



PRISM 2030 FARMER:

GORDON TOMLEY

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Just South of Oswestry in Shropshire, ABP supplier and PRISM 2030 farmer, Gordon Tomley runs a mixed arable, beef and sheep enterprise. Farming 950 acres (384ha), split 400 acres (162ha) grass and the remainder in cropping including some fodder beet.

The arable side of the business supports the livestock, and manures from the livestock support the arable ground. 160 Angus x calves are purchased for finishing and 60 Angus x suckler cows are put to a Hereford bull.

Average finishing age is 18-20 months, using a home-grown diet, with more emphasis on forage. On his hill farm, 400 Welsh and Beulah ewes are crossed to a Lleyn tup, with replacements kept for his 200-ewe lowland flock. All lambs are finished on stubble turnips as part of the arable rotation, with the aim to finish lambs at 12-13 weeks.

Efficiency is key for Gordon and after completing his Agrecalc report, the PRISM 2030 partners highlighted areas to improve, including fuel and fertiliser usage. Gordon now uses white clover within a four-year ley in the arable rotation to fix nitrogen and improve soil quality. Manure from a local chicken farm is top dressed onto wheat fields, reducing artificial fertiliser requirements.

Since joining PRISM 2030 Gordon has started soil sampling pastures as well as arable ground.

Grassland soil pH was low, so lime was applied bringing it up to pH 6.3-6.4, and some compacted ground has been sward lifted. Gordon has improved grassland through rotational grazing and managed to improve stocking numbers by up to 25% on the same ground.

Genetics are an area Gordon continues to focus on. The aim is to finish Angus x cattle at 18 months, with heifers at 320kg/dw and steers at 340-350kg/dw.

Gordon has noticed a reduction in finishing time of up to six weeks and an increase in weights of up to 15-20kg when using the best genetics.



Gordon's top tips for improving efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of beef and sheep farms are:

- Good pasture management – rotational or strip grazing, saves on fertiliser, increases stocking density and improves the soil
- Fuel use accounting – using minimal tillage, not idling vehicles
- Quality genetics – breeding cattle that finish earlier
- Labour savings – use of GPS on machinery

Gordon says, "Look at everything individually within enterprises, see where improvements can be made and then add these together, over the course of twelve months, the savings can be significant."