



## Shortwood Farm

### *Our Family*

We are David and Janet Legge and we farm Shortwood in partnership with our daughter, Gina. She has a partner called Adam who is an agricultural engineer, he is great at mending our tractors when they break! We also have a son called Anthony, he does not work on the farm because he is a butcher and has a business in our local town which is called Bromyard. Anthony is married to Rebecca (Beck) and they have two children, James who is 8years old and Grace who will be 5 years old in February.

### *The Farm*

Shortwood is situated in the parish of Little Cowarne which is in the county of Herefordshire. David is the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of the family to farm here. We have 150 acres (including 10 acres of ancient woodland) at around 650 feet above sea level which means we are very exposed to the weather but have wonderful views across the surrounding countryside. The soil is heavy clay which is good at retaining water in the summer but can become easily waterlogged then very heavy to work on.

### *Organic farming.*

Since the year 2000 we have run Shortwood as an organic farm. We are certified with the Soil Association who inspect us annually to check that we are keeping to their standards. We rely on clover in our grassland and composted manure for soil fertility. We have less cows per field than a non-organic farm and we do not rely on antibiotics as a normal treatment for our animals.

### *The Dairy Herd*

The main enterprise on our farm is our dairy herd of 70 Holstein cross Friesian cows. The herd calves all year as we aim to keep the same number of cows in producing milk all the time.

Milking happens twice daily in a milking parlor, 12 cows at a time.

Milking at Shortwood. David puts the teat cups on and the milking machine draws the milk from the cows and into jars.



The milk is transferred into the bulk tank where it is cooled and stored waiting to be collected by the tanker.



Milk is sold to The Organic Milk Supplies Co Operative, and is collected every other day. The price we receive for the milk varies from month to month depending on demand. The cows are out on the grass during the summer and inside in the winter.

Cows eating silage during the winter



We do not have any arable land and so have to buy in all the straw for bedding the cows in winter.

We buy in all the concentrate feed for the cows and this is fed to them via a computerised feeding system.

All manure is composted for a minimum of 12 months before spreading on the land.

We have a Hereford bull (beef breed) which we use to get the heifers in calf for the first time. All the beef calves and dairy bull calves are sold at around a month old and all dairy heifers are reared on the farm. They join the dairy herd after they have had their first calves at the age of two.

## *The open farm*

Unfortunately the price we are paid for our milk is not enough to pay all the bills and so we have to make money in another way. So for more than 20 years now the farm has been open to the public during the summer months. We are open for families and for school parties who all pay us an entry fee. We offer guided tours around the farm and give people a chance to help to feed some of the animals. As well as giving the visitors a fun day out, we are try to educate about farming techniques and food production. Of course the cows alone would not be enough for this side of the business and so we have got other animals such as ducks, hens, pigs, ponies, donkeys and guinea-pigs to make the farm more interesting.



## *Send a Cow at Shortwood.*

For many years we have been interested in the work of Send a Cow and have tried to support it when we can. Then about three years ago we came up with an idea to teach our visitors about all the charity so that we may gain their support as well. We decided to build a replica of an Ugandan Farmyard, with a cow shelter, keyhole garden, bag gardens and elephant grass.

In October 2008 David and Janet traveled to Uganda with a party of Send a Cow ambassadors. We spent the most wonderful two weeks travelling around the country visiting farms which were in the Send a Cow program. It was so good to see first hand all the good things that have been achieved by the farmers since the gift of their cow. All the animals were so well cared for, the vegetable production was fantastic the health of the families had improved from better nutrition and the children were attending school.

Now we are able to draw on this experience when we teach visitors to Shortwood about Send a Cow. Our aim is to show people that t they donate to the charity will be used to transform the lives of a vulnerable family, and that family will in turn help yet another family when they pass on their first calf.

Now we are to take part in Grow it Global. We are looking forward to this exciting new venture and we are especially looking forward to welcoming Zenah Muhumuza to our farm in April.