



Whitmuir Farm is 15 minutes drive from Peebles and 20 minutes drive from Hillend, Edinburgh.

We are on the A701, (the Moffat road) 4 miles south of the Leadburn Inn junction and 2 miles north of West Linton.

## ABOUT WHITMUIR ORGANICS

Whitmuir Organics is a Soil Association certified farm on the A701, south of Edinburgh. We produce organic Shorthorn beef, lamb, mutton, Tamworth pork, genuinely free range eggs, soft fruit and vegetables and turkeys for Christmas. We also buy in a wide range of organic and Fairtrade produce for sale in our organic farm shop.

Our home grown meat, together with additional Shorthorn beef from Dunsyre Organics, is butchered in our organic on-farm butchery by our 5th generation master butcher. As well as an extensive range of prime cuts, we offer a bespoke butchery service. We also do 5-15 kilo stash packs of beef, lamb, mutton and pork at very affordable prices.

The shop is open seven days a week and stocks over 600 lines of organic produce - everything from organic aduki beans to organic panti-liners! Freshly baked bread, cheese, milk,

groceries, ice cream, coffee, tea, chocolate, wine, beer - all organic - plus ethical toiletries and cleaning products.

## BECOMING A FARM SUPPORTER

Most people just come to the shop like regular customers. But many become farm supporters. That means taking out a monthly standing order to the farm for your food, based on how much you want to spend. We put what you buy on your account and we balance the accounts every three months.

It's that simple. Supporters get fresh, organic food at a good price and can visit the farm as often as they like to see what's going on. We grow food for people we know and have some regularity of income. We also organise farm supporter events throughout the year.

We do a weekly delivery run to Edinburgh for farm supporters and are considering a couple of new routes to Biggar, West Linton and Peebles.

## SHOP OPENING TIMES

Monday - Friday	10-6
Saturday	10-4
Sunday	12-4

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## PIGMAIL APRIL 2008

*APRIL is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead lands, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain*

As far as we know, T S Eliot spent little time in the lambing shed but the opening lines of *The Wasteland* speak to growers and farmers every year.

## PERPLEXING TIMES

Living on one planet means that dodgy mortgages in America affect house prices in the UK - and rice shortages in Vietnam mean that prices double here. It's all connected - and it suddenly feels fragile. We can no longer take food for granted.

So what's going on? There were poor wheat harvests in Australia and Canada last year, but overall world wheat production was only down 30 million tonnes or 5%. The real cause is the push to produce biofuels so we can keep driving more every year.

Huge government subsidies in the US mean 80 million tonnes of maize next year is for biofuel. By 2017, half the US maize crop will be for fuel, not food.

Misguided targets in the EU mean that new wheat to ethanol plants in England will use up to 2m tonnes of wheat in 2010 - more than twice the whole Scottish harvest.

And it gets worse. Rain forest is being cleared to grow palm oil for biodiesel. Britain's new chief scientist, Professor John Beddington, has said cutting down rainforest to produce biofuel crops was "profoundly stupid".

Higher demand means higher prices for all cereals. Rice has gone up by 96% in the last year, and wheat by 90%. Bad enough here, when food costs are 10-15% of our budget - but catastrophic in developing countries

where food costs are 60-70% of income. And there is only so much land, and so much water for irrigation. Higher prices for wheat means more uncultivated land brought into production, more nitrogen fertiliser, more pressure on biodiversity.

It's not bad news for everyone. Big grain farmers are back in the money after years in the doldrums. This month, agriculture conglomerate Cargill's third-quarter profit rose 86 % to \$1.03 billion. Every little price rise also helps the supermarkets.

But it's bad news for the poorest people in the world. Cereal supplies are set to increase slightly in 2008, with higher plantings in many parts of the world and a better harvest in parts of Australia, but the 'low income food deficit' countries will be paying twice as much as two years ago for importing the same volume of cereals.

Food riots have been reported in Egypt, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Madagascar, the Philippines and Haiti.

There are two competing visions of the future. Proponents of the technical fix will call for GM crops and fertiliser to raise yields and will trust in the global market to sort out distribution. The alternative vision - where food production is sustainable and food distribution equitable - needs to become a good deal sharper.



## NEW ARRIVALS

As at time of print, we have 95 new lambs and 7 new calves. Two thirds of the way through calving and lambing. Maggie is doing her bit, and just produced another 8 piglets. Susie soon to follow. We have 100 new layer hens - so there should be more Whitmuir eggs on the shelves.

Vegetables struggling...it's too cold for the grass to grow yet...but the shared pallet with Phantassie box scheme plus top-up with MacLeod Organics is ensuring the vegetable shelves aren't bare.

## £1,027.99 CARBON OFFSET PAYMENT TO LEADBURN COMMUNITY WOODLAND

As many of you are already aware (see last Pigmail) cows and sheep use their rumen to break down the grass they eat. As a result, they emit large amounts of methane - a greenhouse gas. Each of our cows is responsible for as much greenhouse gas in a year as a small car. In Scotland, 12-14% of the carbon footprint comes from agriculture. Half of that amount is due to the use of artificial nitrogen. Organic farming prohibits the use of artificial nitrogen (we use clover to fix nitrogen), but we do contribute to global warming by keeping livestock.

In order to balance the damage we are doing, Whitmuir Organics have worked out that we should be contributing 10p/kilo for every kilo of butchered lamb, mutton and beef and 4p/kilo for every kilo of butchered pork (pigs don't have a rumen but the production of pig feed also involves production of carbon dioxide).

In our first year of running our on-farm butchery, that amounts to a sum of £867.99. Together with the generous donation of 4 prints by Myrtle Ashmole, we have managed to contribute a total of £1,027.99 to the Leadburn Community Woodland to support their tree planting locally.

If you would like more information on how we have worked out the sums, please ask!

## NEXT..

We are hoping to convert the existing cattle courts into an organic café, with some office space to rent and a small education centre for school groups and others to use. We've just started the process of applying to the Scotland Rural Development Programme for some grant funding towards this.

Part of the plan is to install a small wind turbine on the hill to power the farm - and an anaerobic digester to turn the butchery waste and café leftovers into biogas. The digester will probably only work if we can also gather food waste from local households, so we would welcome ideas for how to get a scheme like this going.



## RHUBARB, RHUBARB

Spring is very late this year. By this time last year we had all the vegetables planted - just ready for the rain and the weeds. This year, we've not been able to get on the ground because it's so wet - and anyway the soil is still too cold for most crops. Still, 2006 was a very late spring and then a glorious summer.

At least the rhubarb is up. We have our very own rhubarb triangle behind the polytunnel but have not yet managed to hear it growing. The upturned buckets are a poor substitute for the heated sheds where most early rhubarb is grown - but they do make the stalks redder and more importantly they keep the chickens off.

## THINK GLOBAL, EAT LOCAL

In a recent survey by the Food Standards Agency, more than 50% of those interviewed said they bought local food to support local businesses and the local community. Only 2% said it tasted better. We say they are both right.

The New Economics Foundation showed that every £10 spent with a local vegetable box scheme was worth £25 for the local area, compared with just £14 when the same amount was spent in a supermarket.

Our average carbon footprint in the UK is 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide. Not flying would reduce this by 1.6 tonnes - the same impact as buying organic products and local unprocessed food.