

## Ashlyns Organic Farm case study

Farm owner	
Farm manager	Jim Collins.
Address	Ashlyns Organic Farm, Ashlyns Lane, Bobbingworth, Ongar, Essex, CM5 0ND.
Phone /email	01922 523038.
Grid Ref	
Size	120 hectares.
Tenancy	
Date when farm competed organic conversion	2002. Further parts of the farm are being converted at the moment.
History	

### Physical features

General description	Ashlyns Farm lies in the rolling clay – lands of West Essex. It is an ancient and still unspoiled countryside with winding lanes, thick hedgerows and meandering brooks.
Soil types	Clay.
Altitude	
Rainfall	61cm per year.

### Land use

Crops	Potatoes, Wheat, Vegetables.
Crops used in rotation	Cereals, vegetables, grass and fertility building crops such as clover, vetch and mustard.
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Stewardship	Planting and restoring hedges, tree planting, establishing wildflower meadows
Woodland	New woodland planted 2003. Small areas of existing woodland.

### Animals

Cows	9 cows plus calves. The breed is Lincoln Red.
Sheep	Jim will be bringing sheep onto the farm in 2003.
Chickens	350 hens. The breed is Black Rock.
Pigs	2 Pigs. The breed is Essex.

Labour	2 full time 6 part time & seasonal.
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Machinery	3 tractors (Ford) Various implements.
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### Markets for farm produce

Vegetables	Vegetables are sold in a number of ways: 1. Box scheme (veg. is delivered direct to customers) 2. At the farm shop 3. To supermarkets. 4. At farmers markets.
Wheat	Wheat is sold to be milled or as seed to be grown.
Eggs	Eggs are sold: 1. Through the box scheme 2. At the farm shop.

### Diversification

Alternative sources of income	
<b>Other features / attractions</b>	

### Environmental benefits

Habitats	Woodland, hedges, beetle banks.
Wildlife	Hares, foxes, rabbits, skylarks, woodpeckers, grey partridges, barn owls, badgers, deer, bats, water voles, harvest mice, butterflies and bumblebees.

### Significant changes arising from organic conversion

Animals	No animals were kept on the farm before organic conversion. Animals have now been introduced and numbers are increasing. This will provide manure for building soil fertility.
Labour	More seasonal labour.
Types of crops grown	The farm used to grow just wheat and oilseed rape. Now it is much more diverse with livestock, clover, potatoes, wheat, beans and over 50 types of vegetables.
Change in balance of land use (arable v. animal)	The balance in land use has changed significantly. The farm used to be completely arable but since the change to organic more animals are being introduced.

Income from produce / profitability of farm	Profitability has reduced due to the problems with setting up our new business and not being able to sell food as organic for two years (the conversion period). However, we hope that profits will increase as time goes on.
Noticeable changes in wildlife	Increased bird population especially lapwings.
Other – eg personal outlook on farming	Due to a change in marketing we deal more directly with customers. Having a closer link with the consumer provides us with important information on how we are doing and it also makes us feel good about our work. It is nice to see the public able to walk the fields and watch their food growing in the fields.