



## Pasture for Life at Conygree Farm... In practice



### Herbal leys

Our 14ha of herbal leys (based on the Cotswold Seeds research and seed mix) contain a wide range of species including ryegrass, timothy, meadow fescue, several clovers, birdsfoot trefoil, sainfoin and chicory.

The various rooting depths allow the plants to draw up water and nutrients, and improve our soil structure (important for our dry 'brittle' soils). Current soil organic matter levels are at around 6% but we are aiming for 10%.

The leys provide an early green bite for pregnant ewes and hoggets. 10ha is shut up for first cut silage and sold to a local organic dairy farmer.

Under our HLS agreement the leys are then allowed to flower to benefit pollinators through the summer months. The bees go mad for the clover. Natural England pay £200/ha for shutting up the leys.

By late summer the sward is thick and the flowering chicory is head high! We then strip graze with the cattle. Fattening lambs graze the ley through autumn/winter.

In the first three years, the chicory and legume can dominate. By year three the grass content increases as the chicory fades. The ley is re-established every five years, rotating with the spring-sown wild bird cover (direct drilled where possible).