

Tales from Whyle House

The home of Whyle House Lamb

December 2006



Never give a lamb a name..... On good Friday 2006 a tiny little ewe lamb came into the world – her brother had had all the food in the womb and she was so small she could sit in your hand. Celine – my invaluable assistant and soon to be daughter in law – who the teacher on the lambing course insisted on calling my ‘2IC’ - kept her alive against all the odds – even buying her a red plastic ‘lambmac’ which had to be cut down to fit her. Eventually of course nobody wanted to see ‘Minimo’ go. Nevertheless as promised last year we are now selling Whyle House lamb and the bank manager is happy (amazed even) to see some revenue coming into the account.

We thought our customers might like to keep up to date with goings on at Whyle House so my wife Frances and I have decided to produce an occasional newsletter – and Christmas seemed a good time to start! Eventually we’ll have a web site where we can put photos and recipe ideas and an online order form (in fact it’s there already but not terribly interesting yet at www.whylehouse.co.uk).



We had a difficult winter for our first year as sheep keepers and we finally gave up battling with the elements in late February and brought them all inside. This was great for us as we could feed them while it was dark and quite good for them as they were inside but very, very bad for the bank balance as we had to buy lots of extra feed. Lambing started on time on 10th April and was all over in two weeks – the last 2 arrived while we were in the pub, having convinced ourselves nothing would happen that night.

Celine and I between us managed to get all but one of the lambs out alive.



The weather did eventually improve and the grass started to grow in late April only to stop again in June when the weather suddenly went dry and hot. I carefully organised to make hay during what looked like the first dry spell for several weeks – and I don't think it rained again for 3 months! I made the hay myself having bought a haybob from a farmer in mid Wales although I relied on contractors to cut and bale it.



My brilliant idea to handle the hay on large pallets failed as I couldn't keep the bales from bouncing off but they were useful for lifting the bales up on the stack in the barn. I think we're going to have to look into big bale hay or even silage if we get any bigger as small bales seem a lot heavier than they did when I was 18 - although they are so convenient.



We sold our first lambs in late August and have had some really encouraging feedback about their taste and tenderness. We're trying a new butcher for the last of this year's lambs and as I'm now trained in butchery, next year I'm hoping to do some of them myself, so we can offer an even more individual service. The key thing we're trying to achieve is to provide good honest food of known provenance. We try to look after our animals, our customers and our land, all of equal importance to us and we hope that comes across in our approach and in the quality of our product. Do let us know if you think we can do things better!

Basil the tup has been back to start the whole thing off again so assuming all goes well we'll be lambing again at Easter 2007. Orders already being taken.....!

Happy Christmas from Andy, Frances and Celine.