

## First Hand Case Study: Quick Bulk Westerwolds with Richard Bown



Richard Bown is a third generation farmer, and his family are third generation Cotswold Seeds' customers. Richard farms at Northfield Farm, near Upton on Severn, with his son, Dan. They have 420 acres which are predominantly used for dairy. The 170 dairy Holstein herd, comprising 65 milking cows plus followers, is named Richaven Holsteins and there's also a pedigree herd of beef short horns. The Bowns employ a rotation based around the three crop rule, with 60 acres of maize and around 20 acres of barley, and the rest split between one and five year leys for silage and grazing.

{video1}

The Cotswold Seeds' leys used include Intensive Dairy Graze, Pochon Dairy, Quick Bulk Westerwolds and Fast & Vast. Timothy is included in mixtures sown on the heavier, wetter fields which are prone to drought in summer and flooding in winter - incidentally the farm has one of the three lowest fields on the Tewkesbury to Worcester floodplain. One of the farm's most successful crops is the Quick Bulk Westerwolds Ley, which they use for fast growing, bulky silage.

'Forage is everything,' says Richard. 'We pride ourselves on the quality, size and capacity of our stock, but you only get out what you put in. If we don't put a good product in them at the front end, we can't expect a good result from the animals. We are very particular about what we grow and how we forage it and we get a lot of people commenting on the amount of milk and the quality of the forage that we are feeding our animals. The Bown's take part in 2 to 3 national shows each year to promote their herd and secure embryo and progeny sales in the UK and Europe. 'When we show our animals people have been known to come up to us asking what we feed the animals to get them looking and milking so well',

So how do the Bown's make their silage?

The westerwolds ryegrass is often reseeded after maize and other fields might get reseeded in spring if quick bulk is needed. In the spring, fields receive no more than 70 units of nitrogen before the first cut, which is usually taken in mid April. This high quality, early silage goes in the pit for the milkers. By June it can be above waist height and ready for a second cut, for big bail production for livestock and equine use. 'We get 2-3 cuts off

most fields and sometimes even a fourth,' says Dan.

'The cattle do really well on it,' Richard says with pride. 'Our herd averages over 11,000 litres, which includes both cows and heifers on a twice a day, very simple, fairly low input system. The cows themselves average over 12,000 litres, making us one of the highest yielding twice a day herds in the country.'

The Bowns say they use Cotswold Seeds for the excellent advice, and the consistency of the seed. 'I can honestly say we have never put a field in that hasn't germinated,' says Richard.

---

Date Posted: 18th February 2020