

## Church Farm case study

Farm owner	Child Beale Trust.
Farm manager	Clive Hill.
Address	Church Farm, Beale Park, Lower Basildon, Reading, Berkshire RG8 9NH.
Phone /email	0118 984 5172 / bealepark@bun.com.
Grid Ref	
Size	121 hectares.
Tenancy	All the land is owned.
Date when farm completed organic conversion	Conversion began in 1995. The farm became fully organic in 1997.
History	Some of the fields have not been ploughed since world war 2.

### Physical features

General description	Riverside hay meadows rich in wild flowers on the banks of the River Thames.
Soil types	Calcerous gleys (Thames series) with peaty gleys by Thames (Broadmoor series). Calcerous brown earths on the terraces.
Altitude	50 metres.
Rainfall	68cm per year.

### Land use

Crops	All grass.
Crops used in rotation	N/A.
Set a side	None.
Stewardship	The whole farm is in stewardship – including hedge and woodland planting and meadow management.
Woodland	A 19 hectare broad leaved woodland has been planted on the farm. The species are all native to the area including oak and ash. As well as being a wildlife habitat the wood should provide an income from timber.

### Animals

Cows	20 suckler (beef) cows. Breeds are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aberdeen Angus,</li> <li>• British White</li> <li>• Traditional Hereford (rare breed).</li> </ul>
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Sheep	120 ewes. All are rare breeds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whitefaced Woodland</li> <li>• Llanwenog</li> <li>• Dorset Down</li> <li>• Portland</li> <li>• Black Wesleydale.</li> </ul>
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Labour	Two. One farm manager and one habitat manager.
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Machinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Massey Ferguson tractors and loaders</li> <li>• Baler</li> <li>• Hay turner</li> <li>• Chain harrow</li> <li>• Roller</li> <li>• Root feeder.</li> </ul>
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### Markets for farm produce

Cows	Cows are sold: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For breeding stock</li> <li>2. As store cattle to be finished (fattened) on other farms</li> <li>3. As fat cattle to local organic shop.</li> </ol>
Sheep	Sheep are sold: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As fat lambs to marketing co-op</li> <li>2. As fat lambs to local organic shop.</li> </ol>

### Diversification

Alternative sources of income	A little money from education visits.
Other features / attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education visits, e.g. lambing and habitats.</li> <li>• Guided walks</li> <li>• Public open days</li> <li>• Rare Breed Survival Trust approved centre</li> <li>• Soil Association demonstration farm.</li> </ul>

### Environmental benefits

Habitats	Flower rich riverside meadows, SSSI, woodland, hedges, reedbed (third largest in Berkshire).
Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barn owls, Kestrels, Red kites, Buzzards, Skylark, Reed bunting, House sparrows, Song thrush – all birds are on RSPB</li> </ul>

	endangered list.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity of invertebrates, especially moths and butterflies.</li> </ul>

### **Significant changes arising from organic conversion**

Animals	Use of rare breeds for extensive (low impact) grassland farming system.
Labour	No change.
Types of crops grown	No change.
Change in balance of land use (arable v. animal)	No change.
Income from produce / profitability of farm	Improved financial return from the sale of organic stock /produce.
Noticeable changes in wildlife	Increase in species numbers due to stewardship and organic practices.
Personal outlook on farming	Organic farming is compatible with a view of the farm which includes improvement of the environment and protection of rare breeds of farm animals.