

Richard Cottrill & Jill Gascoigne

Case Study

NET ZERO

Jill and Richard are committed to the environment and were keen to take part in the net zero workshops in order to better understand what their carbon footprint was and to explore the opportunity of selling carbon credits to offset the loss of Basic Payment. They were interested in taking part in the test and trial to try to influence the decisions made at a policy level which will impact farmers.

The landlord has planted heather, sphagnum moss and trees on the moorland and pasture on the rented farm. Jill and Richard are planting sphagnum and blocking grips as part of a regeneration project on their own moor. They have also planted trees and are enhancing the biodiversity value of their grassland by adding wildflowers. Future plans include managing their herd and flock to best improve grassland quality and to stock different breeds suited to the types of grassland habitat that they are grazing. Traditional breeds, although slower growing, are the most appropriate to graze upland grasslands, heathland and bog.

ELMS

Jill and Richard are keen to see actions that maintain and enhance biodiversity in ELMS such as sward enhancement, pond creation and maintenance, as well as targeted tree planting. Capital works and incentives to reverse the decline of habitats should also be made available including bracken control and infrastructure for livestock. Other key features that Jill and Richard were keen to see include the flexibility to create habitats for species relevant to the local area and the ability to earn money for maintaining features, rather than trying to fit the scheme requirements in amongst another job (full time farming).

Jill and Richard's business offers most opportunity to contribute to net zero through protecting carbon stores and enhancing sequestration by adding trees and shrubs in thickets. Conversely there are small areas of the farm where it could be possible to enhance the grassland sward to make the grasses more productive but much of the farm is too steep to cultivate. They also continue to focus on animal health to reduce the greenhouse gas footprint of their livestock.



JILL AND RICHARD FARM OVER 2500 HA IN THE PEAK DISTRICT WITH CATTLE AND SHEEP. The farm is all grassland and much of it is hill pasture and moorland. The business is made up of three farms including a significant tenanted farm, rented from the National Trust.

Greenhouse gas calculators without modules to measure carbon storage and sequestration are of limited use on an upland, grassland farm where the delivery of biodiversity is a major driver of farm management. Farmers need assistance to confirm what they are inputting; therefore, Jill and Richard would be keen to receive assistance if the tool enabled them to fully understand their net zero performance.

Richard said: "I find it inspiring to see how farmers are adapting and diversifying their businesses in so many different ways, all to make their businesses and the food they produce more climate-friendly. It's clear that most farmers are doing what they can within their current means, but there are still limitations holding us back.

"On my farm I've planted trees and sphagnum moss to sequester more carbon, as well as running a regeneration project on our moor. However, if these actions were supported through ELMS I would be in a much better position to increase the scale of this work and invest more to build my

carbon stores. I also believe there are huge opportunities for businesses like mine when it comes to selling carbon credits. Stacking of public and private sector funding could deliver huge benefits, not only for my business but for the whole country and the planet.

"While my own farm is well into its net zero journey, I know there is more I could do if there was a more net zero-specific focus in ELMS, for example actions and help around using greenhouse gas calculators, which I think would be invaluable for British farmers and British food production."



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