

News from the Farm

Springtime on the farm has been a joy to those of us who are able to get out and about, the wildflowers are flourishing; King cups or you might call them Marsh Marigolds are flowering in the water meadows at Houghton.

The young store Longhorns have been busy as conservation graziers in our 3 very special biodiverse fields at Wallacefield, our site near Armathwaite, so that there is now time for the carpets of orchids and large clumps of globe flowers to flourish. While feeding the pet lambs each morning either a wren or a robin sings its heart out to the delight of the lambs' foster mother. The pigeon's nest in the ivy around the back door of The Croft was raided 2 weeks ago by a Sparrow Hawk who then just sat there for a good 5 minutes staring at us. Undeterred the pigeon has returned, hoping to raise another brood. The ivy is also home to 'sparrow city', they almost vanished after their visitation, but are now back in residence.

We now have 4 splendid calves, Sid, Sian, Sophia and Sarah, all are doing well. The calves and their mothers are much admired by all those many, many people from the local community who take their one hour's daily exercise walking the footpath beside Tarraby Wood and across the water meadows. We now have 2 older store cattle in the water meadows at Houghton. They enjoy playing hide and seek in the rushes, with just the tips of their horns showing.

Most of the ewes and lambs have been transferred to Wallacefield. They are about to start strip grazing, following the cattle, on the herbal ley fields beside the road between Cumwhitton and Armathwaite. A new activity for those working hard at Wallacefield is moving the electric fence every 2- 3 days. We are really excited to see how this new grazing system works out to maximize our grass efficiency.

The goslings will be arriving at the end of May and we'll be sheering the sheep at the beginning of June.



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Sales of Beef lamb and Mutton

The sales of our meat have increased substantially since lockdown started, we just hope that all our new customers appreciate how good our traditional meat, reared organically is and continue to support ourselves as well as other local producers once normality returns.

We are now using an abattoir that has not been approved as organic so our meat cannot be sold as Organic. We are still an organic farm and the butchery we use has been approved as organic. Our Pasture for Life certification is still valid.

Care Farming – Supporting Beneficiaries who attend Susan’s Farm

We are thrilled and delighted that we have now been able, with the support of the Cumbria Community Foundation and the Prince’s Countryside Fund to start a ‘Meals on Wheels’ service to most of the beneficiaries who attend the farm normally at least once a week . A full 2 course organic meal together with flapjacks is delivered twice a week. This is a time for nutritious meals to be delivered - at a crooks distance. The contact with a familiar member of the farm team and an opportunity to exchange news in person is greatly appreciated. The regular phone calls continue on the remaining days of the week.

Telephone contact with the Tuesday and Wednesday teenagers also continues. These young people are longing to return to the farm. As for everyone, there is so much uncertainty and we have no idea when this will be permitted. Hopefully within the next month, will begin having them back individually or perhaps in pairs. We fear it will be much longer before we can re-start class visits from schools.

The Weather

Having had an horrendously wet winter, lambs being born in puddles, we are now longing for rain! When isn’t a farmer complaining about the weather? There has been a little more rain at Wallacefield than at Houghton. This is when the herbal leys, with a good mixture of deep-rooted species that can reach down to the damper ground, will really come into their own. The clay subsoil at Houghton doesn’t dry out as quickly as the sandy subsoil at Wallacefield. The meadows at Aglionby having been well and truly flooded are also dry. The swans built a nest in the middle of a pond and it is now raised up in a dry cracked area. Being Cumbria when it does start to rain, it will not know how to stop.



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Sales from Susan's Farm

We now have lamb, strictly hogget, available every 2 weeks, and mutton intermittently. We expect beef to be back on the menu in June. The delay in the beef has been caused by the calves in 2018 being born in a bunch and not being yet ready to go. Farming in a traditional way we like to finish them as near 30 months as possible. We have been a welcome source of flour from 2 local watermills, the Watermill at Little Salkeld whose flour we have used for many years and the recently restored Corn Mill at Warwick Bridge. We also have a good stock of Birdoswald cheese, the regular one and one with a blue vein which is equally delicious.

The trustees and staff at Susan's Farm have been planning to start a group called "Friends of Susan's Farm" since last October, long before any of us had heard of COVID-19.

We have a wonderful team here at the farm, completely dedicated to the care of the land, the animals and all the beneficiaries who normally visit the farm week in and week out, including Bank Holidays.

Even without COVID-19, Susan's Farm needs the support of friends locally and further afield.

COVID-19 has made this support even more urgent. Our Trustees have been working tirelessly to ensure that the farm will be sustainable when these extremely challenging times are over. Like so many charities our income has dropped dramatically, in our case by 75%. We are determined to continue to be able to serve some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Many of our supporters would like to help with donations, so we are producing a donations leaflet. There will be a variety of ways of funding our charity. If you wish to donate money now, there is a donations button on our website www.susansfarm.co.uk

Thank you, Susan
Founder of Susan's Farm
Registered charity Number 1183223

All of us on the farm wish that you and your families are keeping safe and well, if you have any queries do please contact us at info@susansfarm.co.uk

Do follow us on [@Susans_Farm](https://twitter.com/Susans_Farm) and like us on [Facebook@susansfarmcumbria](https://www.facebook.com/susansfarmcumbria) for regular updates and cute video clips.

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