

AGRICULTURE

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICAL FARMING



Pasture for Life at Conygree Farm



In practice - not perfect

Our challenges and questions for the future include:

- **Achieving more from the herb rich leys.** As forage yields fall from our wildflower meadows our leys must work harder. Improving soil health and better establishment will be key.
- **Moving away from set stocking.** We are introducing a mob grazing system grazing tall grass (eating a third, leaving a third, trampling a third) where we can. Balancing this with CS prescriptions will not be easy. We must also ensure stock have space to express natural behaviour and to find shelter in the grazing cell.
- **Dealing with climate extremes.** We have experienced the driest and wettest of seasons in the last few years. This is now the norm. Our poor soils do not cope well in hot dry summers and conversely although our ground is free draining, leaving all livestock out 365 days of the year may not be wise.
- **Seeking additional forms of income.** The current system is financially viable but we are over reliant on government support. New enterprises being considered include pastured chickens and more agri-tourism/education related activity. We just need more time and an intern or two!
- **Rare breeds are rare for a reason.** We love our Cotswolds and Herefords but are they the ultimate breeds for our system?
- **Dropping the plough.** To help with weed control we do rely on inversion tillage from time to time. This is not ideal for soil health. Is Glyphosate a potential friend or absolute foe?
- **Grass fed confusion.** Does the consumer understand the difference between grass fed and pasture fed? Do they think grass fed means no grains? Retailers are taking advantage of this confusion. How do we make the most of the current market opportunities and ensure product integrity?