

Cottage Farm

*"Organic, sustainable and carbon neutral,
powered by renewable energy"*

Sustainable Farmer of the Year finalist, BBC Food & Farming Awards

Cottage Farm is an **organic, sustainable, carbon neutral farm** in Jacobstow, North Cornwall. It is powered by renewable energy **with near zero use of fossil fuels**, one of the first in the country.

Cottage Farm rear native breeds almost exclusively on grass with minimal use of supplementary fodder. They sell and deliver fresh organic meat boxes by carbon neutral means of transport, in reusable boxes.

Owner Paul Sousek says "Having bought Cottage Farm back in 2005, without any prior farming experience at all, soon after I learned about Peak Oil, our aim was to establish a food producing business with a zero carbon footprint, serving our local community and other customers at affordable prices by cutting all our fossil fuel consumption."



Cottage Farm have demonstrated that it is possible to farm sustainably and in a resilient manner; that is without using fossil fuels, but still utilising machinery and energy. Every single aspect of the farm, house, lifestyle, travel and involvement in the community is driven by the need for sustainability and resilience.

The farm was converted to organic status and established a herd of local Red Ruby cattle and a flock of native Wiltshire Horn sheep. Cottage Farm supply their neighbours and others with fresh beef and lamb boxes at below the price of conventional meat, due to cutting out fertiliser, feed and energy costs and through removing all intermediaries by selling directly to customers.

Their house was also subject to an 'eco-conversion', reducing their carbon footprint from 7 tonnes CO₂/year to -1.3 tonnes CO₂/year, a decrease of 119%!

As a result they are the first house in Cornwall to have been accepted into the **SuperHomes Network** (www.Superhomes.org.uk), a charity building up a national network of exemplar energy efficient, older retrofitted homes.

They achieved this SuperHome status by firstly **reducing consumption** with **loft and wall insulation, draft proofing, low energy and LED light bulbs, 'A' rated appliances, solar security lights** and many other measures.

They then switched their space heating to a **wood burner** and **wood fuelled Rayburn** for cooking and heating. They also installed a **Heat Store**, which is powered by **solar thermal tubes**, the wood burner and an immersion heater, to provide hot water and to help heat the house through a connection to the existing central heating system. Solar thermal and a wood burner is an excellent combination providing plenty of hot water and space heating 365 days a year.

Electricity is provided by a combination of a **wind turbine** and **solar PV panels**, both with on-grid inverters. The combination produces power almost every day of the year. Water comes from a **borehole** pumped using the home grown electricity.

They make their own **100% bio-diesel** from waste vegetable oil. This powers a car, Landrover and the tractor, and is used to deliver the meat boxes. That means that all the work done on the farm, all deliveries and general driving is almost completely CO₂ free.

As members of the SuperHomes Network, they hold regular 'Open Days' for the public to learn about, see and touch the various energy saving measures and renewable energy devices, as well as enjoying the land and animals on an organic farm walk. The aim is to inspire others follow suit, saving themselves money on energy.

Best Small Scale Renewable Energy Scheme award.
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