PRISM 2030 FARMER:
RICHARD THOMAS

Watch Richard's case study

Based in the rolling hills of Herefordshire, suckler cattle and sheep farmer Richard is focussing on improving the basis of his farm: the soil.

The family farm has a long-established herd of 50 pedigree Hereford cows grazing pastures for an extended grazing season, before housing on straw during winter when the clay/loam soil can't hold livestock.

250 Romney ewes and another 80 ewe lambs are outdoor lambed, with progeny going to ABP or used as replacements.

After changing to a more soil friendly way of farming, Richard noticed more plant species growing in the farm's swards, which cattle selectively graze on a rotational system.

The pastures are split 50:50 permanent pasture and temporary grass/herbal leys.

Richard sees it as a more extensive livestock grazing system, which works well on his farm, growing enough grass and winter forage to produce beef and lamb whilst supporting the ecosystem.

Richard has been monitoring dung beetle activity and (when needed) he carefully selects anthelmintics that won't adversely affect the dung beetle populations, as he has seen the benefits of their role in the degradation of livestock manure, and the subsequent fertility and quality of the farm's soil.

Joining PRISM 2030 in 2022 meant that Richard could quantify the carbon emissions from his farm and tweak the enterprises and farming methods accordingly. With his Agrecalc assessment proving the carbon emissions to be measured as already low but considering ways of improving outputs off the same acreage.

Richard has found the PRISM 2030 online meetings interesting and helpful in improving his knowledge, and farming practices.

PRISM 2030