

Graze debate 2022 –

Jock Gibson Edinvale Farm,
Forres Morayshire



Farm Facts

- 100 acres owned, 250 acres rented improved grazing (April–end September) and 50 acres of hill.
- Heavy soils. pH 6.2, moderate P and K indices. Ca and Na levels are low.
- Average annual rainfall of 700–800mm.

Livestock

- 80 suckler cows (Highland cross and Shorthorn cross) run in two bulling groups to either Highland bulls or Shorthorn bulls. Spring calving with calving starting mid-February (all indoors).
- Heifers are calved at 3 years old, selected for maternal traits.
- Bulls are out with cows for 9 weeks in 2022.
- Prime cattle are killed at 21–30 months, highlanders are over 30 months.
- Target finish weight of 500–650kg.
- Beef sold through Macbeth's butcher shop, aiming to kill 2/3 cattle per fortnight, increasing in the run up to Christmas.
- Finished on a forage-based system (Certified through Pasture Fed Livestock Association)

Key challenges

- Landscape water management – the farms heavy soils and terrain can lead to fast waterlogging
- Tight forage supplies in early Spring – slow grass growth, seasonal let access and silage ground mean Spring can be difficult to manage
- Expensive wintering

Integrating trees on Farm

In 2010, two-hectare blocks of trees were planted in an agri-environmental scheme. Most fields are lined with hedgerows.

In spring 2022, 1200 trees were planted on marginal land with the main aims of this being to improve drainage, provide shelter and create wildlife habitats.



Other mutually beneficial practises



Waterways on the farm are fenced off to improve water flow and there has been an improved number of wildlife observed since.

A herb and legume mix of vetch, stubble turnips, fodder radish and annual clover was trialled last year with mixed results as the vetch did not stand up well to the storms. Jock will continue to experiment with multispecies leys to benefit animal performance, soil health and biodiversity.

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Planned deferred grazing land will reduce winter resource demand and, the summer rest will benefit wildlife.