1

00:00:00,720 --> 00:00:05,240

[Music]

2

00:00:02,050 --> 00:00:05,240

[Applause]

3

00:00:10,000 --> 00:00:15,440

Hello and welcome. You're listening to

4

00:00:12,400 --> 00:00:17,920

episode 51 of Ear to the Ground, the

5

00:00:15,440 --> 00:00:20,480

agricultural podcast brought to you by

6

00:00:17,920 --> 00:00:22,720

Farming Connect, supporting Welsh farmers

7

00:00:20,480 --> 00:00:24,880

to adapt and thrive.

8

00:00:22,720 --> 00:00:26,960

I’m your host, Aled Jones, and this week

9

00:00:24,880 --> 00:00:28,960

we've been recording at Weobley Castle

10

00:00:26,960 --> 00:00:31,599

Farm near Llanrhidian in the Gower

11

00:00:28,960 --> 00:00:34,239

Peninsula, the home of Dan Pritchard and

12

00:00:31,599 --> 00:00:36,719

his family, owners of the award-winning

13

00:00:34,239 --> 00:00:38,559

Gower Salt Marsh Lamb. The family

14

00:00:36,719 --> 00:00:40,879

graze a thousand ewes on the tidal

15

00:00:38,559 --> 00:00:42,399

marsh along the Loughor estuary and it's

16

00:00:40,879 --> 00:00:45,120

the herbal grasses that grow on the

17

00:00:42,399 --> 00:00:46,160

marsh that gives the lamb its distinct

18

00:00:45,120 --> 00:00:48,480

flavour.

19

00:00:46,160 --> 00:00:51,680

Seeing this as a business opportunity to

20

00:00:48,480 --> 00:00:54,000

add value to their produce, in 2004 the

21

00:00:51,680 --> 00:00:56,239

family started selling lambs direct to

22

00:00:54,000 --> 00:00:58,640

the consumer, and since then it's gone

23

00:00:56,239 --> 00:01:00,000

from strength to strength. Looking back

24

00:00:58,640 --> 00:01:03,359

at the records recently, I think the

25

00:01:00,000 --> 00:01:05,119

first year we did 40 lambs,

26

00:01:03,359 --> 00:01:07,680

and last year I've been reliably

27

00:01:05,119 --> 00:01:09,920

informed by the butcher that we did 960

28

00:01:07,680 --> 00:01:13,119

lambs, and we're looking to break the

29

00:01:09,920 --> 00:01:15,119

thousand lambs this year. Keen to

30

00:01:13,119 --> 00:01:17,439

improve the efficiency of the farming

31

00:01:15,119 --> 00:01:19,840

enterprise, Dan is also a member of

32

00:01:17,439 --> 00:01:20,799

Farming Connect's Prosper from Pasture

33

00:01:19,840 --> 00:01:23,280

programme.

34

00:01:20,799 --> 00:01:26,000

I started on the Master Grass programme

35

00:01:23,280 --> 00:01:27,360

which I think was four years ago.

36

00:01:26,000 --> 00:01:28,960

I've learned so much from

37

00:01:27,360 --> 00:01:31,600

going through all the systems up to the

38

00:01:28,960 --> 00:01:32,880

advanced plus level.

39

00:01:31,600 --> 00:01:34,320

Being in the same group with some very

40

00:01:32,880 --> 00:01:35,520

knowledgeable people

41

00:01:34,320 --> 00:01:38,720

who know what they're talking about

42

00:01:35,520 --> 00:01:38,720

instead of just making noise like me.

43

00:01:38,960 --> 00:01:43,200

One of the things that's really

44

00:01:40,880 --> 00:01:44,880

surprised him is the quality of the

45

00:01:43,200 --> 00:01:46,799

pasture they produce.

46

00:01:44,880 --> 00:01:48,799

I took a sample beginning of March and

47

00:01:46,799 --> 00:01:50,320

it was as good as any concentrate you'll

48

00:01:48,799 --> 00:01:52,560

ever buy.

49

00:01:50,320 --> 00:01:55,920

It made me think

50

00:01:52,560 --> 00:01:59,040

why would I ever buy concentrate?

51

00:01:55,920 --> 00:02:01,439

The ME was touching 12 and the

52

00:01:59,040 --> 00:02:03,119

protein was about 22%.

53

00:02:01,439 --> 00:02:05,280

That really does sharpen the mind on

54

00:02:03,119 --> 00:02:07,600

what you could be spending money on and

55

00:02:05,280 --> 00:02:09,840

what you should be spending money on.

56

00:02:07,600 --> 00:02:12,319

That and plenty more over the next half

57

00:02:09,840 --> 00:02:15,280

an hour. I hope you enjoy our podcast

58

00:02:12,319 --> 00:02:18,920

conversation with Dan Pritchard of Gower

59

00:02:15,280 --> 00:02:18,920

Salt Marsh Lamb.

60

00:02:24,879 --> 00:02:29,280

Dan Pritchard, welcome to the Ear

61

00:02:27,280 --> 00:02:30,959

to the Ground podcast. Great to have you

62

00:02:29,280 --> 00:02:33,200

here and thank you very much for the

63

00:02:30,959 --> 00:02:35,599

welcome to Weobley Castle Farm. I've been

64

00:02:33,200 --> 00:02:37,680

lucky to be here once before, but it's a

65

00:02:35,599 --> 00:02:39,200

stunning location. I’m always

66

00:02:37,680 --> 00:02:40,959

really impressed by the view and the

67

00:02:39,200 --> 00:02:42,640

marsh in the background and that gives

68

00:02:40,959 --> 00:02:44,800

away I guess what we're going to be

69

00:02:42,640 --> 00:02:46,160

talking about today. First of all, how

70

00:02:44,800 --> 00:02:47,680

are you keeping and how are things? I’m

71

00:02:46,160 --> 00:02:49,120

good thank you. Thank you for coming down

72

00:02:47,680 --> 00:02:50,800

today.

73

00:02:49,120 --> 00:02:52,239

It's great to be here on an unusually

74

00:02:50,800 --> 00:02:53,840

warm day for October or

75

00:02:52,239 --> 00:02:55,599

the end of October.

76

00:02:53,840 --> 00:02:57,519

How's the farming

77

00:02:55,599 --> 00:02:59,360

year been for you? It's been pretty

78

00:02:57,519 --> 00:03:00,879

good.

79

00:02:59,360 --> 00:03:02,080

You get the weather like

80

00:03:00,879 --> 00:03:03,760

everyone does, but you can't really complain too

81

00:03:02,080 --> 00:03:06,319

much and you’ve got to put up with it

82

00:03:03,760 --> 00:03:07,920

and adapt to it. Sales are going

83

00:03:06,319 --> 00:03:10,319

pretty well with our lamb

84

00:03:07,920 --> 00:03:11,840

and it's been enjoyable.

85

00:03:10,319 --> 00:03:15,120

You've had quite an impressive year.

86

00:03:11,840 --> 00:03:17,040

You've been awarded a Protected

87

00:03:15,120 --> 00:03:18,640

Designated of Origin (PDO) and a Protected

88

00:03:17,040 --> 00:03:20,480

Geographic

89

00:03:18,640 --> 00:03:21,840

Indicator (PGI). Yes.

90

00:03:20,480 --> 00:03:23,280

That was earlier this year and I think

91

00:03:21,840 --> 00:03:25,440

you were the first food product in the

92

00:03:23,280 --> 00:03:26,799

UK to win the award.

93

00:03:25,440 --> 00:03:27,599

It's been in the pipeline for a few

94

00:03:26,799 --> 00:03:29,440

years.

95

00:03:27,599 --> 00:03:30,959

We just missed out on getting the EU

96

00:03:29,440 --> 00:03:32,400

standard,

97

00:03:30,959 --> 00:03:34,080

but in a way, that worked out well and

98

00:03:32,400 --> 00:03:37,200

we were the first ones to go through as

99

00:03:34,080 --> 00:03:38,640

a UK GI. We also got a

100

00:03:37,200 --> 00:03:40,560

fair bit of publicity because of that.

101

00:03:38,640 --> 00:03:42,480

I’m sure. It's always good for sales.

102

00:03:40,560 --> 00:03:43,920

103

00:03:42,480 --> 00:03:45,840

We are recording this podcast

104

00:03:43,920 --> 00:03:48,799

overlooking the marsh and just to

105

00:03:45,840 --> 00:03:51,360

the side of us is Weobley Castle. Not many

106

00:03:48,799 --> 00:03:53,840

farms can boast to have a 14th century

107

00:03:51,360 --> 00:03:55,760

castle virtually on the farmyard. What's

108

00:03:53,840 --> 00:03:57,760

the history behind this

109

00:03:55,760 --> 00:03:59,760

wonderful castle? It's a 14th century

110

00:03:57,760 --> 00:04:00,799

manor house and it was

111

00:03:59,760 --> 00:04:03,360

built

112

00:04:00,799 --> 00:04:05,840

by the English to defend against the

113

00:04:03,360 --> 00:04:07,439

Welsh after they had taken over.

114

00:04:05,840 --> 00:04:10,239

115

00:04:07,439 --> 00:04:11,840

Most of it is still standing today.

116

00:04:10,239 --> 00:04:12,959

It's obviously a bit of a tourist

117

00:04:11,840 --> 00:04:14,879

attraction.

118

00:04:12,959 --> 00:04:16,880

Roughly counting, I think we get

119

00:04:14,879 --> 00:04:18,479

about 4,000 visitors a year,

120

00:04:16,880 --> 00:04:20,560

and then on the back of that we

121

00:04:18,479 --> 00:04:22,960

opened a small farm shop to hopefully

122

00:04:20,560 --> 00:04:24,320

sell our meat and our lamb.

123

00:04:22,960 --> 00:04:26,720

It works quite well. You've got the

124

00:04:24,320 --> 00:04:28,960

tourism alongside the commercial farming.

125

00:04:26,720 --> 00:04:30,400

Yes. How big a farm is it? Tell us a bit

126

00:04:28,960 --> 00:04:32,880

about the figures, the size and the

127

00:04:30,400 --> 00:04:35,840

number of sheep you farm here.

128

00:04:32,880 --> 00:04:38,400

The farm in total is about 250 acres.

129

00:04:35,840 --> 00:04:40,320

25 acres of that is

130

00:04:38,400 --> 00:04:42,880

woodland and the rest is

131

00:04:40,320 --> 00:04:44,880

grassland. We are bordering the

132

00:04:42,880 --> 00:04:46,800

Llanrhidian salt marsh which is common

133

00:04:44,880 --> 00:04:49,199

grazing. The whole common is

134

00:04:46,800 --> 00:04:50,639

about 3,000 acres.

135

00:04:49,199 --> 00:04:53,199

136

00:04:50,639 --> 00:04:55,600

Are there six grazers on that common?

137

00:04:53,199 --> 00:04:57,440

Yes, there are six grazers. I think

138

00:04:55,600 --> 00:04:59,120

2,500 sheep are on there now,

139

00:04:57,440 --> 00:05:02,000

and of that, just over a

140

00:04:59,120 --> 00:05:05,120

1,000 are ours. We use

141

00:05:02,000 --> 00:05:07,199

that every single day we can. I see.

142

00:05:05,120 --> 00:05:09,120

There's a vast expanse of common

143

00:05:07,199 --> 00:05:10,960

marsh just ahead of us. The

144

00:05:09,120 --> 00:05:12,880

thousand ewes we're currently looking

145

00:05:10,960 --> 00:05:14,320

at, they are all grazing at the moment and

146

00:05:12,880 --> 00:05:16,720

they've got the tups just turned out as

147

00:05:14,320 --> 00:05:19,600

well. Because of the system we

148

00:05:16,720 --> 00:05:22,080

run, we only weaned last week which is

149

00:05:19,600 --> 00:05:24,160

very late, I know. The ewes on the marsh

150

00:05:22,080 --> 00:05:26,240

now

151

00:05:24,160 --> 00:05:27,759

will have a month to themselves

152

00:05:26,240 --> 00:05:29,280

to recover a little bit and then the

153

00:05:27,759 --> 00:05:31,360

tups will be going back out aiming

154

00:05:29,280 --> 00:05:33,840

for April lambing.

155

00:05:31,360 --> 00:05:36,160

Tell us, how challenging is

156

00:05:33,840 --> 00:05:37,919

it to graze on a marsh? A lot of our

157

00:05:36,160 --> 00:05:40,240

listeners will be very unfamiliar, like

158

00:05:37,919 --> 00:05:43,919

myself, of knowing the farming system

159

00:05:40,240 --> 00:05:45,680

of grazing on a tidal plane like this.

160

00:05:43,919 --> 00:05:46,960

You've really got to have your wits

161

00:05:45,680 --> 00:05:49,840

about you to make sure you move the

162

00:05:46,960 --> 00:05:51,680

sheep in time. Yes. Every year we have

163

00:05:49,840 --> 00:05:54,080

to buy a tide book

164

00:05:51,680 --> 00:05:56,000

for this estuary and that will tell us

165

00:05:54,080 --> 00:05:57,680

to the day and to the cm how

166

00:05:56,000 --> 00:05:59,600

high the tide would be.

167

00:05:57,680 --> 00:06:02,319

From that, we plan everything. We

168

00:05:59,600 --> 00:06:04,479

plan our shearing, we plan when the rams

169

00:06:02,319 --> 00:06:06,800

are going to go out, we generally plan

170

00:06:04,479 --> 00:06:08,080

weaning as well, but then the most

171

00:06:06,800 --> 00:06:10,160

important part is actually gathering

172

00:06:08,080 --> 00:06:11,600

them before the high tide comes to make

173

00:06:10,160 --> 00:06:13,280

sure the same amounts come in as

174

00:06:11,600 --> 00:06:15,199

what went out. We

175

00:06:13,280 --> 00:06:17,280

get low tide and high tide

176

00:06:15,199 --> 00:06:20,639

every day, but there's a difference

177

00:06:17,280 --> 00:06:22,240

between a high high and a low high.

178

00:06:20,639 --> 00:06:24,400

Some weeks go by where you

179

00:06:22,240 --> 00:06:27,280

don't have to take the sheep off the

180

00:06:24,400 --> 00:06:28,880

marsh, but when there is a high high tide,

181

00:06:27,280 --> 00:06:31,120

you've got to get them in almost on a

182

00:06:28,880 --> 00:06:32,880

daily basis. Yes. When there are high high

183

00:06:31,120 --> 00:06:35,280

tides,

184

00:06:32,880 --> 00:06:37,199

this whole area will be covered. Normally,

185

00:06:35,280 --> 00:06:40,000

it’s about a week if the tide is

186

00:06:37,199 --> 00:06:41,280

coming in and out twice a day, but

187

00:06:40,000 --> 00:06:43,199

every sheep would have to be off that

188

00:06:41,280 --> 00:06:44,479

marsh for that period. On

189

00:06:43,199 --> 00:06:46,400

average, we probably get about two to

190

00:06:44,479 --> 00:06:48,479

three weeks of low tides where we

191

00:06:46,400 --> 00:06:50,319

can put the animals back out there and

192

00:06:48,479 --> 00:06:52,960

let them do their thing before we have

193

00:06:50,319 --> 00:06:54,479

to get them back in again. I

194

00:06:52,960 --> 00:06:55,440

assume you've got some pretty good dogs

195

00:06:54,479 --> 00:06:56,880

to

196

00:06:55,440 --> 00:06:58,880

shepherd all these sheep in when you

197

00:06:56,880 --> 00:07:01,680

need to. The dogs are OK. I think

198

00:06:58,880 --> 00:07:03,440

they learn the system.

199

00:07:01,680 --> 00:07:04,880

Obviously looking at it now, you can't get a

200

00:07:03,440 --> 00:07:06,319

vehicle out to most of it, therefore you do have

201

00:07:04,880 --> 00:07:08,400

to walk a fair bit.

202

00:07:06,319 --> 00:07:10,160

Then with the dogs, you have to do a lot of

203

00:07:08,400 --> 00:07:11,840

shouting, and if it goes wrong, a little

204

00:07:10,160 --> 00:07:14,720

bit of swearing,

205

00:07:11,840 --> 00:07:17,199

and eventually they do all come in.

206

00:07:14,720 --> 00:07:19,039

What breed of sheep are they? Do

207

00:07:17,199 --> 00:07:20,720

they have to be a special breed to

208

00:07:19,039 --> 00:07:23,120

graze here?

209

00:07:20,720 --> 00:07:24,240

Traditionally, we're a Welsh mule.

210

00:07:23,120 --> 00:07:26,319

Probably 50% of them are

211

00:07:24,240 --> 00:07:27,919

Welsh mules. We have got a fair few Easycares

212

00:07:26,319 --> 00:07:30,479

now coming through just to try and

213

00:07:27,919 --> 00:07:32,000

make the system a little bit

214

00:07:30,479 --> 00:07:33,440

easier

215

00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:35,039

for me.

216

00:07:33,440 --> 00:07:36,000

There are a few Suffolk crosses, but

217

00:07:35,039 --> 00:07:37,120

generally,

218

00:07:36,000 --> 00:07:39,520

as long as it's got a good

219

00:07:37,120 --> 00:07:41,280

influence of Welsh blood in the sheep

220

00:07:39,520 --> 00:07:43,440

for the Welsh mules, they should be OK

221

00:07:41,280 --> 00:07:45,520

up there. Talk us through the

222

00:07:43,440 --> 00:07:47,120

farming calendar. Clearly you

223

00:07:45,520 --> 00:07:48,960

wouldn't lamb on the marsh. You tend to

224

00:07:47,120 --> 00:07:52,000

lamb on the higher

225

00:07:48,960 --> 00:07:54,080

ground by the farmyard. Yes.

226

00:07:52,000 --> 00:07:55,680

Sheep are on the marsh till the end

227

00:07:54,080 --> 00:07:57,039

of the year, and at the start of the

228

00:07:55,680 --> 00:08:01,440

following year, we try and bring them in

229

00:07:57,039 --> 00:08:03,599

onto root crops, silage or hay.

230

00:08:01,440 --> 00:08:05,680

Then we try and graze the fields,

231

00:08:03,599 --> 00:08:08,160

the lambing fields in March ready for

232

00:08:05,680 --> 00:08:10,080

lambing in April, and

233

00:08:08,160 --> 00:08:11,680

then within about two or three weeks

234

00:08:10,080 --> 00:08:13,039

we try and get the lambs straight back

235

00:08:11,680 --> 00:08:16,000

out into the marsh

236

00:08:13,039 --> 00:08:18,000

and they'll be there until

237

00:08:16,000 --> 00:08:19,759

October time with the lambs

238

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:21,520

coming in and out.

239

00:08:19,759 --> 00:08:22,720

We'll then wean all the lambs and

240

00:08:21,520 --> 00:08:25,360

then the ewes have a bit of a break

241

00:08:22,720 --> 00:08:26,720

until the tups go out in November,

242

00:08:25,360 --> 00:08:29,680

and then the whole system starts again.

243

00:08:26,720 --> 00:08:31,199

It's a continuous cycle.

244

00:08:29,680 --> 00:08:33,279

The earlier lambs,

245

00:08:31,199 --> 00:08:35,680

will they fatten off this marsh? Will

246

00:08:33,279 --> 00:08:36,880

they get to a good condition?

247

00:08:35,680 --> 00:08:39,440

Yes. They're fattening pretty well

248

00:08:36,880 --> 00:08:41,519

this year. What we find is if they're

249

00:08:39,440 --> 00:08:44,720

healthy going out, they'll be healthy

250

00:08:41,519 --> 00:08:46,399

coming in. I don't think there's

251

00:08:44,720 --> 00:08:48,320

any worms out there at all probably due

252

00:08:46,399 --> 00:08:50,240

to the salt water,

253

00:08:48,320 --> 00:08:52,880

but the little problems that we do have are things

254

00:08:50,240 --> 00:08:54,480

like fly strike and foot problems, and

255

00:08:52,880 --> 00:08:57,040

if they go out and they're not protected

256

00:08:54,480 --> 00:08:58,240

against the flies, then

257

00:08:57,040 --> 00:09:00,560

they might be in a bit of trouble coming

258

00:08:58,240 --> 00:09:02,880

back three weeks later. Things like

259

00:09:00,560 --> 00:09:04,399

feet, if we're not on top of it, things

260

00:09:02,880 --> 00:09:05,680

can escalate quite quickly and they'll

261

00:09:04,399 --> 00:09:06,640

come in a little bit worse than what

262

00:09:05,680 --> 00:09:08,640

we'd like.

263

00:09:06,640 --> 00:09:10,800

For them to be designated

264

00:09:08,640 --> 00:09:13,200

as the Gower Salt Marsh Lamb, the

265

00:09:10,800 --> 00:09:15,360

lambs have to spent at least half of

266

00:09:13,200 --> 00:09:17,279

their lives on the marsh for them to get

267

00:09:15,360 --> 00:09:19,600

that status. Yes. That was one of the

268

00:09:17,279 --> 00:09:21,519

standards we insisted on when we

269

00:09:19,600 --> 00:09:22,720

helped to design the whole standard.

270

00:09:21,519 --> 00:09:24,399

271

00:09:22,720 --> 00:09:25,519

It can be quite a challenge because

272

00:09:24,399 --> 00:09:27,839

they’ll be on the fields for two or three

273

00:09:25,519 --> 00:09:30,640

weeks when they're born

274

00:09:27,839 --> 00:09:33,440

and then maybe one in three they're in

275

00:09:30,640 --> 00:09:35,600

because of high tides.

276

00:09:33,440 --> 00:09:36,959

It's about 12 weeks old when

277

00:09:35,600 --> 00:09:40,320

they're just getting above the 50%

278

00:09:36,959 --> 00:09:42,640

to be classed as Salt Marsh Lamb.

279

00:09:40,320 --> 00:09:44,240

Tell us about the grasses that

280

00:09:42,640 --> 00:09:46,000

grow on the marsh. That is what

281

00:09:44,240 --> 00:09:47,440

influences the flavour of the meat

282

00:09:46,000 --> 00:09:49,680

which we'll come on to in a minute, but it's a very

283

00:09:47,440 --> 00:09:52,640

different type of grass to what we're

284

00:09:49,680 --> 00:09:54,320

stood on here on the bank. Yes. Again,

285

00:09:52,640 --> 00:09:56,720

the salt water

286

00:09:54,320 --> 00:09:58,320

prohibits normal grasses and

287

00:09:56,720 --> 00:10:00,399

clovers to grow. The only thing that

288

00:09:58,320 --> 00:10:01,839

grows are salt tolerant herbs

289

00:10:00,399 --> 00:10:04,160

and there's a long list of different

290

00:10:01,839 --> 00:10:06,320

ones. The

291

00:10:04,160 --> 00:10:07,839

most well-known is the samphire, and there's

292

00:10:06,320 --> 00:10:08,880

sea lavender.

293

00:10:07,839 --> 00:10:11,279

294

00:10:08,880 --> 00:10:13,920

The actual grass itself is a very

295

00:10:11,279 --> 00:10:16,160

tough small fescue which will stand the

296

00:10:13,920 --> 00:10:18,399

salt. That is the lambs and the

297

00:10:16,160 --> 00:10:20,480

ewes’ diet

298

00:10:18,399 --> 00:10:22,480

for the whole time they're out there.

299

00:10:20,480 --> 00:10:24,480

How does that influence the flavour and

300

00:10:22,480 --> 00:10:27,279

the taste of the lamb?

301

00:10:24,480 --> 00:10:28,720

302

00:10:27,279 --> 00:10:30,880

It's all down to the different

303

00:10:28,720 --> 00:10:33,600

diet to what you get in conventional

304

00:10:30,880 --> 00:10:34,959

lamb, and then that different diet goes

305

00:10:33,600 --> 00:10:37,040

through and

306

00:10:34,959 --> 00:10:38,560

gives the meat a little bit extra as I

307

00:10:37,040 --> 00:10:40,320

like to say.

308

00:10:38,560 --> 00:10:43,200

When did you start the box scheme,

309

00:10:40,320 --> 00:10:45,680

selling direct to the consumer?

310

00:10:43,200 --> 00:10:48,959

The business actually started about 17

311

00:10:45,680 --> 00:10:51,519

years ago and it's slowly been getting

312

00:10:48,959 --> 00:10:52,880

busier and busier every year.

313

00:10:51,519 --> 00:10:56,560

Looking back at the records recently, I

314

00:10:52,880 --> 00:10:58,399

think the first year we did 40 lambs,

315

00:10:56,560 --> 00:11:00,880

and last year I've been reliably

316

00:10:58,399 --> 00:11:03,120

informed by the butcher that we did 960

317

00:11:00,880 --> 00:11:06,480

lambs. We're looking to break the

318

00:11:03,120 --> 00:11:08,480

thousand lambs this year. Almost all

319

00:11:06,480 --> 00:11:10,959

the lambs you rear are potentially going

320

00:11:08,480 --> 00:11:12,640

through the box? Yes. That's

321

00:11:10,959 --> 00:11:14,240

incredible.

322

00:11:12,640 --> 00:11:15,839

In all fairness, you've been at it

323

00:11:14,240 --> 00:11:18,160

for many years and you've learned a

324

00:11:15,839 --> 00:11:19,839

lot during that period and the

325

00:11:18,160 --> 00:11:20,959

experiences you've gained,

326

00:11:19,839 --> 00:11:22,480

but you're lucky as well that you've got a

327

00:11:20,959 --> 00:11:24,240

local abattoir which is only four or

328

00:11:22,480 --> 00:11:26,640

five miles away. Yes. The local abattoir

329

00:11:24,240 --> 00:11:28,800

is five miles down the road. That

330

00:11:26,640 --> 00:11:30,079

makes the system viable. Yes, and

331

00:11:28,800 --> 00:11:32,640

it adds to the story.

332

00:11:30,079 --> 00:11:35,120

One of the

333

00:11:32,640 --> 00:11:37,040

standards for being in the UK GI scheme

334

00:11:35,120 --> 00:11:39,120

is that the lambs have to

335

00:11:37,040 --> 00:11:40,800

go to an abattoir in Gower, and we're

336

00:11:39,120 --> 00:11:42,959

quite lucky that it’s literally a few miles

337

00:11:40,800 --> 00:11:45,360

from the door. 10-15 minutes

338

00:11:42,959 --> 00:11:47,360

drive and we are there. Small local

339

00:11:45,360 --> 00:11:49,519

abattoirs are under huge pressures.

340

00:11:47,360 --> 00:11:51,600

You're so lucky that you’ve got one.

341

00:11:49,519 --> 00:11:52,639

We've got to keep it busy.

342

00:11:51,600 --> 00:11:54,480

You're doing a good

343

00:11:52,639 --> 00:11:56,720

effort to put as many lambs through as

344

00:11:54,480 --> 00:11:58,399

you possibly can.

345

00:11:56,720 --> 00:12:00,240

They leave here, they spend half

346

00:11:58,399 --> 00:12:01,680

their lives on the marsh, they

347

00:12:00,240 --> 00:12:03,360

produce this wonderful meat, they get

348

00:12:01,680 --> 00:12:05,760

slaughtered in the local abattoir and then

349

00:12:03,360 --> 00:12:07,839

they're back here for the butchery on

350

00:12:05,760 --> 00:12:08,639

the farmyard.

351

00:12:07,839 --> 00:12:11,120

Yes.

352

00:12:08,639 --> 00:12:13,839

Ten years ago, we converted an old shed

353

00:12:11,120 --> 00:12:16,480

into a little butchery room.

354

00:12:13,839 --> 00:12:18,959

We quickly outgrew that, therefore two

355

00:12:16,480 --> 00:12:20,639

years ago, we invested a bit more money

356

00:12:18,959 --> 00:12:23,120

and we converted one of our main sheds,

357

00:12:20,639 --> 00:12:24,800

or a proportion of our main shed into a

358

00:12:23,120 --> 00:12:26,399

brand new butchery room.

359

00:12:24,800 --> 00:12:27,680

That’s what we're using currently,

360

00:12:26,399 --> 00:12:30,079

and it's much more efficient than

361

00:12:27,680 --> 00:12:32,000

what we used to have.

362

00:12:30,079 --> 00:12:33,680

All the lambs come back to us

363

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:36,480

and we get a butcher in once or twice a

364

00:12:33,680 --> 00:12:38,639

week and he can process the lambs then.

365

00:12:36,480 --> 00:12:40,880

From then on, they're boxed and

366

00:12:38,639 --> 00:12:43,120

delivered. It's quite a lot of work

367

00:12:40,880 --> 00:12:44,800

to manage the admin side of it.

368

00:12:43,120 --> 00:12:47,200

I assume you get a lot of

369

00:12:44,800 --> 00:12:49,839

online orders, telephone orders, repeat

370

00:12:47,200 --> 00:12:52,079

customers, tourists and visitors that come

371

00:12:49,839 --> 00:12:53,519

here on a regular basis. You've got to

372

00:12:52,079 --> 00:12:55,440

take those orders and make sure you match

373

00:12:53,519 --> 00:12:57,120

the lambs you've got to that order and

374

00:12:55,440 --> 00:12:58,800

make sure their boxes are all in place

375

00:12:57,120 --> 00:12:59,839

and get them delivered or collected.

376

00:12:58,800 --> 00:13:01,600

There’s quite a bit of logistics.

377

00:12:59,839 --> 00:13:03,360

There’s quite a bit of

378

00:13:01,600 --> 00:13:04,639

everything going around and

379

00:13:03,360 --> 00:13:06,079

pen and paper have been pushed around

380

00:13:04,639 --> 00:13:07,360

with little notes on to remind people of

381

00:13:06,079 --> 00:13:08,880

what to do.

382

00:13:07,360 --> 00:13:11,120

I think we’ve got into a good sort

383

00:13:08,880 --> 00:13:12,639

of rhythm now and it generally does work.

384

00:13:11,120 --> 00:13:14,399

You work in partnership

385

00:13:12,639 --> 00:13:15,360

with your brother and your parents

386

00:13:14,399 --> 00:13:17,200

of course, but your brother's very

387

00:13:15,360 --> 00:13:19,600

hands-on on the butchery side. Yes. He

388

00:13:17,200 --> 00:13:21,360

does the indoor work

389

00:13:19,600 --> 00:13:22,800

and I generally do the outdoor work.

390

00:13:21,360 --> 00:13:24,480

That's a very simple way of

391

00:13:22,800 --> 00:13:26,880

thinking about it. The splitter

392

00:13:24,480 --> 00:13:29,120

responsibilities works well. Yes.

393

00:13:26,880 --> 00:13:31,040

You deliver your

394

00:13:29,120 --> 00:13:32,000

lamb all across the UK. Where do you send your boxes

395

00:13:31,040 --> 00:13:34,000

to?

396

00:13:32,000 --> 00:13:36,560

We use a courier system, next

397

00:13:34,000 --> 00:13:37,920

day delivery, and it goes all over. I

398

00:13:36,560 --> 00:13:39,120

think a couple went to Aberdeen

399

00:13:37,920 --> 00:13:42,399

last week.

400

00:13:39,120 --> 00:13:44,480

We generally do about 40

401

00:13:42,399 --> 00:13:45,600

individual boxes a week, and they

402

00:13:44,480 --> 00:13:47,360

can be all over the

403

00:13:45,600 --> 00:13:48,880

country. Are they whole boxes, or do you

404

00:13:47,360 --> 00:13:51,040

do half lamb?

405

00:13:48,880 --> 00:13:52,639

Whole lambs, half lambs,

406

00:13:51,040 --> 00:13:53,680

quarter lambs you've started doing, and

407

00:13:52,639 --> 00:13:55,600

then there are

408

00:13:53,680 --> 00:13:56,800

different boxes if people just want a

409

00:13:55,600 --> 00:13:58,639

leg of lamb.

410

00:13:56,800 --> 00:13:59,920

We can accommodate for that as well.

411

00:13:58,639 --> 00:14:02,000

What's the price for a whole

412

00:13:59,920 --> 00:14:05,120

lamb and a half lamb in a box? Whole

413

00:14:02,000 --> 00:14:07,600

lamb is £210, and for that we

414

00:14:05,120 --> 00:14:09,760

guarantee that it'll be above 20kg,

415

00:14:07,600 --> 00:14:11,680

and that includes the delivery as well.

416

00:14:09,760 --> 00:14:13,680

It makes a huge difference.

417

00:14:11,680 --> 00:14:16,079

In terms of adding

418

00:14:13,680 --> 00:14:17,760

value to the product, it's beneficial to

419

00:14:16,079 --> 00:14:19,199

the business to sell as many direct

420

00:14:17,760 --> 00:14:21,279

as you can. It obviously

421

00:14:19,199 --> 00:14:23,440

takes a bit of work to organise it all,

422

00:14:21,279 --> 00:14:24,639

a bit of time, a bit of money

423

00:14:23,440 --> 00:14:25,839

invested and

424

00:14:24,639 --> 00:14:28,800

you've got to get that back

425

00:14:25,839 --> 00:14:30,560

somehow. Every little helps.

426

00:14:28,800 --> 00:14:32,000

Have you noticed on the back of

427

00:14:30,560 --> 00:14:34,880

things like

428

00:14:32,000 --> 00:14:36,959

being awarded the PDO status and

429

00:14:34,880 --> 00:14:39,519

you've had a lot of media attention, does

430

00:14:36,959 --> 00:14:41,440

that help boost sales from time to time?

431

00:14:39,519 --> 00:14:45,360

Yes. When the

432

00:14:41,440 --> 00:14:47,199

PDO was granted,

433

00:14:45,360 --> 00:14:49,839

orders went crazy for the next two days.

434

00:14:47,199 --> 00:14:51,839

It’s only now that we are cutting the orders

435

00:14:49,839 --> 00:14:54,800

that we received that week. We just had

436

00:14:51,839 --> 00:14:57,199

to tell them there's a big delay,

437

00:14:54,800 --> 00:14:59,440

but luckily, they've all understood.

438

00:14:57,199 --> 00:15:02,160

We’ve done a few

439

00:14:59,440 --> 00:15:03,600

television shows in the past and they

440

00:15:02,160 --> 00:15:05,120

do re-runs

441

00:15:03,600 --> 00:15:06,959

and we don't even know about it, and all

442

00:15:05,120 --> 00:15:08,320

of a sudden our orders spike

443

00:15:06,959 --> 00:15:10,560

that week when something's being shown

444

00:15:08,320 --> 00:15:11,839

on Saturday morning television or

445

00:15:10,560 --> 00:15:12,720

something like that. It definitely

446

00:15:11,839 --> 00:15:14,320

helps.

447

00:15:12,720 --> 00:15:15,680

But it's still a seasonal business.

448

00:15:14,320 --> 00:15:16,959

There is a window where you sell your

449

00:15:15,680 --> 00:15:19,040

lamb and there's obviously a period

450

00:15:16,959 --> 00:15:21,360

where there is no lamb available. Yes.

451

00:15:19,040 --> 00:15:24,160

The salt marsh season runs from the

452

00:15:21,360 --> 00:15:26,079

end of June up until Christmas.

453

00:15:24,160 --> 00:15:28,079

What we do then is we freeze as

454

00:15:26,079 --> 00:15:29,440

much as we can at Christmas with a view

455

00:15:28,079 --> 00:15:31,600

to sell

456

00:15:29,440 --> 00:15:33,279

before we start the fresh season again.

457

00:15:31,600 --> 00:15:35,040

Is it just you as a family that's

458

00:15:33,279 --> 00:15:37,759

involved in this, or do your neighbouring

459

00:15:35,040 --> 00:15:39,680

farmers also supply Gowers Salt Marsh Lamb?

460

00:15:37,759 --> 00:15:40,959

There are neighbouring farmers who do

461

00:15:39,680 --> 00:15:42,800

have sheep on the marsh, but it's a

462

00:15:40,959 --> 00:15:44,639

family business and we only use our

463

00:15:42,800 --> 00:15:47,199

lambs in our butchery room.

464

00:15:44,639 --> 00:15:49,600

If the demand

465

00:15:47,199 --> 00:15:50,800

continues to grow as it has in

466

00:15:49,600 --> 00:15:52,839

previous years, do you think you're going to

467

00:15:50,800 --> 00:15:54,560

need to carry more sheep on this farm?

468

00:15:52,839 --> 00:15:55,920

469

00:15:54,560 --> 00:15:57,920

No. We can't have more sheep. We're sort

470

00:15:55,920 --> 00:15:59,920

of limited by the size of the fields

471

00:15:57,920 --> 00:16:01,199

for lambing as that’s our sort of

472

00:15:59,920 --> 00:16:03,279

critical point.

473

00:16:01,199 --> 00:16:04,880

I don't really know what will happen if

474

00:16:03,279 --> 00:16:07,120

more orders come in. Maybe we’ll have to

475

00:16:04,880 --> 00:16:08,720

look at buying from a neighbour who

476

00:16:07,120 --> 00:16:10,079

fits the same

477

00:16:08,720 --> 00:16:12,079

standards and criteria

478

00:16:10,079 --> 00:16:12,959

that we ask for,

479

00:16:12,079 --> 00:16:14,560

480

00:16:12,959 --> 00:16:16,720

but that could be on the horizon pretty

481

00:16:14,560 --> 00:16:18,639

soon. What a nice problem to

482

00:16:16,720 --> 00:16:20,160

have in that

483

00:16:18,639 --> 00:16:21,600

respect.

484

00:16:20,160 --> 00:16:23,920

We've been recording here and we've had

485

00:16:21,600 --> 00:16:25,839

some tourists pass us earlier on.

486

00:16:23,920 --> 00:16:27,839

How do you manage running a commercial

487

00:16:25,839 --> 00:16:29,279

farm alongside what is essentially a

488

00:16:27,839 --> 00:16:31,680

tourist attraction? I’m sure the

489

00:16:29,279 --> 00:16:33,199

staycation trend or boom we’ve seen

490

00:16:31,680 --> 00:16:34,720

this year has meant you've had a lot

491

00:16:33,199 --> 00:16:37,600

more visitors than usual. It’s been a

492

00:16:34,720 --> 00:16:39,120

lot busier the last couple years.

493

00:16:37,600 --> 00:16:41,519

What we try and do is put all the

494

00:16:39,120 --> 00:16:44,079

dirty stuff around the back and

495

00:16:41,519 --> 00:16:46,560

keep the public side of things clean.

496

00:16:44,079 --> 00:16:47,839

It’s not too bad though. Luckily, our

497

00:16:46,560 --> 00:16:49,040

sheds are a little bit away and you've got

498

00:16:47,839 --> 00:16:50,720

to go around the back of the sheds to

499

00:16:49,040 --> 00:16:53,120

get to all the machinery.

500

00:16:50,720 --> 00:16:55,040

You don't really cross paths often.

501

00:16:53,120 --> 00:16:56,880

It’s very well kept and

502

00:16:55,040 --> 00:16:58,399

the landscape is very well

503

00:16:56,880 --> 00:17:00,639

manicured. I could see a robotic

504

00:16:58,399 --> 00:17:02,800

lawnmower passing earlier on. You

505

00:17:00,639 --> 00:17:04,400

do make an effort to keep this

506

00:17:02,800 --> 00:17:06,000

clean and tidy, and it's part of the

507

00:17:04,400 --> 00:17:07,280

brand I guess and it's part of the marketing.

508

00:17:06,000 --> 00:17:08,720

It helps.

509

00:17:07,280 --> 00:17:10,640

To get repeat customs coming back, you

510

00:17:08,720 --> 00:17:11,600

want something that looks quite nice for

511

00:17:10,640 --> 00:17:14,079

them

512

00:17:11,600 --> 00:17:16,160

to look at. Being responsible for the

513

00:17:14,079 --> 00:17:18,799

outside element of the farm, another area

514

00:17:16,160 --> 00:17:20,160

you've been looking at in detail is the

515

00:17:18,799 --> 00:17:21,839

grassland management, and you've been a

516

00:17:20,160 --> 00:17:23,760

member of the Prosper from Pasture

517

00:17:21,839 --> 00:17:25,839

programme. Has that been worth it?

518

00:17:23,760 --> 00:17:28,640

Yes. It's been brilliant.

519

00:17:25,839 --> 00:17:32,240

I started on the master grass

520

00:17:28,640 --> 00:17:33,600

programme which I think was four years ago,

521

00:17:32,240 --> 00:17:35,200

and I've learned so much from

522

00:17:33,600 --> 00:17:37,840

going through all the systems up to the

523

00:17:35,200 --> 00:17:39,120

advance plus level.

524

00:17:37,840 --> 00:17:40,559

Being in the same group with some very

525

00:17:39,120 --> 00:17:41,760

knowledgeable people

526

00:17:40,559 --> 00:17:44,160

who know what they're talking about

527

00:17:41,760 --> 00:17:46,000

instead of just making noise like me.

528

00:17:44,160 --> 00:17:47,600

It’s trying to copy what

529

00:17:46,000 --> 00:17:50,080

they're doing and take little bits which

530

00:17:47,600 --> 00:17:51,919

I think will help my business.

531

00:17:50,080 --> 00:17:53,840

What made you apply for that programme

532

00:17:51,919 --> 00:17:55,360

in the first place? I've always been

533

00:17:53,840 --> 00:17:57,440

interested in sort of continuous

534

00:17:55,360 --> 00:17:59,520

learning, continuous development,

535

00:17:57,440 --> 00:18:00,559

and knowing stuff about the

536

00:17:59,520 --> 00:18:01,840

soil and grass is something that I’m

537

00:18:00,559 --> 00:18:03,120

interested in. It sort of ticked all

538

00:18:01,840 --> 00:18:04,559

the boxes.

539

00:18:03,120 --> 00:18:05,440

Just behind you there

540

00:18:04,559 --> 00:18:07,760

is a

541

00:18:05,440 --> 00:18:10,480

field with about 400 lambs on it.

542

00:18:07,760 --> 00:18:12,480

I think there are 420 lambs in

543

00:18:10,480 --> 00:18:14,720

about a seven-acre field

544

00:18:12,480 --> 00:18:17,360

and they are the last ones which we

545

00:18:14,720 --> 00:18:19,360

weaned about a week ago.

546

00:18:17,360 --> 00:18:21,200

They're all going to be

547

00:18:19,360 --> 00:18:23,440

rotationally grazed in the fields.

548

00:18:21,200 --> 00:18:24,559

I reckon

549

00:18:23,440 --> 00:18:27,060

we should take a look at them. How about

550

00:18:24,559 --> 00:18:31,430

that? Sounds perfect. Good.

551

00:18:27,060 --> 00:18:31,430

[Music]

552

00:18:37,440 --> 00:18:42,880

Moving on from the farm,

553

00:18:40,160 --> 00:18:45,600

we've just come 200 yards up the road to

554

00:18:42,880 --> 00:18:47,440

a block of land which we own. It's a 50

555

00:18:45,600 --> 00:18:50,880

acre block,

556

00:18:47,440 --> 00:18:53,600

and behind me are about 420 lambs probably

557

00:18:50,880 --> 00:18:55,360

averaging about 30kg.

558

00:18:53,600 --> 00:18:56,720

They're the last lambs which we

559

00:18:55,360 --> 00:18:58,720

have just weaned.

560

00:18:56,720 --> 00:19:01,600

I’ve just about started their

561

00:18:58,720 --> 00:19:04,240

rotations now. I started a few days ago,

562

00:19:01,600 --> 00:19:06,080

and I’m confident I’ve got enough grass

563

00:19:04,240 --> 00:19:07,120

to last them until Christmas in

564

00:19:06,080 --> 00:19:08,559

this block.

565

00:19:07,120 --> 00:19:09,600

There's a good cover of grass here,

566

00:19:08,559 --> 00:19:11,120

if something,

567

00:19:09,600 --> 00:19:13,280

it's a bit too strong

568

00:19:11,120 --> 00:19:14,960

almost and that's why you put a big mob in

569

00:19:13,280 --> 00:19:17,280

one field to try and get on top of

570

00:19:14,960 --> 00:19:18,480

the grass.

571

00:19:17,280 --> 00:19:20,400

This grass has been growing

572

00:19:18,480 --> 00:19:23,280

since we took a second cut.

573

00:19:20,400 --> 00:19:25,200

It's got a bit far ahead of them, therefore

574

00:19:23,280 --> 00:19:26,480

I decided to mob all the lambs

575

00:19:25,200 --> 00:19:28,880

we've got together and which we've got left

576

00:19:26,480 --> 00:19:30,960

on the farm and

577

00:19:28,880 --> 00:19:33,200

get right on top of the grass and

578

00:19:30,960 --> 00:19:35,039

get them moving around this block.

579

00:19:33,200 --> 00:19:36,720

How long do you envisage they'll be

580

00:19:35,039 --> 00:19:39,200

on this paddock before they move on

581

00:19:36,720 --> 00:19:41,039

to the next field? Using the calculations

582

00:19:39,200 --> 00:19:43,360

which I did last week, there should be

583

00:19:41,039 --> 00:19:45,600

enough for about 12 days, but I think

584

00:19:43,360 --> 00:19:47,440

that's a bit long. I'll probably leave

585

00:19:45,600 --> 00:19:49,760

them for four days here and

586

00:19:47,440 --> 00:19:51,840

then move them on to another field for

587

00:19:49,760 --> 00:19:53,520

four or five days and

588

00:19:51,840 --> 00:19:56,240

just keep going around the whole

589

00:19:53,520 --> 00:19:57,919

grazing block.

590

00:19:56,240 --> 00:19:59,280

Even though this grass is quite

591

00:19:57,919 --> 00:20:00,640

long, hopefully it will hit it quite hard.

592

00:19:59,280 --> 00:20:03,200

593

00:20:00,640 --> 00:20:05,200

I’m sure I won't hit the proper

594

00:20:03,200 --> 00:20:06,960

residuals, but they'll come back for

595

00:20:05,200 --> 00:20:08,720

another grazing quick enough. You’re

596

00:20:06,960 --> 00:20:10,400

lucky, the size of the paddocks here,

597

00:20:08,720 --> 00:20:11,919

the existing size are quite small

598

00:20:10,400 --> 00:20:13,919

enough and you haven't had to put electric

599

00:20:11,919 --> 00:20:17,280

fencing up to try and subdivide paddocks

600

00:20:13,919 --> 00:20:19,679

yet. No, not yet. Generally, on this farm

601

00:20:17,280 --> 00:20:20,640

the fields are about five, six, seven

602

00:20:19,679 --> 00:20:22,480

acres in size.

603

00:20:20,640 --> 00:20:24,400

The one they're in now is one of our

604

00:20:22,480 --> 00:20:26,159

bigger ones. This field is about

605

00:20:24,400 --> 00:20:28,559

9 acres.

606

00:20:26,159 --> 00:20:30,159

I haven't put any electric fences up

607

00:20:28,559 --> 00:20:32,640

yet, but it's something I might do

608

00:20:30,159 --> 00:20:34,400

in the future. One thing with the

609

00:20:32,640 --> 00:20:36,640

infrastructure though, I have spent a

610

00:20:34,400 --> 00:20:38,960

little bit of money just putting in a

611

00:20:36,640 --> 00:20:40,799

more water troughs of course and

612

00:20:38,960 --> 00:20:42,320

dragging some

613

00:20:40,799 --> 00:20:43,760

alkathene pipes around just to make it a

614

00:20:42,320 --> 00:20:45,200

bit easier for them,

615

00:20:43,760 --> 00:20:47,200

and it gives me the option then if I do

616

00:20:45,200 --> 00:20:48,960

want to put an electric fence up and I can

617

00:20:47,200 --> 00:20:50,720

put it wherever I want. Do you

618

00:20:48,960 --> 00:20:53,039

have your own water supply

619

00:20:50,720 --> 00:20:55,520

here, or is it mains? This block is off

620

00:20:53,039 --> 00:20:57,200

the mains. I’m

621

00:20:55,520 --> 00:20:59,440

quite lucky that there's very good pressure

622

00:20:57,200 --> 00:21:01,200

up here. There are no problems

623

00:20:59,440 --> 00:21:03,440

at all with it ever going dry.

624

00:21:01,200 --> 00:21:04,799

And the rotational grazing

625

00:21:03,440 --> 00:21:06,799

that you're trying to implement here. Is

626

00:21:04,799 --> 00:21:08,720

that something you've done on the back

627

00:21:06,799 --> 00:21:10,640

of the Prosper from Pasture programme, or were you

628

00:21:08,720 --> 00:21:12,559

experimenting with it beforehand, and

629

00:21:10,640 --> 00:21:14,480

then the course and the programme has

630

00:21:12,559 --> 00:21:17,039

given you the confidence to do more? I

631

00:21:14,480 --> 00:21:19,440

was kind of experimenting beforehand

632

00:21:17,039 --> 00:21:21,039

but without any sort of figures or any

633

00:21:19,440 --> 00:21:23,039

knowledge of what I was doing. It was

634

00:21:21,039 --> 00:21:23,840

mainly just moving them every three days

635

00:21:23,039 --> 00:21:24,960

because that’s what I read in

636

00:21:23,840 --> 00:21:27,039

magazines.

637

00:21:24,960 --> 00:21:29,840

Since starting this programme,

638

00:21:27,039 --> 00:21:32,080

I've looked into it in a bit more depth.

639

00:21:29,840 --> 00:21:33,840

I was out here measuring last week just

640

00:21:32,080 --> 00:21:36,000

to see what this block had,

641

00:21:33,840 --> 00:21:38,240

and I now know that there's over

642

00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:39,840

3,000kg of dry matter (DM) per hectare (ha)

643

00:21:38,240 --> 00:21:41,760

in this field.

644

00:21:39,840 --> 00:21:43,840

From then on, I

645

00:21:41,760 --> 00:21:45,039

can work out how long the lambs could

646

00:21:43,840 --> 00:21:46,640

stay here.

647

00:21:45,039 --> 00:21:49,200

One of the main things which I've

648

00:21:46,640 --> 00:21:50,720

used it for is for a pre-lambing grazing

649

00:21:49,200 --> 00:21:53,600

rotation.

650

00:21:50,720 --> 00:21:55,200

Speaking to Rhys who convinced me that

651

00:21:53,600 --> 00:21:56,000

it was the right thing to do.

652

00:21:55,200 --> 00:21:59,200

653

00:21:56,000 --> 00:22:01,039

These fields were used

654

00:21:59,200 --> 00:22:03,120

for the whole of March

655

00:22:01,039 --> 00:22:04,880

for the ewes with multiples to

656

00:22:03,120 --> 00:22:06,400

graze around before they started lambing

657

00:22:04,880 --> 00:22:08,720

in April.

658

00:22:06,400 --> 00:22:11,280

Were you measuring grass before

659

00:22:08,720 --> 00:22:12,799

going on the programme? No.

660

00:22:11,280 --> 00:22:15,200

Since the programme, I've started

661

00:22:12,799 --> 00:22:18,400

measuring grass

662

00:22:15,200 --> 00:22:20,480

and taking grass cutting analysis

663

00:22:18,400 --> 00:22:22,000

to see how much goodness is in the grass.

664

00:22:20,480 --> 00:22:23,120

I think you learn so much from doing

665

00:22:22,000 --> 00:22:26,400

that and it gives you a lot of

666

00:22:23,120 --> 00:22:29,120

confidence that what you're doing will

667

00:22:26,400 --> 00:22:30,400

come good and the grass will last for

668

00:22:29,120 --> 00:22:32,240

longer than what you actually think

669

00:22:30,400 --> 00:22:33,919

it will. What have you learned

670

00:22:32,240 --> 00:22:35,520

around pasture quality? You've

671

00:22:33,919 --> 00:22:37,919

taken samples, you've sent them away to be

672

00:22:35,520 --> 00:22:40,640

analysed, but were you surprised by some

673

00:22:37,919 --> 00:22:42,320

of the results? Yes.

674

00:22:40,640 --> 00:22:44,720

With our system here, we don't really use

675

00:22:42,320 --> 00:22:46,880

the fields during the summer.

676

00:22:44,720 --> 00:22:48,320

Like I said, the pre-lambing grazing and

677

00:22:46,880 --> 00:22:50,880

this time of year for lamb finishing is

678

00:22:48,320 --> 00:22:52,960

when we need it, therefore we need

679

00:22:50,880 --> 00:22:55,200

the best grass we can get.

680

00:22:52,960 --> 00:22:56,960

I took a sample beginning of March

681

00:22:55,200 --> 00:22:58,799

and it was as good as any concentrate

682

00:22:56,960 --> 00:23:01,039

you'll ever buy.

683

00:22:58,799 --> 00:23:05,039

It just made me think

684

00:23:01,039 --> 00:23:05,039

why would I ever buy concentrate?

685

00:23:05,120 --> 00:23:10,240

The ME was touching 12 and the

686

00:23:07,600 --> 00:23:11,280

protein was about 22%.

687

00:23:10,240 --> 00:23:13,039

688

00:23:11,280 --> 00:23:15,120

That really does sharpen the mind on

689

00:23:13,039 --> 00:23:16,799

what you could be spending money on and

690

00:23:15,120 --> 00:23:18,159

what you should be spending money. The

691

00:23:16,799 --> 00:23:20,400

sheep are getting plenty of

692

00:23:18,159 --> 00:23:22,720

nutrition without the need of buying

693

00:23:20,400 --> 00:23:24,559

external concentrates? Yes. With the

694

00:23:22,720 --> 00:23:26,559

pre-lambing grazing,

695

00:23:24,559 --> 00:23:28,960

the speed of which the grass was

696

00:23:26,559 --> 00:23:30,400

recovering after it had been grazed by

697

00:23:28,960 --> 00:23:31,760

the big mob,

698

00:23:30,400 --> 00:23:33,280

it

699

00:23:31,760 --> 00:23:35,039

was catching up with the fields that

700

00:23:33,280 --> 00:23:36,880

hadn't been grazed

701

00:23:35,039 --> 00:23:38,960

two weeks before. It just shows that

702

00:23:36,880 --> 00:23:41,520

if you do get it down in February/March,

703

00:23:38,960 --> 00:23:43,279

it will come back quickly for April.

704

00:23:41,520 --> 00:23:45,440

With the measurement techniques that

705

00:23:43,279 --> 00:23:46,799

you use, do you use a special software

706

00:23:45,440 --> 00:23:49,679

to try and

707

00:23:46,799 --> 00:23:51,200

map out how much capacity, how much

708

00:23:49,679 --> 00:23:52,240

forage you’ve got in front of them and

709

00:23:51,200 --> 00:23:54,080

where you're going to have those pinch

710

00:23:52,240 --> 00:23:56,799

points? I’ve been using

711

00:23:54,080 --> 00:23:58,640

Agrinet for a while. That does

712

00:23:56,799 --> 00:24:01,360

give me the data on how much

713

00:23:58,640 --> 00:24:03,279

DM is growing.

714

00:24:01,360 --> 00:24:05,039

With the lambing system that we’ve got,

715

00:24:03,279 --> 00:24:06,799

it's good to know when the

716

00:24:05,039 --> 00:24:08,559

the so-called magic day

717

00:24:06,799 --> 00:24:10,799

is going to happen so that you

718

00:24:08,559 --> 00:24:12,559

don’t run out of grass. I found

719

00:24:10,799 --> 00:24:14,159

out last year that our magic day was

720

00:24:12,559 --> 00:24:15,600

actually the middle of March

721

00:24:14,159 --> 00:24:17,760

which surprised me as I thought it'd be

722

00:24:15,600 --> 00:24:19,520

more like the middle of April.

723

00:24:17,760 --> 00:24:21,120

On the theme of measuring grass,

724

00:24:19,520 --> 00:24:22,799

you're a part of the Welsh Pasture

725

00:24:21,120 --> 00:24:25,200

Project where you're submitting your

726

00:24:22,799 --> 00:24:27,520

measurements to Farming Connect. Talk us

727

00:24:25,200 --> 00:24:29,679

about the process involved with that.

728

00:24:27,520 --> 00:24:31,840

It's fairly simple really. I bought a

729

00:24:29,679 --> 00:24:34,080

plate meter a while back and every couple

730

00:24:31,840 --> 00:24:36,240

of weeks I go out and measure

731

00:24:34,080 --> 00:24:38,880

pretty much the whole farm.

732

00:24:36,240 --> 00:24:40,240

It doesn't take that long really. You

733

00:24:38,880 --> 00:24:41,360

can do it in an hour.

734

00:24:40,240 --> 00:24:42,880

If the suns out then it’s quite nice to have a

735

00:24:41,360 --> 00:24:44,880

little stroll around.

736

00:24:42,880 --> 00:24:46,480

From that, the data gets

737

00:24:44,880 --> 00:24:47,760

inputted

738

00:24:46,480 --> 00:24:49,600

739

00:24:47,760 --> 00:24:51,600

and other farmers can log in and see

740

00:24:49,600 --> 00:24:53,440

what the other farms in their area are doing and how

741

00:24:51,600 --> 00:24:56,640

much grass they're growing.

742

00:24:53,440 --> 00:24:58,480

Personally, I can see

743

00:24:56,640 --> 00:25:00,240

on the run up to lambing when I’m going

744

00:24:58,480 --> 00:25:01,919

to be safe and when I’m going to be able to

745

00:25:00,240 --> 00:25:04,320

know that there's going to be enough grass

746

00:25:01,919 --> 00:25:05,760

left for actual lambing. Have

747

00:25:04,320 --> 00:25:07,279

you learned a lot from that process

748

00:25:05,760 --> 00:25:09,520

because I'd imagine you're from a very

749

00:25:07,279 --> 00:25:12,159

early growing location being on a

750

00:25:09,520 --> 00:25:14,159

coastal belt like this? It

751

00:25:12,159 --> 00:25:15,039

surprised me how fast it can actually

752

00:25:14,159 --> 00:25:17,200

grow.

753

00:25:15,039 --> 00:25:20,080

If you rest it enough in the winter and

754

00:25:17,200 --> 00:25:21,919

then graze it off quickly

755

00:25:20,080 --> 00:25:23,600

February/March time, and it surprised me how quickly

756

00:25:21,919 --> 00:25:25,679

it can actually grow from that

757

00:25:23,600 --> 00:25:27,679

point onwards. How would you

758

00:25:25,679 --> 00:25:30,240

describe the soil and grassland

759

00:25:27,679 --> 00:25:32,799

principles that you abide by here at

760

00:25:30,240 --> 00:25:34,880

Weobley Castle Farm? I like to

761

00:25:32,799 --> 00:25:37,279

think that we're farming with nature.

762

00:25:34,880 --> 00:25:38,640

If you try and kick nature too hard then

763

00:25:37,279 --> 00:25:40,640

it's going to bite back and there's only

764

00:25:38,640 --> 00:25:43,679

one winner there. We try and leave our

765

00:25:40,640 --> 00:25:46,000

soils in as good as condition as possible.

766

00:25:43,679 --> 00:25:48,240

I try not to graze the fields too hard

767

00:25:46,000 --> 00:25:50,000

in the winter just so there is that

768

00:25:48,240 --> 00:25:51,520

little bit of growth available when it

769

00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:52,799

does start to go.

770

00:25:51,520 --> 00:25:54,960

There’s a lot of focus on

771

00:25:52,799 --> 00:25:56,799

environmental sustainability, carbon

772

00:25:54,960 --> 00:25:59,600

footprinting, and we're hearing

773

00:25:56,799 --> 00:26:01,520

all sorts of new phrases and buzzwords,

774

00:25:59,600 --> 00:26:03,919

regenerative farming is one of them.

775

00:26:01,520 --> 00:26:05,840

What's your take on that? I think

776

00:26:03,919 --> 00:26:08,000

they've got a place for everything.

777

00:26:05,840 --> 00:26:10,400

As you can see, this farm is full of

778

00:26:08,000 --> 00:26:11,679

hedgerows, full of wildlife,

779

00:26:10,400 --> 00:26:13,840

and that wouldn't be possible if the

780

00:26:11,679 --> 00:26:15,520

lambs weren't here grazing as it would just

781

00:26:13,840 --> 00:26:16,480

revert to scrubland.

782

00:26:15,520 --> 00:26:17,760

783

00:26:16,480 --> 00:26:20,320

I definitely think that

784

00:26:17,760 --> 00:26:22,480

regenerative farming has got a place and

785

00:26:20,320 --> 00:26:25,760

it's up to us to learn how to utilise it

786

00:26:22,480 --> 00:26:27,440

to its maximum. As a member of the

787

00:26:25,760 --> 00:26:29,120

Prosper from Pasture group, have you been

788

00:26:27,440 --> 00:26:31,039

doing some benchmarking and looking at

789

00:26:29,120 --> 00:26:33,279

some financial KPIs? Have you got some

790

00:26:31,039 --> 00:26:35,360

KPIs that you use here at the

791

00:26:33,279 --> 00:26:36,400

farm? With the whole group, we're

792

00:26:35,360 --> 00:26:38,000

looking at many different

793

00:26:36,400 --> 00:26:40,559

benchmarkings,

794

00:26:38,000 --> 00:26:42,559

main ones being grass growth and

795

00:26:40,559 --> 00:26:45,520

average farm covers, and then we’ve looked

796

00:26:42,559 --> 00:26:47,520

into individual financials and carbon

797

00:26:45,520 --> 00:26:49,039

storage on different farms.

798

00:26:47,520 --> 00:26:50,320

799

00:26:49,039 --> 00:26:51,279

We looked into them in-depth and it's

800

00:26:50,320 --> 00:26:54,240

nice to be able to look at other

801

00:26:51,279 --> 00:26:55,840

people's, have a little nose and see

802

00:26:54,240 --> 00:26:57,840

what they're spending money on and what

803

00:26:55,840 --> 00:26:59,840

their returns are

804

00:26:57,840 --> 00:27:01,600

and take little bits then to move into

805

00:26:59,840 --> 00:27:02,480

this farm and see where I can improve

806

00:27:01,600 --> 00:27:04,720

things.

807

00:27:02,480 --> 00:27:06,400

Have you been taken aback by how open

808

00:27:04,720 --> 00:27:08,000

and honest members of the group are in

809

00:27:06,400 --> 00:27:09,840

sharing their performance figures? It's

810

00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:11,679

not in a competitive way, it's

811

00:27:09,840 --> 00:27:13,919

in a healthy environment where you

812

00:27:11,679 --> 00:27:16,400

can just see where you're performing and

813

00:27:13,919 --> 00:27:18,720

where you can make gains. It’s

814

00:27:16,400 --> 00:27:20,960

reassuring that you can see other people's

815

00:27:18,720 --> 00:27:22,559

and most of the people in the group

816

00:27:20,960 --> 00:27:25,120

are all roughly at the same sort

817

00:27:22,559 --> 00:27:27,360

of level when you actually look down

818

00:27:25,120 --> 00:27:28,799

into it all. There's nothing

819

00:27:27,360 --> 00:27:31,679

really to hide.

820

00:27:28,799 --> 00:27:33,200

Farming is a business really

821

00:27:31,679 --> 00:27:35,200

and we're all in it together. It's not as

822

00:27:33,200 --> 00:27:37,039

if one's against another, therefore I don't see

823

00:27:35,200 --> 00:27:38,640

any harm in sharing

824

00:27:37,039 --> 00:27:40,240

some details.

825

00:27:38,640 --> 00:27:42,240

You said previously that

826

00:27:40,240 --> 00:27:44,080

there are some very high-profile progressive members

827

00:27:42,240 --> 00:27:46,640

that are part of the

828

00:27:44,080 --> 00:27:48,320

programme, and one of them only a couple

829

00:27:46,640 --> 00:27:50,080

of days ago won the Beef Farmer of the

830

00:27:48,320 --> 00:27:51,679

Year, Aled Picton Evans from the

831

00:27:50,080 --> 00:27:53,200

outskirts of Whitland in

832

00:27:51,679 --> 00:27:55,120

Carmarthenshire.

833

00:27:53,200 --> 00:27:56,960

Sharing the experiences

834

00:27:55,120 --> 00:27:59,520

and expertise of people like that must

835

00:27:56,960 --> 00:28:01,919

be quite inspiring in itself. Yes.

836

00:27:59,520 --> 00:28:03,840

You try and take the little

837

00:28:01,919 --> 00:28:05,919

things that they do differently and

838

00:28:03,840 --> 00:28:07,760

replicate them on yours and it’s also a

839

00:28:05,919 --> 00:28:09,340

little bit of a competition to try and

840

00:28:07,760 --> 00:28:11,039

keep up with the Joneses as they say,

841

00:28:09,340 --> 00:28:13,360

[Laughter]

842

00:28:11,039 --> 00:28:14,480

to strive to do your best

843

00:28:13,360 --> 00:28:15,919

and

844

00:28:14,480 --> 00:28:17,440

be in that sort of category as well

845

00:28:15,919 --> 00:28:19,279

then hopefully. You're in the same

846

00:28:17,440 --> 00:28:20,640

category as them, Dan, and a lot of

847

00:28:19,279 --> 00:28:22,880

people will be looking up to you as a

848

00:28:20,640 --> 00:28:25,120

progressive innovative forward-thinking

849

00:28:22,880 --> 00:28:26,720

farmer, which leads quite nicely to

850

00:28:25,120 --> 00:28:28,720

to a question that we've been asking all

851

00:28:26,720 --> 00:28:31,760

of our guests on the podcast - How

852

00:28:28,720 --> 00:28:34,240

would you define a successful farmer?

853

00:28:31,760 --> 00:28:35,840

What does a successful farmer

854

00:28:34,240 --> 00:28:38,320

look like to you?

855

00:28:35,840 --> 00:28:39,600

A successful farmer would

856

00:28:38,320 --> 00:28:42,799

probably be

857

00:28:39,600 --> 00:28:44,640

somebody who enjoys what they're doing

858

00:28:42,799 --> 00:28:46,559

and is obviously able to make a living

859

00:28:44,640 --> 00:28:47,840

from what they are doing and is able to have

860

00:28:46,559 --> 00:28:49,120

enough time off

861

00:28:47,840 --> 00:28:50,880

and get away from the farm

862

00:28:49,120 --> 00:28:52,320

every now and again and have a little

863

00:28:50,880 --> 00:28:54,000

bit of a relax.

864

00:28:52,320 --> 00:28:55,279

What do you do to relax? What do you

865

00:28:54,000 --> 00:28:56,880

do

866

00:28:55,279 --> 00:28:58,640

when you have a look at the tide tables

867

00:28:56,880 --> 00:28:59,520

and see that there's a low tide on

868

00:28:58,640 --> 00:29:02,559

this week?

869

00:28:59,520 --> 00:29:03,919

Where would you go? I

870

00:29:02,559 --> 00:29:05,200

am quite into,

871

00:29:03,919 --> 00:29:07,039

I must be getting old, but I’m quite into my

872

00:29:05,200 --> 00:29:09,039

walking now.

873

00:29:07,039 --> 00:29:11,919

A nice little trip around Llyn y Fan up

874

00:29:09,039 --> 00:29:14,399

near Llandovery. I did that a few weeks ago,

875

00:29:11,919 --> 00:29:16,960

and maybe go out on the bike for a spin

876

00:29:14,399 --> 00:29:18,559

and just try and keep active away from

877

00:29:16,960 --> 00:29:20,399

the farm where I don't have to think too

878

00:29:18,559 --> 00:29:21,840

much. You’re a keen runner as

879

00:29:20,399 --> 00:29:23,279

well. I remember a couple years

880

00:29:21,840 --> 00:29:26,320

ago both of us were running the Swansea

881

00:29:23,279 --> 00:29:28,080

half and you passed me.

882

00:29:26,320 --> 00:29:29,520

I didn't want to bring that up but yes,

883

00:29:28,080 --> 00:29:31,120

I think you're right.

884

00:29:29,520 --> 00:29:32,399

Dan Pritchard, thank you ever so much for

885

00:29:31,120 --> 00:29:34,000

joining us on the podcast.

886

00:29:32,399 --> 00:29:35,520

Congratulations to you and the family

887

00:29:34,000 --> 00:29:37,440

for everything you're doing here.

888

00:29:35,520 --> 00:29:39,200

The Gower Salt Marsh Lamb brand is clearly

889

00:29:37,440 --> 00:29:40,399

going from strength to strength. I would like to

890

00:29:39,200 --> 00:29:42,320

wish you on behalf of the Farming

891

00:29:40,399 --> 00:29:45,840

Connect team all the very best for the

892

00:29:42,320 --> 00:29:45,840

future. No problem. Thank you very much.

893

00:29:47,600 --> 00:29:51,440

If listening to Dan and hearing the

894

00:29:49,200 --> 00:29:53,760

benefits he's had from being a member of

895

00:29:51,440 --> 00:29:55,760

the Prosper from Pasture programme has

896

00:29:53,760 --> 00:29:58,080

made you consider applying, then why not

897

00:29:55,760 --> 00:30:00,399

go for it. The application window will be

898

00:29:58,080 --> 00:30:02,720

open from 1 November until

899

00:30:00,399 --> 00:30:04,559

30 November. There are three

900

00:30:02,720 --> 00:30:06,320

levels to the programme that will develop

901

00:30:04,559 --> 00:30:08,399

your knowledge and confidence in

902

00:30:06,320 --> 00:30:10,799

grassland management. There's an Entry

903

00:30:08,399 --> 00:30:13,440

Level, Intermediate also known as Master

904

00:30:10,799 --> 00:30:17,039

Grass and Advanced. More details can be

905

00:30:13,440 --> 00:30:17,039

found on the Farming Connect website.

906

00:30:17,440 --> 00:30:21,039

If you would like more information about

907

00:30:19,200 --> 00:30:23,520

the support available through Farming

908

00:30:21,039 --> 00:30:25,279

Connect, please contact your local

909

00:30:23,520 --> 00:30:28,399

development officer or the Service

910

00:30:25,279 --> 00:30:30,880

Centre on 08456 000 813.

911

00:30:28,399 --> 00:30:32,640

912

00:30:30,880 --> 00:30:35,279

There we are. We've reached the end

913

00:30:32,640 --> 00:30:37,200

of yet another episode. We'll be back in

914

00:30:35,279 --> 00:30:39,520

two weeks time with plenty more to talk

915

00:30:37,200 --> 00:30:41,679

about, but in the meantime, don't forget

916

00:30:39,520 --> 00:30:44,080

to hit subscribe on whichever platform

917

00:30:41,679 --> 00:30:46,559

you use to keep notified of all new

918

00:30:44,080 --> 00:30:48,320

episodes of Ear to the Ground.

919

00:30:46,559 --> 00:30:50,559

On behalf of the team at Farming

920

00:30:48,320 --> 00:30:52,240

Connect and myself, Aled Jones, thank you

921

00:30:50,559 --> 00:30:55,140

for listening and goodbye for now.

922

00:30:52,240 --> 00:30:56,480

923

00:30:55,140 --> 00:30:59,040

[Applause]

924

00:30:56,480 --> 00:31:01,570

[Music]

925

00:30:59,040 --> 00:31:08,460

[Applause]

926

00:31:01,570 --> 00:31:08,460

[Music]

927

00:31:17,679 --> 00:31:19,760