

Our Farm, Our Future

A scenic view of a farm with a herd of cows in a field, a person standing nearby, and a large stone structure in the background. The landscape is green and hilly, with a large stone structure in the background.

Neil Heseltine
Hill Top Farm
Malham

Hill Top Farm



@hilltopfarmgirl

HILL TOP FARM

- Live & work at Hill Top Farm, Malham;
- 300 acre family farm, Grandparents moved here in 1950 as tenants;
- Parents bought it in 1980;
- Parents converted cow shed to bunk barn accommodation in 1987;
- Leigh runs family holiday cottage and bunk barn;
- Cattle reintroduced 2003.



HILL TOP FARM

- Built up to 1100 acres, split between Malhamdale and Littondale;
- Bought 200 acres;
- 500 acres rented from private landlords;
- 100 acres rented from National Trust;
- All Less Favoured Area (LFA);
- All Severely Disadvantaged;
- All limestone permanent pasture;
- All under HLS/ELS schemes;
- Heights ranging between 800-1800ft above sea level.



HILL TOP FARM

- 400 Swaledale ewes;
- 300 crossed with BFL ram;
- 100 bred pure to Swaledale ram;
- Dipping, clipping, dosing, scanning;
- Lambing in mid March;
- Ewes fed concentrates over winter and spring;
- Wethers sold as stores/fat by end of August;
- Mule gimmers sold for breeding in September;
- Lambs creep fed through summer.



LOCAL CHAMPION

MALHAM SHOW
2013

THE TUP - NOT ME



HILL TOP FARM

- 20 Belted Galloway breeding cattle introduced in 2003;
- 120 in total;
- Hardy native breed;
- Out wintered on the hill, fed hay in adverse weather conditions;
- Extensively managed;
- Low labour input;
- Entirely grass fed;
- Conservation grazers
- Improve biodiversity and wildlife habitat



WILDLIFE HABITAT

Photo by @neil_bilsborough



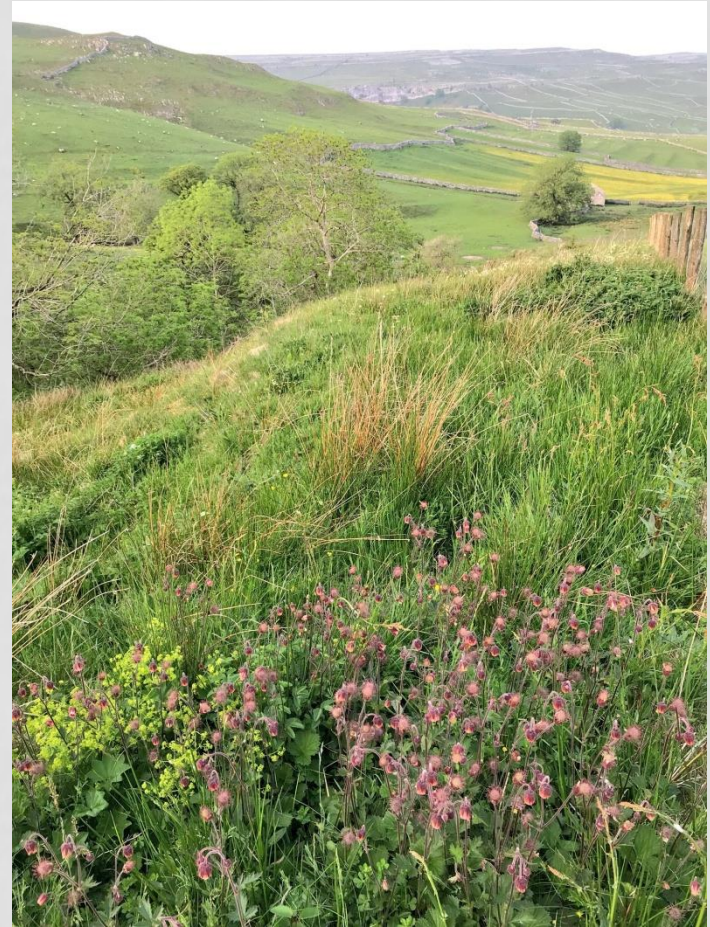
Photo by Brian Rabbitts



WILDLIFE HABITAT



BIODIVERSITY - PLANTS



HILL TOP FARM

SHEEP

- Higher output
- High feed costs
- Labour intensive
- Environmental Impact
- Marketed as a commodity
- Regular worming/vaccination programme

CATTLE

- Lower output
- No purchased feeds
- Minimal intervention
- Increased biodiversity
- Marketed as a premium product
- Zero routine treatments

HILL TOP FARM

2012 COSTINGS

	SHEEP	CATTLE
• Sales	£59,318	• £17,828
• Labour	£12,000	• £ 1,755
• Feed	£15,178	• £ 270
• Haulage	£ 320	• £ 668
• Other costs	£11,202	• £ 3,675
• Livestock purchases	£18,900	• £ 220
• Vets costs	£ 1,240	
• Total	£58,840	• £ 6,588
• Contribution to drawings	£ 478	• £11,240

HILL TOP FARM SHEEP

Replicate the lessons we have learnt from the cattle enterprise:

- The right breed for the right situation
- Allow sheep to exhibit natural behaviour

To achieve this?

- Breed is crucial
- An extensive system – reduce breeding ewe numbers to 200
- Lambing in late April, early May

HILL TOP FARM

CURRENT COSTINGS

	SHEEP		CATTLE	
	2012	2016	2012	2016
	£	£	£	£
• Sales	59,318	32,081	17,828	21,310
• Labour	12,000	750	1,755	1,260
• Feed	15,178	3,724	270	500
• Haulage	320	0	668	0
• Other costs	11,202	2,600	3,675	1,318
• Livestock purchases	18,900	7,042	220	3,040
• Vets costs	1,240	186	117	117
• Total	58,840	14,302	6,588	6,265
• Contribution	478	17,779	11,240	15,045

CONCLUSION

Reducing sheep numbers has resulted in:

- Lower impact on the environment
- Improved sheep health
- Increased quality of family life
- Good business decision

YOUR FARM, YOUR FUTURE

- Emphasising nature
- Improving resilience
- Retaining farming families
- Continuation of farming communities
- **LESS IS MORE!**