



MEADOWSWEET MATTERS

HAY AND STRAW FOR SALE

DO YOU KEEP RABBITS, GUINEA PIGS, HORSES, DONKEYS OR SHEEP? STRUGGLE TO GET GOOD QUALITY HAY AND STRAW FOR FEED AND BEDDING? WE CAN HELP AS WE SELL SMALL BALES OF HAY OR STRAW. PLEASE RING OR EMAIL IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE DETAILS.

A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY...

Our next lot of beef will be ready on **TUESDAY 19TH AUGUST.**

Please let us know if you would like to be added to the list for August, September or October.

I know this is unusual for a farmer to say, but the weather has been kind to us so far this Summer! We had 4 fields of hay to make and we managed to get it all done before the end of June. We made about 2500 small bales of hay which are now all stacked in the hay barns. I have never seen them so full but Grampy remembers when he used to make 3 times as many, and they had to stack some of them outside as there was not enough room in the barns. Anyway, all the hay making went well and it's a relief to know we have plenty of winter fodder for the cattle.



Martin baling hay in the Hill Field.



This time last year this field was under water because of the July floods!

We have just started our winter barley harvest so let's hope the fine weather holds. Most of this will be sold for animal feed, but we'll keep some back to mill up and feed to our cattle in the winter.



FERTILIZER: A HIGH PRICE TO PAY

We have just taken delivery of our fertilizer ready for next season's crops. This seems a bit early as we have only just started harvesting this year's crops... We are not looking forward to the bill, however. Last year, Nitrogen fertilizer was £150 a tonne but this year it has increased to £350! The Phosphorus and Potassium fertilizer which is used in the Autumn to help the arable crops establish has seen an even more dramatic increase. Last year: £170/tonne: This year £575!!!!. It's a good thing we only use fertilizer on the arable crops and not on the grassland! But we hope there will be some increase in our arable crop prices to compensate.



FARM SHOP UPDATE:

The build continues to go to schedule. We're hoping to move in around Christmas-time with the shop opening in Spring 2009. We're finalising what we're going to stock and what hours we plan to be open. If you have any suggestions we'd love to hear from you.

ALSO...

I was thrilled to be brought a bowl full of raspberries one morning recently. Martin, Lucy & William had gone to see how the orchids were faring this year when they stumbled across a patch of wild raspberries. These have been magnificent this year - perhaps they liked the wet Spring? The orchids have also been lovely this year. And for the first time, we found one in the adjoining field, so perhaps they're spreading?



The cattle are doing well and have been divided into two batches for the Summer. The older ones are being finished on grass supplemented with barley and these should continue to supply our beef boxes until Christmas.

We're continuing to try to find what Native breeds are best for our farm so with this in mind we took delivery earlier this year of some Hereford and South Devon cattle. These have a gentle temperament and are supposedly easier to handle, but they may have a tendency to get fat, so we have to be careful how we feed them.

"Patch" with the other Hereford cross cattle.

"GENTLE GIANT" SOUTH DEVON CATTLE



Well known for its strong maternal and beef qualities, the South Devon is the biggest of our native British Breeds - hence its nickname the gentle giant. The South Devon's renowned docility is a very important consideration for the modern beef producer who is reliant on limited labour resources. The cattle grow quickly on an early diet of plentiful rich milk, and are excellent forage converters. The beef that is produced is marbled and tender, and sought after by butchers and restaurants who recognise its premium quality. We'll let you know how we get on with these 2 native breeds which will feed into the box scheme in the Spring of next year.



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