

Farm woodland case studies

Barcloy Farm Kirkcudbright



Isobel and Marc Henkleman

Barcloy Farm is a 340 hectare hill farm with some scattered conifer plantations and a few areas of hardwoods. The Henklemanns are strong believers in diversity and find a landscape with mixed woodland much more attractive than a bare hill. They have a new plantation situated in the middle of the farm surrounded with improved grassland which is aesthetically pleasing and will, come time, provide shelter for stock and encourage an increase the local biodiversity.

Marc and Isobel aim for a simple approach to land management with as little maintenance requirement as possible.



Barcloy farm has been owned by Isobel's family since the late 1800s. When Isobel and Marc took over in 2004, the farm land was all in grass let, so they were basically starting from scratch. Since taking over, they have steadily built up a flock of 500 commercial hill ewes, rearing around 650 lambs a year. By 2018 they hope to have increased the breeding flock to around 700, returning the stocking density to its 1980's equivalent.

Fifty per cent the farm, mostly rough hill ground, is let to a neighbour who utilises it for sheep in the summer and cattle in the winter.

Between April and November, Marc and Isobel have a herd of 50 cows with calves at foot on 'full board'. The cattle supplement their grazing system and create some income as well as adding crucial nutrients to the soil. The farm receives LFASS payments and also SRDP payments for the woodland they planted 3 years ago.



There are nine separate areas of woodland on the farm aged between 15 to 40 years: seven conifer plantations; one hardwood plantation and a small area of native woodland. These woodland areas range from 1 to 3 hectares in size and are really too small for economic commercial extraction. In 2010, following previous unsuccessful attempts, the Henklemanns finally succeeded in obtaining a SRDP grant and planted a 22 hectare native woodland comprising 75% broadleaves and 25% conifers that is central to the farm.



Making the woodland work for the farm

The native woodland provides shelter for livestock, habitat for wildlife and some game shooting, as well as being aesthetically pleasing. There has been little impact of the loss of 22 hectares that was originally grassland, although the additional grazing could be valuable over the winter. However, as the trees mature, the benefit from the shelter they provide will outweigh the loss of grazing.

Isobel and Marc also 'sacrificed' a 1.5 hectare field which already had a 40% cover of trees and shrubs. After excluding the livestock they planted the remaining 60% in trees to create their own 'miniature nature reserve' from which they derive great pleasure but no monetary value.

Although the older blocks of conifer are too small to be commercially viable they supply fuel for a biomass boiler which heats the house and farm cottages and provide wind breaks and carbon capture/storage.

How it all adds up: the costs and benefits of farm woodland

The total cost of planting was £51,200. Following the total capital grants of £64,993 the net capital contribution was £13,793. As a result, the business is receiving enhanced income as annual maintenance and farmland premium payments of £7293 for five years reducing to £2520 for a further five years.

Prior to planting woodland, the land received no SFP as the Henkelmans started farming after the qualifying period, but it did contribute to the annual LFASS payment which has now been reduced slightly. The effect on livestock output from the loss of grazing was minimal. The contribution to farm profitability will amount to around £50,000 over the first 10 years following planting.

Looking forward: where do we go from here?

Woodlands are an integral part of the management of Barclay. They contribute to the health and management of the livestock by providing shelter, they provide diversity of habitat and landscape and are a source of fuel to the farm and cottages. Marc and Isobel consider that they now have sufficient area planted to meet these objectives although some additional shelterbelts,

hedges and environmental woodland developments may still evolve.

They feel their new woodland really improves the landscape: 'it created another layer of trees in our line of sight and so gave the view from farm to the (bare) hill more depth. It's also very satisfying to see how the little hardwood trees are beginning to form a carpet of leaves in the spring'.



The James
**Hutton
Institute**

Aberdeen
Craigiebuckler
Aberdeen AB15 8QH
Scotland UK

Dundee
Invergowrie
Dundee DD2 5DA
Scotland UK

Tel: +44 (0)844 928 5428
Fax: +44 (0)844 928 5429
info@hutton.ac.uk
www.hutton.ac.uk