

The Eastbridge Herd

Eastbridge Farm is situated in Crondall in the north east corner of Hampshire and Surrey with 120 acres of medium loam over clay.

The river Hart rises in Crondall and runs through the farm with wet, seriously wet water meadows. Stock generally has to be housed by the end of October and sometimes turn out is not until the beginning of May, however in a dry summer we can still produce grass.

In the past the farm has produced hops and corn but now is entirely down to permanent pasture.

The Eastbridge Herd was founded in 1980 with the purchase of six spring calving cows from Mr. J.O.J. Stevens' Crondall Herd. Mr. Bob Coyle, Mr. Stevens' stockman gave us help and advice as we were new and inexperienced farmers.

The early years were spent urgently erecting winter housing as there were no building on the farm. The first real improvement in the herd was the fortunate purchase in 1984 of some older Glottenham cows bred by Mr. Steve Comber. Their progeny have gradually taken over the herd. These cows were autumn calving which gave us another problem – with no bull of our own we had to find bulls to hire twice a year



At this time the Sussex Society introduced the Herd Development Scheme and we hired a local Limousin bull for a 1st cross and entered the scheme. The first calves were rather wild but by the time they calved there was no difference in temperament.

With the herd increasing in size we decided, with our small acreage and our flock of Lleyn sheep we would limit ourselves to small herd status i.e. nineteen breeding cows, this certainly concentrates the mind and poor cows have to go.

Our next step forward was the hire of Mr. Keith Barnard's bull Bosham Formidable 1st. We then began to develop the conformation we were looking for.

With only limited indoor housing a return was made to spring calving which starts in April at point of turnout. Weaning takes place in late October at housing. Calves are then fed a 3lb mix of bought-in lucerne nuts, sugar beet and rolled barley with home produced silage and hay. The steers have to be kept growing and have preferential grazing in their second summer as they go as eighteen month beef due to lack of housing.



The Cattle Health Scheme was joined and MLC Signet weighing and we have been a closed herd for some years apart from occasional bought in bulls.

We are not great showmen although at the Congress show all our animals were prizewinners. We prefer the stock to be judged on the farm and have done consistently well in the Society's Herd Competition and Cranleigh Show beef competition.

Finally I would like to say what a privilege it has been to have had our Sussex Herd for the past twenty years.

*Mrs. J.B. Kirsch
April 2000
Herd Dispersed 2005*