



Whitmuir on-farm butchery

Our 16th century stone barn has been transformed into a state of the art on-farm butchery. As well as providing individual cuts of fresh organic beef, lamb, mutton and pork, we can supply stash packs. Sold in larger quantities, the price per kilo is reduced, resulting in significant savings - so you get great meat at a good price. Perfect for sharing with your friends and family or freezing.

As our butcher, Jeremiah Sinclair, is a fifth generation master butcher, we can also supply a bespoke butchery service - so you tell us exactly what you want, and we will do our best!



Evening events November 2007

Carlops Village Hall 7.00 - 9.00pm
Thursday 15 November - Organic Wine tasting evening with Linda Ward of Vintage Roots.
Thursday 29 November - Environmentally sensitive skincare and why it matters - Kerrbally Skincare.

Whitmuir farm shop

Fresh locally reared beef, pork, mutton and lamb from our own butchery. Home grown seasonal soft fruit and vegetables.

Genuinely free range eggs.

Bread, cheese, milk, groceries and ice cream.

Fair Trade tea, coffee, chocolate, wine and beer.

100% organic

Also a wide range of ethical cleaning products and toiletries.

NEW EXTENDED OPENING TIMES

Monday - Friday • 10.00pm - 6.00pm
Saturday • 10.00am - 4.00pm
Sunday • 12 noon - 4.00pm



It's nearly Christmas - get organised!

- Kelly Bronze turkey
- Cured ham
- Trimming and stuffing boxes
- Seasonal vegetable boxes
- Make your own Christmas pudding kits
- Home made Christmas cake
- Whitmuir gift hampers

Order now!



GROWING FOR PEOPLE WE KNOW

PIGMAIL
NOVEMBER 2007

KEEP FARMING LIVE

If the management here were better organised we would have been allowed off the compound at least once during the summer to sample the Mother of all Festivals in Edinburgh. While the events range from world class to no class, they are all live. There's a relationship between the performer and the audience, they are a social activity, each day is different and (with the possible exception of the sword swallowers) what you see is what you get.

Live farming is much the same. It's a social activity, with the relationship between the growers and the customers at the heart of it. We haven't yet imagined how to grow carrots the way Edge plays the guitar, but we're doing our best to make gathering food an experience worth talking about, not just background noise.



Becoming a supporter

Farm supporters pay by regular standing orders. We let supporters know what we have available. Supporters order the food they want, when they want it and we charge it to their account. Every three months we balance the accounts. It is that simple.

You get fresh, organic food at a good price. We grow for people we know and have some certainty of income.



CARBON OFFSET

We were delighted that Jeremy Purvis MSP was able to come to the farm and hand over our first carbon offset cheque to Leadburn Community Woodland. A total of £367 was raised in our first three months trading. This included £160 from sales of prints kindly donated by Myrtle Ashmole. To find out how we calculate the amount see inside.



Nick Nairn, Heather and the film crew filming at Whitmuir. The Landward Programme, screening on Friday 9 November, will feature the carbon offset scheme.

EATS ROOTS AND GREENS

It's been a difficult year for vegetables, not least because the wet summer made weeding impossible for weeks on end. So when veg doctors Alan and Debra Schofield visited the farm for a Soil Association consultancy session, we were knee deep in couch grass where we should have been admiring parsnips.

Alan's prognosis was dire: we would have a harrowing time next season, pulling couch grass out every few weeks until we got on top of it. Then Debra spotted the pigs behind the electric fence, busily rooting out and munching the couch grass rhizomes. When we looked at where they have grazed this year, there was no couch grass to be seen - they have selectively grazed it in preference to ryegrass and even clover.

This was a miracle cure. Just follow the pigs round the field.

On the couch

Couch grass (*agropyron repens*) is also known as Twitch, Rack, Scutch, Wickens and Quackgrass - which just about sums up the way it makes you feel. It spreads under the ground with tough white rhizomes - tough enough to go straight through a growing carrot. Chopping the rhizomes up with a rotavator is couch grass's idea of a Christmas treat, as every bit visible to the naked eye grows up to be a new plant. Rhizome production can be up to 15 t/ha on light soils - 15 tonnes which should have been parsnips in our case.

Root up, not round-up

In conventional systems, farmers can use weedkillers which kill couch grass selectively, or they can just kill everything and plough. But in organic systems there is usually no alternative to pulling it out with long tines, several times - and this only works in dry weather. So the pigs, our constant gardeners, appear to be saving us from rack and ruin.



CALCULATING THE CARBON OFFSET (continued from page 1)

Most people agree that the climate is changing as a result of human activity. We don't know exactly how climate change works, but we do know that we are putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than the atmosphere can recycle. Greenhouse gases trap more of the sun's radiation, making the earth warmer.

Cows and sheep use fermentation in their rumen to break down the grass they eat, and they emit large quantities of methane as a result. Each of our cows is responsible for as much greenhouse gas in a year as a small car.

To balance the harm done by keeping cows and sheep we include a carbon offset charge on all the meat we sell. Since we started the butchery we've set aside 10p for every kilogram of beef or lamb and 4p for every kilogram of pork produced. We are using the money to support Leadburn Community Woodland.

This local group is creating a native woodland and wetland on 100 acres at Leadburn junction. The trees they plant will draw carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and lock it up in their wood.

Much controversy about the value or otherwise of planting trees to offset carbon emissions. Evidence to the Stern Review from the Forestry Commission estimates that forests typically soak up 3t carbon per hectare per year. So just to balance our own livestock we need to 'adopt' about 8ha of forest, and more as we bring in meat from other organic farms. At the moment, the farm has about 10ha of woodland and hedges.

For this approach to cover all the ruminant livestock in Scotland about 400,000 hectares would be needed. A recent report for the Forestry Commission suggested that about 40,000 extra hectares of native woodland could be created in the Borders by restoring and expanding existing native woodlands, without using any arable land - so it is possible.

As far as we know, Whitmuir is the first organic farm to devise such a scheme and we are keen for other farms to join.

WHERE WE ARE

Whitmuir Farm is on the A701, 4 miles south of the Leadburn Inn and 2 miles north of West Linton, approximately 15 minutes from Peebles and 20 minutes from Hillend, Edinburgh by car.

TALKING SHOP 2008

We're planning a series of informal evening talks for farm supporters. The sessions will run from January to March 2008. The meetings will be at the old school in Lamancha from 7.00 - 9.00pm

17 January

Rearing organic livestock, Carey Coombs and Kathleen Lyon.

31 January

On the nature of pigs, Professor Colin Whittemore.

14 February

Introduction to beekeeping, Peter Jack and the Peeblesshire beekeepers association.

28 February

This is just food. Why fair trade matters, Equal Exchange and Green City Wholefoods.

13 March

How to cook meat well with Michael Muir of Cook's Fine Foods.

27 March

An introduction to biodynamic growing, Tim Brinks.

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