

Low Luckens and Whiteholme Organic Farms case study

Farm owner	Mike and Ruth Downham.
Farm manager	Jon and Lynne Perkin.
Address	Organic Resource Centre, Low Luckens, Roweltown, Carlisle CA6 6LJ.
Phone /email	01697 748331.
Grid Ref	NY494 726.
Size	91 hectares.
Tenancy	Jon and Lynne Perkin run the farm and butchery as their own business (01697 48058).
Date when farm competed organic conversion	Whiteholme Farm (1988). Low Luckens Farm (2000).
History	Most of the land had been farmed traditionally and non intensively by the same family for 55 years. Mike and Ruth took over in 1996.

Physical features

General description	Situated on the River Lyne in north east Cumbria, Low Luckens and Whiteholme Farms are surrounded by beautiful countryside with views of the Pennines and Lake District.
Soil types	Clay and river gravel.
Altitude	76 – 152 metres.
Rainfall	127 cm per year.

Land use

Crops	Grassland only.
Crops used in rotation	Not applicable.
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Stewardship	An extensive countryside stewardship scheme for the conservation of species – rich hay meadows and pastures, hedge restoration, tree planting, pond creation, footpath work.
Woodland	10 hectares. A mixture of ancient woodland with areas of oak and hazel coppice, beech and new plantations managed for wildlife and public access

Animals

Cows	35 cows plus 35 calves and 35 two-years olds. Breeds include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galloway • Blue-Grey
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White Short - Horn bull • Beef Short - Horn bull.
Sheep	Existing flock were culled in Foot and Mouth outbreak (2001). The farm is currently buying some store lambs. The breed they are buying is 'Scottish Blackface'.
Chickens	A few hens are kept to provide eggs for the farm. The breed is 'Black Rock'.
Pigs	A few pigs are kept. These are a cross between 'Saddle-Back' sows and a 'Tamworth' boar.

Labour	2 full-time (husband and wife) 1 part time butcher 1 education/development worker for The Organic Resource Centre.
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Machinery	Old tractors, and equipment for making hay, silage and spreading manure.
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Markets for farm produce

Beef, lamb and pork	Meat is prepared at our on farm butchers and sold: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct from the farm 2. At farmers markets 3. Direct to customers' homes.
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Diversification

Alternative sources of income	None.
Other features / attractions	
Organic Resource Centre	One of the old farm buildings has been converted into an organic resource centre. The centre sleeps up to 12 people and can be used as a holiday base or a place for those wishing to help with conservation or farm work. It contains displays and information on organic farming, countryside conservation, waste management and local wildlife.
Network of footpaths	The farm is open for people to walk along the river, through woodland and around the farm. Some special events are held at the farm.

Environmental benefits

Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strips of ancient woodland border the river, some of which are
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	<p>designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest for their mosses, lichens and ferns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The River Lyne • Hedgerows – restoration of old hedges and new planting.
Wildlife	Roe deer, hares, red squirrels, badgers, otters, curlews. A range of wild flowers.

Significant changes arising from organic conversion

Animals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of traditional breeds of animal. 2. Reduction in sheep numbers. 3. Introduction of pigs.
Labour	Creation of two new part time jobs.
Types of crops grown	No change – still all grassland.
Change in balance of land use (arable v. animal)	No change.
Income from produce / profitability of farm	Profits have increased thanks to the development of the farm butchery and the marketing / selling of meat direct to the customer.
Noticeable changes in wildlife	Difficult to measure. Fencing of areas of woodland to keep out deer has resulted in regeneration of woodland.
Other – eg personal outlook on farming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Greater public interest and support for the farm 2. Greater contact with customers 3. More work 4. More fun!