

## Tim Phipps - Improver

Tim Phipps moved to Bragborough Hall in 2012.

The farm totals 320 ha, which includes 19 ha of rented ground. The farm is between 100 and 170 metres above sea level and receives approximately 28 inches of rainfall annually.

Over 180 ha of the land is used in an arable rotation on a contract farming arrangement, with the remaining ground being a mixture of woodland, permanent pasture and improved grass leys. There are some restrictions with the farm being in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ). Furthermore, the farm is also in the Entry Level Stewardship Scheme and does contain ridge and furrow.



*Tim Phipps*

The beef herd consists of 78 suckler cows which are currently in a breeding transition from commercial crossbreeds to Stabiliser cows. This transition, along with the aim of increasing cow numbers, has led to a larger number of replacements being retained in the herd, with 31 heifers being put to the bull this year. Calving takes place in the spring for around 12 weeks between March and June, with heifers calving at two years.

Bulls join the cows on the 10 June and are removed on the 10 September. At this point the calves are then split. Bull calves receive creep feed to intensively finish them at 13 months at a target weight of 320-370 kg on the Morrisons' Yearling Beef Scheme. Heifers are either retained or sold as breeding heifers at a target weight of 400kg at 14 months.

Cattle are currently housed from November until April on straw, before being turned out to grass, where they are moved from field to field every ten days.

Key targets include:

- To increase sub-division and to install water to paddocks
- To use more grass on the shoulders of the year to reduce housing costs
- To produce more grass for a higher stocking rate as cow numbers increase

Tim has been paired with mentor Matt Pilkington.

## Matt Pilkington - Mentor

Matt Pilkington farms with his parents as Pilkington Farms Ltd which is situated at Church Farm, Barby, Warwickshire.

The enterprise consists of 340 ha, with 28 ha maize and the rest grass. Matt currently stocks the farm with 600 New Zealand Friesian dairy cows, which are split equally between a spring and an autumn calving herd, plus 500 followers.

The cows produce 6,700 litres, with 4,600 litres coming from forage. This equates to 560kg of milk solids per cow (based on 4.6% butterfat and 3.65% protein). The high constituent content suits the current milk contract with Arla Manufacturing.

Matt aims to stock his grazing platform at 3.4 cows per ha, with cows grazing for up to 300 days a year. The spring cows start calving on 10 February, with the aim of having all cows out by the end of the month. While the autumn group calve from 1 September.

To maintain these high stocking rates and utilise grass on the shoulders of the year, Matt has to maintain excellent grassland management with grass covers being measured weekly to create grass budgets.

Looking ahead, the aim is to increase the total number of cows to 750, with the intention of splitting the spring and autumn herds completely, as they currently run through one parlour. This will allow Matt to focus on each enterprise in more detail and allow him to reduce costs by over 1p per litre.