Cotswold Seeds Ltd
The Cotswold Business Village
Moreton in Marsh,
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Special Pochon Grazing Mixture with Martyn Hebson



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This 350 acre farm in Little Salkeld, near Penrith, is a particularly challenging corner of land, with much of it fronting a river which regularly floods, making ploughing impossible and sowing difficult. But the Hebson family have had plenty of time to learn how to tame it, over three generations. This is a family farm, passed down from grandfather, to father and son. Martyn Hebson is already looking forward to passing it to his 18 month old son, Jacob, who will be the fourth generation to farm here.

Martyn uses a Pochon Grazing Mixture to literally help to 'hold the land together' and to feed his 130 cows. This is a mixed farm with some arable land but is home to the Stardingham herd of pedigree British Friesians. Martyn keeps all the replacements, and also keeps store beasts so there are between 300-350 stock at all times.

In some of the fields the Pochon Ley is sown in autumn as a direct reseed but the fields close to the river are reseeded under spring barley around April. Because the river floods in winter it makes reseeding at the back end impractical, since the soil and seeds could be washed away a month or so after the sowing. The Pochon is either grazed all summer, or made into silage with two or three cuts and then grazed at the back end, in August and September. Last year the first silage cut was taken in mid-May and by June it was almost ready to be cut again.

Martyn has found that the high clover Pochon ley helps with weed control by filling in the base of the sward and smothering out weeds. The high clover content fixes lots of nitrogen and the grassland is also slurried in spring or gets spread with muck or chicken litter after every cut of silage. 'We get very good crops that way,' says Martyn.

The Hebsons make all their own silage. They purchased a forage wagon which makes it a manageable job for a small team, requiring just three men, and produces good quality silage with longer stems, so better fibre content for the cows.

Martyn says that he chooses to buy his grass from Cotswold Seeds because of the quality of the mixtures and the next day delivery service, which is vital for him.

'Cotswold are great because we are all pretty last minute like many farmers, and we can order one day and the seed is here the next. This is important because we check out the weather, decide to sow and then want to be able to do it. It's no good if you have to wait a week for your order to arrive, as with many companies.'

And the Pochon mixture gets the seal of approval from the cows too: 'They love it, it's a great mixture and the milk is good.'

Date Posted: 16th February 2017