

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: A PATH TO SUSTAINABLE FARMING

At the Leckford Estate we are passionate about where our food comes from and how it is made. Regenerative agriculture is a holistic approach to farming that focuses on improving and restoring soil health, enhancing biodiversity and creating resilient farming systems.

Rather than depleting natural resources, regenerative practices ensure the long-term productivity and sustainability of the land. These principles are not only good for the environment, but can also improve farm profitability, reduce costs and create more resilient operations in the face of climate challenges. By adopting these practices, farmers can contribute to a healthier planet while cultivating thriving, productive farms.

UNDERSTAND FARM OPERATIONS

Understanding how all components of the farm interact helps to create a balanced, sustainable system that works in harmony with nature rather than against it. Farmers that are in tune with the intricacies of their operations are more able to monitor elements and make informed decisions that improve productivity, optimise resource use and reduce waste.

MAXIMISE CROP DIVERSITY

We promote a 12-year rotation plan of mixed cash cropping, restorative periods and integrated practices, like permanent grasslands, conservation grazing, herbal leys and biomethane production. This diverse approach strengthens the soil biome, enhances carbon stocks and supports long-term productivity with fewer inputs. Covering crops further boost soil fertility and provides forage.

MINIMISE SOIL DISTURBANCE

Traditional methods, like ploughing and secondary cultivation, can harm soil structure and microbial life. Techniques, like 'strip till drill' and 'direct drilling' into stubble, have replaced the old, multi-pass approach, improving soil structure, enhancing water retention and rebuilding soil fertility. This in turn boosts productivity, reducing the reliance on synthetic inputs.

LIVESTOCK INTERGRATION

Livestock provide both an income stream and a key role in regeneration. Grazing from April to October, they naturally fertilise soil and support biodiversity. When housed during the winter, biomethane harvested as CNG from manure replaces diesel. This integration not only benefits soil fertility but also contributes to reducing the farm's carbon footprint, supporting a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly farming system.

PROTECT SOIL SURFACE

Growing herbal leys or over-winter stubbles and covering crops as part of rotation help minimise soil erosion. As well as reducing nitrate leaching, strengthening soil structure also protects water resources and creates a more stable environment for beneficial microorganisms, which promotes long-term farm productivity and environmental sustainability.

MAINTAIN LIVING ROOTS

Living roots enhance soil structure, promote microbial activity and support an environment attractive to future crops. Living roots play a critical role in trapping carbon, removing CO₂ from the atmosphere. This practice not only benefits soil fertility and crop yields but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to a more sustainable farming system.