was raised on the farm, before heading off to University, work in London and abroad. On his return to Treflech, Ian successfully adapted the farm to meet his vision, and the challenges of climate change while ensuring economic viability and environmental stewardship.

THE STORY

“I hadn't really any interest in going into farming, in hindsight, it had a lot to do with the methodologies of farming, that style of farming in the 80s. My dad got sick in 2006, I moved back to the farm and took a sabbatical for a year but then decided to stay at the end of that year.”

It was clear to Ian that they couldn't go back into conventional style dairy. So, he looked around for what else could be done to try and make a small-scale family farm viable. That was the point, the decision was made to enter meat production.

“The options for diversification when we were looking, didn't exist as they do now, maybe it was the communication of the information that wasn't available, so trying to work out what we could do was a long and torturous process. The way that my dad farmed was was of its time, but wasn't fit for when I moved back or now 15 years later. So I quickly went into fresh meat and farmers markets and things realise that actually that's it's a lifestyle, it's not just a business, but it still needed to bring in an income for two families. So, building upon that and some years later, that's turned into us having a beef herd still because that's appropriate for landscape and appropriate to the land we've got here having cattle finish on grass, using Savory Method holistic planned grazing techniques for managing the ground in a regenerative way”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Ian actively engages with local communities and collaborates with other farmers. There is a CIC providing a range of different projects. “We do horticultural therapy and basic skills for young adults with behavioural issues. But we also do educational access projects for local primary schools and secondary schools and also work with a local Higher Education College, young adults with learning difficulties with disabilities. basic skills, so helping the animals.

He believes that collective action is essential for promoting sustainable agriculture in the region and advocates for policy changes and additional support from government initiatives and agricultural extension services to further enhance the adoption of this way of farming.



AT A GLANCE

Ian transitioned from conventional dairy farming to a more sustainable beef production model. He adopted rotational mob grazing techniques, following permaculture and holistic land management principles. This approach has improved soil health, reduced erosion, and increased water retention on the farm. By utilizing natural grazing patterns, Ian has seen improvements in grass growth and livestock health while minimising the need for external inputs like grain and fertilizer.



TREFLECH FARM

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CHALLENGES & BENEFITS

While implementing climate-smart practices, Ian has faced challenges related to the scale of his farm and the transition from conventional farming methods. However, the benefits, such as cost reduction, improved product quality, and environmental stewardship, outweighed the challenges. Ian believes that his farming model is transferable to other production types and landholding sizes, promoting agri-diversity and sustainable agriculture in the region.

CLIMATE-SMART FARMING PRACTICES

Ian transitioned from conventional dairy farming to a more sustainable beef production model. He adopted rotational mob grazing techniques, following permaculture and holistic land management principles. This approach has improved soil health, reduced erosion, and increased water retention on the farm. By utilising natural grazing patterns, Ian has seen improvements in grass growth and livestock health while minimizing the need for external inputs like grain and fertilizer. The implementation of climate-smart practices has enhanced the resilience of Treflech Farm against climate change impacts. The farm is less prone to flooding, and the soil absorbs water more effectively. This resilience has translated into increased job security for Ian and his employees, as well as improved income stability. Additionally, the farm's diversified business model, including meat production, bakery operations, and community engagement, has created opportunities for economic growth and stability.

These changes have had positive environmental outcomes on the farm. Soil health has improved, leading to increased biodiversity and carbon sequestration. By reducing the reliance on chemical inputs and implementing sustainable grazing practices, Ian has observed an increase in species diversity and improved ecosystem health on his land.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TREFLECH & SHROPSHIRE FOOD

"I don't need to produce that much to be able to live the life that I like to live. And, if I do that, it doesn't preclude other farmers locally, doing the same thing, either. But if I've got to drive to London, or sell into a food chain, which then makes my produce anonymous, that is problematic for me. The vision that I'm working towards is hyper local being able to sell all my produce within three, five miles. We need to keep working with the partners in organisations, in the community, and with other growers, different sorts of communities, whether it's customers, suppliers, friends and co-workers. So, just keep moving forward as best we can. "We need to get to the 98% of the population who buy at big supermarkets, we need to work out a strategy to engage with those people."

We also spoke about the benefit of being connected with others in the county who have the same problems, issues and goals. "The fact it's not a national movement. It's not just that there's 20 people in the country doing what they're doing in re-generative farming, but 20 people in the county. It's great that actually there are those links now, and it's getting bigger and bigger, you know, the different individuals who are trying to grow food and the same sort of way are a lot more linked together".



MISSION STATEMENT

- We transition towards sustainable farming guided by holism and grounded in permaculture principles.
- We build soil, conserve biodiversity, and grow, make and eat wholesome food.
- We build resilient relationships between the different on-farm businesses and other individuals/communities/customers/suppliers
- The farm with its diverse set of nature friendly eco-systems and free range animals
- The food business making #tastypies
- The distribution business supporting high quality producers get their products to market
- The Community Interest Company providing therapy projects for a wide range of user groups

