

Matthew House - Improver

Matthew's farm accounts for 195 ha, which includes 40 ha of wheat and 40 ha of maize on a contract farming agreement with a straw for muck deal. The remainder of the farm is grass, some of which is in the Entry Level Stewardship agreement. Around six ha was reseeded in the autumn.

He took over the farm in December 2014 and aims to develop the 113 ha of grassland in a suitable way to increase the current suckler herd. Originally there were 38 cows, but he now has an additional 41 in-calf heifers due to calve in the spring and 54 heifers which will be put to one of his three Aberdeen Angus bulls in June. The suckler cows consist mainly of Aberdeen Angus, however he also buys in dairy crossbred replacement heifers which are put to the Aberdeen Angus bull. Calves are sold as stores through local markets during February and March.

There has previously been little focus on grazing management, but Matthew is very keen to work with others to develop the enterprise further.

Silage is made in big bales and machinery is shared with his father. 24 ha was cut in mid-May and 12 ha for second cut. A further 24 ha of grass was cut for hay. It could be possible to increase the quality of the silage and to maximise liveweight gain in the store calves.

Matthew's key targets include:

- To understand the nutrient requirements of the grassland
- To invest in fencing on the grazing platform
- To investigate the option of out-wintering the cows on the arable land



Matthew House

Ed Green - Mentor



Ed Green

Ed Green is a fifth-generation farmer on the Mendip Hills in Somerset, farming 320 ha (295 ha owned, 25 ha rented). He currently has 1,300 native breed cattle on a custom-feeding contract for the high-end retail market. Cattle arrive at 150kg from dedicated rearing units and leave at 460kg to a finishing unit. In the summer, cattle are grazed in mobs of around 175 animals on a rotational grazing system. Pastures are a mixture of grazing leys, red clover and permanent pastures in the Higher Level Stewardship scheme. In the winter, cattle are mostly housed and fed a Total Mixed Ration (TMR) including home-grown red clover, maize, and whole-crop wheat and barley.

Machinery ownership is kept to a minimum, with machines only purchased if they are used most days of the year. Labour is also minimal, with part-time staff allotted certain tasks on the farm. Contractors are used for the arable work and large grassland work such as silage making. The farm is currently developing a collection of traditional farm buildings into holiday lets.

Off farm, Ed is currently chairman of Meat South West, the organisation responsible for obtaining and managing the West Country Beef and Lamb Protected Geographical Indications (PGI). He is also a member of the AHDB Beef & Lamb Board and has been a member of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust and the NFU National Livestock Board.