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Farm Christmas Hamper!

Each wicker hamper will be available for collection on Christmas Eve and will only contain produce from the farm (zero food miles!) All meat is oven ready. Hampers will include;

- A fresh free-range 4-5 kg cockerel
- A fresh pheasant
- A fresh 1.5 kg beef roasting joint (topside joint, hung for 3 weeks)
- A 1kg pack of Gloucester Old Spot pork sausages (butchered in December, frozen)
- 10 large potatoes and 2 swedes
- ½ lb jar of honey
- 1 dozen free-range eggs

£90 each (£25 deposit at booking please). Please book by 10th December.

As well as hampers, cockerels, beef, and pork sausages will also all be available individually on Christmas eve.



Broughton Grounds Farm Newsletter, Autumn 2016

2016. What. A. Year. Brexit and now Trump ... good grief. Next you'll be telling me the mighty Villa are 16th in the Championship and Ed Balls is still in Strictly. In the year we lost Bowie, life on Mars is increasingly appealing!

Farming is certainly in interesting times. The weaker pound has helped commodity prices a little, and there are some positive noises about future markets that should develop in the long term. However, in the short to medium term there are likely to be some choppy waters ahead. We benchmark our figures against other farmers around the country, and

even though we're doing better than average with our wheat and sheep enterprises we rely on European subsidy to make a profit. Farm margins are so tight that the uncertainty of Brexit is an anxiety we could all do without. Despite the clichés trotted out in the farming press there is only so much diversification and cost shedding a small tenanted farm business can do.

But hey ho, there are also reasons to be positive and optimistic! We're very pleased to be in Natural England's Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship scheme and it's very rewarding to see the new habitats being created around the farm. One field is now effectively five ... as well as 22 acres of barley we have an acre plot of sunflower, maize and quinoa for winter bird food, an acre clover plot for pollinators, five acres of fallow for lapwings, and six metre grassland strips around hedges for other nesting birds ... we've seen several barn owls recently and the yard is full of yellowhammers in the winter. The scheme is European funded but hopefully there will be something similar available post 2020.

Talking of wildlife, did you know that one of the best things you could do for the environment this winter is to make a simple Asian Hornet trap? All pollinators will be adversely affected if this unwelcome new arrival takes hold, and instructions for simple traps are online.

We had nine school visits at lambing time and the regular farm clubs for adults and children with disabilities are great fun. During the spring and autumn visits are quite easy, with lambs and chicks and calves and potatoes. At other times I sometimes find it a challenge to think of enough activities to keep everyone stimulated, especially the Saturday kids group, but my parents often come up with good ideas and we've tried simple cooking (crumble, jam, chutney) and craft activities (pot painting, bird feeders and laminating leaves for window displays) in the classroom and the guys seem to enjoy even the rainiest days. Talking of cooking, in December we have our first ever farm club Christmas lunch (rather appropriate that it's in a converted stable!) with most produce from the farm. If you never hear from me again you can assume I undercooked the goose and went into hiding.

In other random news we had a photographer from the Archers website visit a couple of months ago, I offered myself as a dashing young (ish) Ed Grundy but he muttered something about only wanting photos of cuddly animals and old watering cans so I left him to it.

For obvious reasons it is never a good idea to get too attached to farm animals but we have been giving Nelson, our tame one-eyed Bullock, lots of TLC over the summer. He's a gentle soul, and so the slower you move around the shed the more he eats and so the bigger the steaks. I've also kept two goats for the first time, Billy and Jeff, and along with my two pigs Bangers and Mash they do love a cunning escape. Chasing pigs around the yard for the 5th time that day is a great workout, saves a small fortune in gym membership.

James