



## Farm Snapshot

- Northamptonshire
- 3,500 Acres
- Historic Estate
- Traditional Parkland
- HLS Scheme
- Extensive Flock
- Store Cattle



## Case Study

## Boughton Farming Limited

We are just starting our second Spring working with Farm Manager Ben Chaplin from Boughton, a large, historic estate in Northamptonshire. It is a working country landscape with traditional woodland, conservation areas and game covers plus arable ground under a contract farming agreement. Our role has focused on improving the grass for their 1400 breeding ewes.

The ground is divided into three parts:

- Parkland around the stately home
- HLS scheme with minimal inputs allowed
- Reclaimed ground that needs improvement

The flock are extensively managed with outdoor lambing on traditional grounds where the stock are finished off grass, last autumn Ben decided to try an intensive indoor finishing system where lambs were shorn, weighed and liveweight gains monitored. Originally this was done to combat the summer drought 2018. This threw up some really interesting results and enabled accurate costings. The nucleus flock of Highlanders are crossed with a Aberfield tup, these then supply the commercial flock of Highlander x Aberfield ewe with a Abermax or Primera tup all of which go deadweight.

Following our soil testing a bigger picture has built up demonstrating that some nutrients were locking up. Previous policy in the lambing paddocks was straight Urea, this has now been tailored to maximise production whilst still fitting within the stewardship agreements

Sustained improvements particularly for early spring growth and some re-seeding was essential. Cobb Agri recommended a protected slow release Urea, applied early when the soil temperature was warm. A bespoke mix of PK and Sodium to increase the palatability of traditional sward with PGrow rather than TSP has substantially increased Phosphate.

*"We have seen a vast improvement in grass quality and bulk particularly on the silage ground and I believe this is down to Pauls knowledge and the introduction of PGrow."*

Ben plans to further enhance soil nutrient levels and plans to use digestate in the future. He has also introduced 37 Angus store cattle onto the parkland, moving them down from their Scottish estate. Since these changes have been implemented there has been a positive increase in silage volume and in time the hope is to increase stock numbers as the grassland improves.