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SELECT LINCOLNSHIRE

Pigtails

The Lincolnshire Curly Coated Pigs Newsletter August 2011

*Our final Open Farm Day for 2011 is Sunday 11th. September from 1200 -1500 hrs.
Children with adults welcome.*

La Vie en Rose

Purely for historical reasons the Rectory Reserve year for accounting purposes ends in August. Hence, before we revise the three year plan and produce a budget for next 12 months, it's a good idea to review progress. So much that was novel a couple of years back we now regard as straightforward and it's rare that I now have to say 'but I haven't read that chapter yet' (as I did when Ginger had her first litter). Now it's sometimes a question as to whether we can remember what happened last time. Luckily Linda usually does and we have set systems in place for the usual run of activities.

The Breeding Programme continues to move forward. We started the year with 3 sows and now have 5 and a gilt awaiting service.

Delila	September 2010 (10)	March 2011 (10)
Ginger	November 2010 (7)	May 2011 (8)
Precious	February 2011 (9)	August 2011 (10)
Aster	July 2011 (3)	
Andromeda	August 2011 (5)	
Truffle		

In order to spread the genes Andromeda & Truffle are in residence with the boar JD at Keith Thomas' farm a few miles away. Moreover, to increase flexibility on movements, needed to meet DEFRA quarantine regulations, we have entered

into a livery arrangement with Lucy Barclay at Stixwould. Meanwhile the Farm Park and Custodian arrangements have again proved very popular.

The main concern during the year was the price of feed. No sooner had we finished the 2011 budget last September than the cost of a 20Kg bag increased, from around £6 to over £7.50, in the space of a few months. This added between £2 & 3000 to the costs. Arrangements were made to obtain vegetables from two sources locally that would lead to saving perhaps half this in a full year. However, the cost of diesel for transport of these & marketing our products also went from £1 to £1.40 per litre. The extra cost from more mileage and fuel cost increase was about £1500. This month we purchased a Tipper Truck with improved diesel consumption that will redress this amount in the coming year (but which added to cost pressure in the short term because of depreciation, Tax & insurance).

The Pig breeding and production of our Rare Breed animals, therefore, showed losses during the year compared to a budget that had been planned to break even.

Meanwhile, we split off 'Food activities' in order that we could budget and monitor these separately. We planned to develop the product range and the points of sale during the year. We now have a pretty good idea as to why new food products fail. It's because we humans are incorrigibly incomprehensible. Some products we would test market and they would go well at one location but terrible at another just a few miles away. We tried planning for different weather, different towns, different months, school holidays, tourists, and we are no closer explaining or understanding some of our results. However, Black (and recently launched White) pudding sold very well & Pork Pies go from strength to strength. Pate has sold for several weeks and then not at all. Producing different variations has no effect on good or bad sales. Bacon, we had problems with in presentation. Since we solved these, sales have jumped. The major disappointment was the delay in launching Chorizo / Salami sausages. Sampling went well but production has been delayed with yeast contamination. We hope to have product available early in the new financial year. On the whole we feel we developed the Charcuterie range well during the year.

There are several market sectors we could attack such as Restaurants and Delis. However, we decided this year to keep the Product primarily under our

own sales control. Thus, alongside sales from the Farm, we built up attendance at Xmas Events, Farmers Markets and Summer Fayres. Sales were variable but trended upwards during the year as products developed. However, recessionary pressures reduced turnover at Farmer's Markets and led to a shortfall against budget in this sector. This was compensated, to some extent, by better results than planned at Fayres. Margins were adversely affected by feed costs and mix effects. Altogether a lot of experience was gained during our first real year of selling Products away from the farm. This has created a foundation for next year but financial results this year were not outstanding.

Marketing added to our sales presence during the year. 2 appearances on National TV, some local media coverage and Social networking launches on Twitter and Facebook, all stimulated interest at little cost.

Overheads were as expected, apart from Bookeeping that was significantly over budget. The company registered for VAT as most sales are Zero rated and we can claim back input payments.

We feel it has been a satisfactory year. If the wind had blown in another direction we might have avoided losses and even made a profit. However, actions that have been taken should enable us to move forward in 2012 and produce a positive budget forecast. Good progress has been made in re-establishing the breed but the major challenge is still to produce a longer term, robust position that ensures the future of the Curly Coated Pigs in Lincolnshire.

With kind regards

Brian & Sylvia Codling

Click here for our summer [order form](#)

PS We'll be at Farmers' Markets on:
Horncastle Thursday 11th August
Louth Friday 12th & Wednesday 24th. August
Grimsby Friday 19th. August
Sleaford Saturday 3rd. September
Please see the web site for latest information www.rectoryreserve.co.uk