



PRISM 2030 FARMER:

RICHARD SHIRES

[Watch Richard's case study](#)

Richard farms 700 acres (283ha) which supports 1,000 breeding ewes and an arable system of mostly wheat.

Forage crops are being increasingly used in his arable rotation to improve soil fertility which supports the sheep and cropping enterprises.

EasyCare sheep were introduced to the farm 20 years ago when Richard needed to reduce reliance on indoor lambing labour and wanted to minimise time spent shearing.

Richard says, "Starting with EasyCare sheep is one of the best farming decisions I've made, they lend themselves to this low-cost sheep system and I am very pleased with them".

Ewes lamb outdoors during April and the breed, which requires minimal shepherding and veterinary care, sheds its fleece in summer. It also offers good lambing ratios and meat yields, and has streamlined sheep production on the farm.

During housing from mid-December, breeding ewes are fed quality silage containing red clover at around 16% protein.

This year Richard is growing Sainfoin to hopefully increase silage protein content to 18%.

Lambs are grown purely on forage and sold year-round to ABP from 10-12 weeks old, with 250 breeding ewe lambs selected for replacements or for sale as breeding females.

The move to direct drilling has reduced fuel use dramatically in the arable system, and growing legumes eliminated fertiliser use, further reducing machinery and labour requirements.

Richard added: "I think it's important to reduce our carbon emissions because we know that the world has a problem and we can do our bit to help."