



SHEEPDROVE ORGANIC FARM - Background information

Though correct when compiled, all information is liable to change, so please contact us if you need to confirm accuracy.	
Farm owners	Peter & Juliet Kindersley
Farm Director	Paul Redmore
Address	Sheepdrove Organic Farm, Lambourn, Berkshire. RG17 7UU
Phone /email	01488 71659 manager@sheepdrove.com
Website	www.sheepdrove.com and www.thekindersleycentre.com
Grid Ref	SU 358 817
Size	810 hectares (Just over 2000 acres)
Tenancy	We also rent another 100 ha which we have converted to organic for a neighbour.
Date when farm completed organic conversion	First plots of land farmed organic in 1996, but neighbouring Warren Farm land was not bought until 1997. Now it is all called Sheepdrove Organic Farm, and fully organic. Main conversion completions in 2000 or 2001. Soil Association Licence no. G2574.
Awards	We won 'Best Mixed Farm' in the 2003 Organic Food Awards. For 2002 we were runners-up with 'Highly Commended' for both 'Producer of the Year' and for the 'Retail' category, and the year before that we were awarded 'Producer of the Year 2001'
History	Most of the land was previously run as a cattle research farm.
Other	Headquarters of the Barn Owl Conservation Network. www.bocn.org

Physical features

General description	Perched high on the Berkshire Downs, Sheepdrove Organic Farm is an 800ha mixed farm, growing cereals, and rearing beef cattle, sheep, pigs, free-range chickens and Christmas turkeys with high standards of welfare. Award-winning meat box home delivery nationwide. The farm's composting enterprise recycles 12,000 tonnes of racehorse bedding, farm livestock bedding, coffee grounds and green waste. The Kindersley Centre is the farm's organic conference venue. Farm trail, open days and events. Farm Tours, study visits & groups by prior appointment. Ancient 'sheepdroves' link the farm to the famous Ridgeway Path. Nature conservation projects include a fine area of restored flower-rich chalk grassland, as well as many kilometres of hedges and wildlife margins. Headquarters of the Barn Owl Conservation Network.
Soil types	Chalk Downland; light flinty chalk soils, with some areas of clay cap.
Altitude	130 – 215 metres
Rainfall (annual)	600mm

Land use

Rotation	Land area split about 60/40 between clover-grass leys and arable.
Crops	Mainly wheat, also Triticale, Oats, Barley, Borage or Beans. Grass-clover leys, red clover or sainfoin for silage, and we cut hay.
Crops used in rotation	All set into mixed rotation with clover leys. Arable 3yrs then back to clover. Mainly wheat, also Triticale, Oats, Barley, Borage or Beans.
Set -Aside	None.
Stewardship (Over 130ha plus field margins.)	Bockhampton Down restored to grassland, access, 21km hedges planted or restored, dew ponds, many miles of beetle banks and wildlife margins, cereal stubbles. Arable stewardship projects include 10ha of double wildlife mixes for birds and pollinators.
Woodland (45ha or 111 acres)	5ha Semi-natural ancient woodland, 4ha mature plantation, 36ha young broadleaf plantation. Minimal management, some coppiced. Our poultry's free-range agroforestry field has 3.2km of rows of trees.

Animals

Cattle	180 beef cow herd; South Devon and Angus with reducing no's of Limousin and Simmental cows. We have South Devon, Aberdeen Angus & Limousin bulls.
Sheep	2000 ewes; mainly Shetland-cross-Cheviot.
Pigs	80 breeding sows; crossing Duroc boars with Saddlebacks and Camborough.
Chickens	22,000 'Hubbard 257' table birds. Agroforestry field system with herb strips.
Turkeys	2000 Norfolk Bronze reared for Christmas time.

Markets for farm produce

Beef, Lamb, Pigs, Chickens, Turkeys	Meat box home delivery anywhere in the UK, and free local deliveries. Supplying our family butcher's shop in Bristol. Selling to many organic specialist retailers, restaurants and also major supermarkets.
Food Cereal	Milled for flour, and can be sold for brewing.
Animal Feed Crops	Organic feed cereal for our poultry & some beans and cereal as winter feed for cattle and sheep, as well as hay and silage.
Organic Seed Cereal	Sold to supply other organic cereal growers.

Diversification – not just farming!

Conference Facilities	The Kindersley Centre is a purpose built conference centre with state-of-the-art presentation equipment and conference facilities for between 10 and 200 people. A uniquely designed venue built with sustainable methods and features, it introduces visitors to organic farming in action, all the way from plough to plate. In the vaulted Dining Room we serve delicious food cooked from organic produce grown and raised on the farm. The centre has exhibition space, breakout areas, gardens and courtyard with outdoor seating, an amphitheatre and inspiring walks. Visitors can take a farm tour, wander through grassy meadows to our reedbed system or stroll around the physic garden.
Processing and Produce	We have developed a very wide range of products. The Processing Plant serves to slaughter all our own poultry on site, where we also have our own butchers, and meat box packing areas. Very high standards include Organic and EFSIS certifications.
Composting	Sheepdrove has a large composting scheme where green wastes, horse bedding, farm manures and coffee grounds are converted into a valuable compost to add to the soil. The compost conditions the land and boosts soil ecology, but reduces waste disposal and soil erosion.
Other features / attractions	
Open Days	Popular event with local food stalls, farm tours and presentations. Usually held at March Lambing time and again in autumn.
Farm Tours	Group and conference bookings only. Whether on our trailers or on foot, <i>seeing is believing</i> . Led by our Biodiversity Officer or the Farm Director.
Reedbed System	A series of reedbeds and ponds provide the environment for nature to clean our waste water ecologically while benefiting wildlife. Clean water ends up in a large lake, then irrigates willows before seeping into the field where, underground, it replenishes a chalk aquifer – our water source.
Physic Garden	Medicinal and culinary planting set behind The Kindersley Centre.

Labour	27 at the Processing Plant, 6 in Retail, 3 for The Kindersley Centre plus casual staff, 2 in Conservation, 5 Admin, the remainder in organic farming and our composting operation. Total 57.
Machinery	Tractors number several, with Ploughs, Drills, Hedge trimmers, Toppers, Compost Turner, Bowsers, Compost Spreaders, Feed loaders, Trailers, etc...

Environmental

Habitats	Ancient chalk grassland, ancient woodland, hedgerows, ponds, the reedbed system, rough grassland, scrub, young broadleaf plantation, wildlife margins, improved grassland, 75 ha of restored botanically diverse grassland.
Wildlife examples	Barn Owl, Tawny Owl, Little Owl, Short-eared Owl, Kestrel, Buzzard, Hobby, Merlin, Sparrowhawk, Red Kite, Skylarks, Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Yellowhammer, Corn Bunting, Linnets, Starling, House Sparrow, Stonechat, Song Thrush. Brown Hare, Roe Deer, Fallow Deer, Muntjac Deer, Badger, Fox, Stoat, Weasel. Insect life includes Common Blue, Adonis Blue, and other butterflies; Hummingbird Hawkmoth, Emperor Dragonfly, mayflies, various beneficial bees, wasps, beetles and hoverflies.

Significant changes arising from organic conversion

Animals	Changes in breed to suit organic farming.
Labour	Increased vastly.
Types of crops grown	Was all winter-sown, now 50% Spring-sown cereals here. Greater variety of crops now, e.g. some beans. No more Oilseed Rape.
Change in balance of land use (arable v. animal)	See below.
Productivity & profitability of farm	The farm was converting as soon as it was bought, and many new enterprises were started, so there was a financially demanding period of essential investments in tandem with conversion to organic. Prices and demand for our high quality produce have been very good. Meat productivity is on a par with conventional farming but our arable productivity is less intensive than the previous farm methods.
Noticeable changes in wildlife	Lapwings have bred in 2003 and 2004, following a long absence of breeding success for this species during the last 2 decades. Noticeable increased breeding success of Grey Partridge, Barn Owls, and more overwintering flocks of Skylark, Starlings and finches. Brown Hares are doing very well. Invertebrate life, particularly beneficial species, now have more habitat to support them, and can be found buzzing in our beetle banks and flowery field margins. Recently the unusual Adonis Blue butterfly has been observed here, and for the last few years we have had pyramidal orchid on a carefully managed grass bank.
Other changes	Whole landscape change – not just from the big increase in tree numbers in plantations & hedges, but the character of many of the fields is different. There are now beetle banks, wildlife margins, more stock fencing, and boundaries between fields have changed or become visible, due to fencing or hedges for livestock, because we now have a mixed rotation between arable and clover leys, where <i>before</i> there were permanently arable fields with fewer fences to separate them. Sheepdrove has taken many conservation measures, with features like 3 new dewponds and the Reedbed System as very visible changes. We have adopted 'Environmental Stewardship' for wildlife and archaeological conservation. Agri-environment grants contributed to the costs of most new woodland and new hedges, though some tree planting is independent. Bockhampton Down (also called Hundred Acre Field) is a key example of changes taking place here. It has excellent floral and invertebrate diversity, and has Open Access under Countryside Stewardship. This field was arable, in Oilseed Rape, until restored to downland in 1992 by the Kindersleys. Now this 'arable reversion' once more supports a thriving chalk grassland ecology reflecting its downland heritage. Being an open farm, committed to promoting the organic message, we have also changed the personal outlook of a great many people!