

## LUNDY FARM REPORT 1993

### GENERAL

Lundy is a working farm. It extends to 1115.728 acres (451.71 hectares) of grade 4/5 farm land; it is categorised as a less favoured area with severely disadvantaged status.

There is an all permanent grassland policy of which some 850 acres are situated within a SSSI; this covers all the area north of the Quarter Wall, including the side lands (cliffs) to the south, all of which has been entered for Countryside Commission Stewardship payments, together with a request for grant aid to control the bracken and rebuild the stone walls. This area is subject to a Dog and Stick farming practice.

The remaining 265 acres are subject to more intensive farming policy and on average receives some 70 units of Nitrogen per acre, plus dressings of Calcified Seaweed or Sea Sand as and when required.

Due to the nature of the farm, a recent arrangement has been made with the RSPB West Sedgemoor Reserve, Taunton, for the seasonal use of a further 200 acres. This land is used for the freshening up of livestock prior to sale in Taunton/Exeter Market or as a holding facility for any purchased livestock awaiting shipping. In a normal year this land would not be fully utilised, therefore part of it is sub-let on the understanding that in the event of a drought, a large percentage of the land would be made available for the finishing of the Island's store stock, this being essential in the event of a summer drought.

A round bale silage system has been adopted for conservation and the Island currently makes some 600 bales per annum with its own baler and wrapper. The 4 tractors and quad bikes are shared with cargo loading and unloading operations on the beach.

### STOCKING RATES

**250 Welsh half bred breeding ewes:** these are put to the Suffolk tup for either terminal lamb sales or, in some instances, the better Chilver lambs (ewe lambs) have been sold as Breeders. Last year's lambing average was 155%.

**350 White face Welsh ewes:** these are put to the Boarder Leicester ram to produce replacements for the half bred flock and for sale. The replacements for this flock are being bought in because it is financially better for us to totally cross breed; there is a £20 per lamb price differential, despite there being an extra subsidy for breeding an approved hill type. Last year's lambing average was 135%.

**100 Welsh half bred Chilver lambs:** lambed in their first year (new venture).

**100 Soay ewes:** these originated from an introduction some 60 years ago of 7 ewes and 1 ram, by the Island's then owner, as an effort to produce food on a poor terrain during war time. The flock is confined to the North End. Full sheep subsidies are now claimed and culling is carried out with the aid of a rifle. An 80% lambing average was achieved last year with the produce being sold to delicatessens.

All lambing commences on the 1st March and indoor facilities are available, together with a full complement of handling facilities except for the Soays which lamb outside.

**Cattle:** The pedigree breeding programme of Red Devon cattle has been discontinued for economic reasons and the Simmental bull is now used on the remaining Devon cows together with the Continental cows and heifer replacements that have been bought in. The enterprise has recently increased from 8 to 25 cows, their progeny being sold as strong stores in their second year if not kept for breeding replacements.

For the second year running a further 30 steers have been brought over from the mainland on a grass keep basis, this being done because the farm was severely under-stocked. Historical records however show that even present day combined stocking figures have all been achieved in the past. There is approximately 100 head of cattle of

all ages on the Island at present.

**Ponies:** There is a small herd of Lundy Ponies comprising of 5 brood mares, a stallion and various followers. These ponies are predominantly dun and make excellent 13.2 hh to 14.0 hh riding ponies. This enterprise is financially assisted by the Lundy Pony Preservation Society.

**Veterinary Services:** Because of the farm's geographical position, preventative medicine is practised in full under the guidance of the Coombe Field Veterinary Practice, Axminster.

**Transportation of livestock and feed:** This is done by the Island's only supply vessel, The Oldenburg, which apart from her 267 passengers and crew of 8, can carry 15 tonnes of cargo in Big Bags or Pallets. Cattle and horses are crated and put in the ship's hold, a very labour intensive operation. Sheep are transported on the fore deck in pens.

Obviously all these operations can only take place in good weather conditions, which is usually done on Bideford Sailings and is governed by the tide. Therefore we have to have a very understanding haulier.

#### FARM POLICY

Sources for grants (including MAFF Grants, Farm Diversification Grants, English Heritage/English Nature/Countryside Commission/Forestry Grants) have been researched. With a team effort, the farm has been returned to profitability.

This is the first Farm Report to appear in the LFS Annual Report. It has been my intention to provide a background of events and developments to date. A more conventional annual Farm Report will appear in subsequent years.

T. GLASPER  
April 1994.