



Our Objectives:

“To run a viable farming business by making the best use of the farm’s natural resources to produce quality beef, quality lamb and a quality environment.”

Mill House Farm is a 250 hectare (618 acre) beef, sheep and arable farm lying on the western fringe of the Lake District National Park, south of Whitehaven. We have been farming here for thirty six years and saw Integrated Farm Management as the best way forward post Foot and Mouth disease. It helps us look at the farm as a whole and really stand back and look at the bigger picture. For us, it makes good business sense.

Cropping

We follow a traditional mixed rotation of autumn and spring sown crops at Mill House Farm and our arable farm near Whitehaven, growing a variety of crops including wheat, oats, barley and beans which we use for animal feed and sell to neighbouring farmers. The success of a fully integrated approach begins with the soil. We carry out regular soil mapping to monitor the crops performance and ensure any fertilisers we use are applied exactly where they are needed.



A well balanced crop rotation forms the basis of our crop protection policy coupled with selecting crop varieties which have natural resistance to disease as well as varying the products we use. We see farm yard manure as a useful by product and apply it regularly to add valuable nutrients to the soil and improve its structure and fertility, and so reduce our reliance on artificial fertilisers.

Pollution Control/Waste Management

Reducing the risk of pollution is a key part of an integrated farming system. We do all we can to monitor risk and take appropriate action to reduce these risks by buffering water courses, careful grazing regimes, regular maintenance of machinery and having a well thought through pollution control management plan.

Mill House Farm became a LEAF Demonstration Farm in 2005

“We think it is important to be able to show consumers how we are producing good quality food whilst trying to put something back into the environment. Being a LEAF Demonstration Farm is a great opportunity for us to tell our story to other farmers as well as the general public. ”

Animal Welfare: A farmers responsibility

Since the Foot and Mouth outbreak we have been gradually building up the stock from local suppliers and now have 400 ewes including mules and pedigree Lleys and 40 suckler cows.



Most of the lamb is sold through the Lakeland Livestock Centre and the beef is sold as strong stores. As livestock farmers, we have a huge responsibility to breed and rear livestock in the most welfare friendly way possible. We try to run a clean grazing system and replacement ewes are bred

on the farm to reduce the risk of disease being brought in from outside the flock. Worm burdens are monitored prior to dosing to ensure effective use of anthelmintics. Polytunnels are used for lambing, providing plenty of space, light and ventilation and we manage all the grassland carefully to avoid overgrazing. We are members of FABBL and ACCS.

Environmental Passion

Farming with environmental care has always been our aim. The work we have been doing for years at Mill House Farm, in habitat protection and creation is becoming a major part of the way we farm. All our environmental work is based around a Whole Farm Conservation Plan, which has helped to identify and manage areas of wildlife value. We have a wealth of features, including pastures, hay meadows, small woods and copses, stone walls, mature hedges and watercourses, which are home to a wide variety of birds,



mammals and insects including tree sparrows, skylarks, lapwing, redshank, yellowhammer, roe deer, red squirrels, otters and lots of midges and cleggs!

Two metre margins around most fields act as a buffer between hedgerows and the crop and provide valuable wildlife habitat. We have an ongoing programme of hedge maintenance and they are managed sensitively to provide food and habitat for birds and insects. All

the environmentally sensitive areas, such as woods and water courses are fenced off from grazing stock. A scheduled monument on the higher pastures is managed sensitively to avoid damage. Likewise, we avoid ploughing under the canopy of in-field trees and well away from the trunk of hedgerow trees.

Farm ambassadors

We think it is important to be able to show consumers how we are producing good quality food whilst trying to put something back into the environment. Hopefully, by seeing how their food is produced, they will come to value what farmers are doing to produce their food and protect the environment. We look forward to welcoming you.





Mill House Farm at a glance

A traditional mixed hill farm, producing quality lamb and beef with environmental care, following Integrated Farm Management principles.

Owned by:	Thomas and Isabelle Ostle	
Farmed by:	Thomas and Isabelle Ostle	
Farm Size:	250 hectares (618 acres)	
Location:	Gosforth, Cumbria	
Staff:	1 with contractors used for certain jobs	
Elevation:	Ranging from 50 metres - 200 metres (160 - 655 ft)	
Soil Type:	Mainly Brown Earths ranging from sandy to medium loams overlying sandstone at Whitehaven and granite at Gosforth with large areas of peat at higher levels	
Topography:	Very hilly at Gosforth and undulating at Whitehaven	
Typical farm enterprises	Hectares	Acres
Arable:		
Wheat, Barley, Oats, Beans, Fodder Beet, Swedes	100	247
Grass Leys:	30	74
Managed Habitat and Woodland:	40	99
Permanent pasture:	80	198
Livestock:	400 mule and pedigree Lleyn ewes 40 suckler cows and followers	

What is LEAF?

Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF) is a national organisation working to develop and promote Integrated Farm Management (IFM) - common sense farming practices that are both financially viable and environmentally responsible.

LEAF:

- Helps farmers adopt IFM by providing practical guidelines and a comprehensive self-assessment Audit.
- Promotes IFM to a broad range of interest groups through the LEAF Marque and its national network of LEAF Demonstration Farms and Innovation Centres. Visitors include farmers, the media, politicians, concern groups, teachers and opinion formers.

Membership:

As a charity, LEAF relies on its members to support its work. Membership provides regular newsletters, the LEAF Audit, practical guides to IFM, visits to LEAF Demonstration Farms, technical information on IFM throughout Europe, training and talks on Integrated Farming and members events across the country.

LEAF is:

Committed to a viable agriculture which is environmentally and socially acceptable and ensures the continuity of supply of wholesome, affordable food while conserving the fabric and wildlife of the British countryside.

How do I arrange a visit?

To arrange a visit to Mill House Farm or any of the other LEAF Demonstration Farms, simply contact the LEAF Office, contact details below.



LINKING ENVIRONMENT AND FARMING
Integrated Farm Management

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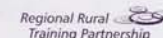


Linking Environment And Farming at

Mill House Farm, Cumbria



Thomas and Isabelle Ostle
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