

A TASTE FOR QUALITY

SUSTAINING THE SOUTH DOWNS



Eat the best

There are few landscapes more beautiful than the South Downs. For centuries, these rolling hills have supported generations of sheep farmers and a host of small, traditional businesses. Now's your chance to support our local producers – and enjoy some of the finest South Downs Lamb and Venison you will taste anywhere in the UK.

Help us to protect this stunning landscape

When you buy produce bearing the mark of the South Downs brand, you will be doing your bit to help us conserve the South Downs landscape, its wildlife and cultural heritage for generations to come. This mark is an assurance that participating producers follow environmentally friendly practices that help us to protect, conserve and enhance the South Downs landscape. It also guarantees the highest quality naturally produced meat.

Explore nature's legacy

Sheep grazing

The South Downs landscape depends on sympathetic farming and land management practices. Without sheep grazing, the South Downs' beautiful landscape would become unrecognisable. Since the Bronze Age, flocks have maintained the rare chalk grassland, allowing an incredibly diverse range of plants and insects to thrive. Our South Downs Lamb producers are committed to conserving this grassland, while providing the finest tasting meat.

Coppicing

Coppiced woodland provides a safe habitat for bees, butterflies and other wildlife including native plants such as foxglove, dog violet and primrose. Coppicing means cutting back young tree stems to maximise sunlight through the tree canopy and promote healthy, vibrant woodlands. South Downs Charcoal is produced using coppicing as a means of managing the South Downs woodlands sustainably.

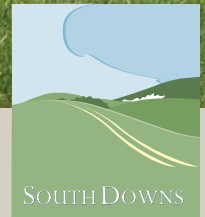
Deer

Careful management of the South Downs deer population allows us to protect young trees, crops, woodland flora and fauna. When you buy South Downs Venison you're helping to maintain a stable deer population guaranteeing the conservation of the landscape for generations to come.





PETER KNIGHT NORFOLK ESTATE



‘Less impact, more output’ ...

..is the mantra of Peter Knight, Estate Manager of the Norfolk Estate, Arundel. Peter is in charge of 8,500 acres of South Downs land, incorporating arable and livestock farming, within the newly formed South Downs National Park.

Arundel Castle

At the centre of the Norfolk Estate lies Arundel Castle. This has been the seat of the Dukes of Norfolk and their ancestors for over 850 years. The castle, which overlooks the River Arun, was built at the end of the 11th century by Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Arundel. During the Civil War (1642-45), it was badly damaged. However, it was restored by Henry, the 15th Duke of Norfolk in the 1900's and was one of the first English country houses to be fitted with electric light and central heating.

The Norfolk Estate's outdoor lambing combined with home-grown feed, rotational cropping and an integrated farm management system, results in tender, succulent South Downs Lamb.

A traditional style of farming

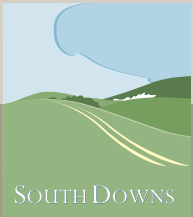
The estate's approach to farming is designed to get the most out of the land while minimising interference with the natural habitat, so that flora and fauna can flourish. It's a traditional style of farming that's becoming more and more popular.

Peter runs the estate on an integrated farm management system whereby the livestock and arable parts of the business work in harmony together with the natural environment. For example, the estate's 1000 ewes are bred with Hampshire Down Rams, and the lambs are finished on grass in the summer and on forage crops during the winter. Spring Barley is undersown with grass and clover which not only provides the sheep with high quality grazing for the next two years but also creates a rich haven for bird life. Many endangered bird species such as lapwings, sky larks, corn buntings and grey partridges are making a welcome reappearance in the area.

Giving indigenous wild plants a helping hand

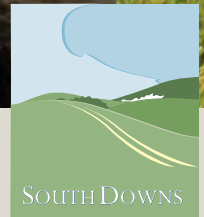
Peter and his team are also encouraging biodiversity through a process known as conservation headlands. This means leaving field margins free of sprays and fertilisers so that a greater range of broad-leaved weeds can thrive. This practice has seen plants such as the cornflower, dwarf fumitory, narrow fruited cornsalad and night flowering catchfly make a comeback.

With 1,450 lambs produced every year, Peter and the Norfolk Estate are putting South Downs Lamb at the heart of the Great British menu, and, at the same time, showing how sympathetic farming combined with conservation initiatives can really make a difference to our countryside.



To find out more about where you can buy produce from the South Downs, visit www.plantationpigs.co.uk or phone us on 01483 810113.





CHRIS & CAROLINE HODGKINS

LOCKS FARM

Dominating the hilltop above the village of Washington...

...are the ancient earthworks of Chanctonbury Ring. This is where Sheep Farmers of the Year, Chris and Caroline Hodgkins, graze their prize lambs. Tenants of Locks Farm, which is part of the Wiston Estate, they follow in the footsteps of countless generations of South Downs sheep farmers.

An Iron Age homestead

Locks Farm is situated at the foot of Chanctonbury Ring, a famous East Sussex landmark that's rich in history. Around 300BC, it was home to an Iron Age hill fort. Following the Roman invasion, in about 50AD, it was abandoned and 300 years later, a temple was built inside the earthworks. More recently, in 1588, beacons were sited at Chanctonbury Ring to warn of the impending Spanish Armada which was routed by Queen Elizabeth's fleet in the English Channel.

South Downs Lamb is grown, processed and sold locally to reduce food miles. Buy South Downs Lamb and you're helping to support sustainable agriculture.

Chanctonbury's famous ring

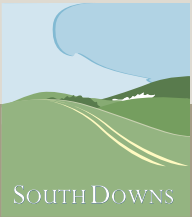
In the 18th century, the Goring family of Wiston Park planted a ring of beech trees at the centre of the earthworks. These were decimated by the Great Storm of 1987 but thankfully, new trees were planted by the family's descendent, Richard Harry Goring, although it will be years before they reach their former glory.

Prime grazing grassland

For centuries the area around Chanctonbury has been grazed by ewes and their lambs. Their presence has defined the landscape of grazed chalk uplands and helped to attract a rich array of wildlife, especially butterflies and bees that flourish in this beautiful habitat.

Tradition meets innovation

Sheep farmers have historically herded their sheep along ancient tracks from nearby Cissbury Ring to Chanctonbury Ring, a process known as droving. Chris and Caroline are no exception and use trained dogs and quad bikes to drove their flock. The couple's ethos is based around keeping their lambs outside and minimising human intervention, particularly at lambing time. The quality of the meat is testament to the way Chris and Caroline select their animals. The lambs are a product of Hampshire Down rams. These are very hardy and thrive outside in all weather conditions. Rigorous selection means that their Locks Farm flock produces the most succulent, tender lamb; a perfect meat for any meal.

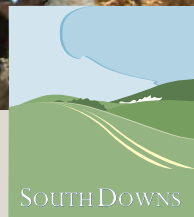


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TOM TUPPER BIGNOR FARM



Take a stroll from Bignor Hill to Gumber Farm...

...and you will pass through fields of Tom Tupper's sheep. The Tupper family has been farming the land around Bignor Roman Villa for at least 500 years. In fact, the name 'Tupper' is an ancient Anglo-Saxon word for shepherd and farmers still call a male sheep a 'tup'. The Tupper farm consists of 2,200 acres of arable and pasture stretching from Fittleworth to Slindon, taking in a large part of the South Downs Way and some prime National Trust land.

A Roman home on the South Downs...

The Tupper farm sits on the site of the 3rd century Bignor Roman Villa and even today, it's still possible to see the building's original mosaic floors. The remains were discovered in 1811 by Tom's ancestor, George Tupper, who was out ploughing one day when he struck the villa's ancient fountain.

By opening its doors to the public, Bignor Farm is helping consumers to understand where their food comes from and find out more about the stunning South Downs countryside.

Giving families a taste of farm life

Like many other farms in the area, the Bignor Farm is keen to help protect the biodiversity of the South Downs. That means using as few fertilisers and chemicals as possible. Helping consumers to understand where their food comes from is something else Tom and his family feel strongly about. With this in mind, Bignor Farm has recently opened its doors to the public with barbecues, farm tours and displays of vintage tractors and trailers on offer.

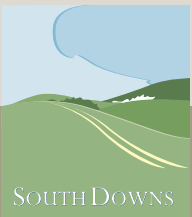
A commitment to natural regeneration

As well as lambs, Tom farms a variety of crops such as oilseed rape, wheat, barely, beans and linseed, most of which can be seen growing in the fields around Bignor Roman Villa. After the winter wheat, he also plants stubble turnips which provide autumn and winter grazing for the lambs. Another important initiative is leaving winter crops to stubble so that arable weeds can grow as well as planting a variety of grass mixes. This ensures the area's bird and butterfly life has a plentiful source of food all year round.

Bignor Farm and South Downs Lamb

Every year, around 1,000 of Bignor Farm's lambs are specially selected for the South Downs Lamb brand and are sold in the locality. These lambs are the product of a Southdowns ram and a mule ewe which produces just the right amount of fat, and, as a result, the premium South Downs Lamb that we can all enjoy.

Many of the lambs are overwintered on stubble turnips and sold as 'hoggets' (a traditional stronger flavoured lamb). These are available after Christmas until March.



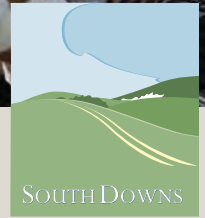
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GREG BULL

LECONFIELD FARMS



Producing local produce for local people...

...is the business ethos of Leconfield Farms, near Petworth, West Sussex. Farm Manager, Greg Bull believes that animals should be reared, butchered and eaten within the same local area. A shorter journey to slaughter means the lambs experience minimal stress. This means South Downs Lamb is very tender and has great meat quality. Add to this the reduced carbon emissions and you've got a way of producing meat that's both naturally produced and environmentally friendly.

Petworth House, home to Lord and Lady Egremont

At 1,000 acres, Leconfield Farms is a small part of the Leconfield Estate which spans around 14,000 acres of West Sussex countryside. At the heart of the estate lies Petworth House, home to Lord and Lady Egremont, who are both strong advocates for the conservation of the South Downs wildlife habitat, and sustainable farming in partnership with the National Trust.

As part of the Environmental Stewardship scheme, Leconfield Farms is working to conserve our countryside and, at the same time, offer customers the best quality South Downs Lamb.

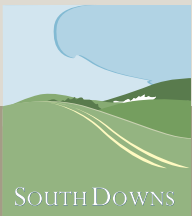
There's been an estate at Petworth since the 12th century although the house that can be seen today was built in the 1690s. The 3rd Earl of Egremont (1751-1837) extended the estate's lands while Capability Brown created Petworth House's landscaped grounds.

A sympathetic approach to farming

Today, Lord and Lady Egremont are actively involved in the running of their estate, particularly lamb production. The estate's lambs are bred from a fine stock of Southdown rams. Leconfield also has one of the oldest pedigree herds of Sussex cattle in the world.

Leconfield's commitment to the environment has secured its place on the Environmental Stewardship scheme. Run by the government body, Natural England, the scheme is designed to encourage farmers to actively improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside, enhancing wildlife habitats and historical features.

In many ways, the scheme prompts farmers to take a more traditional, less intensive approach to their businesses. For example, at Leconfield, Greg and his team are keen to minimise the number of sheep on the land at any one time, thus reducing the environmental impact and ensuring the lambs get better quality grazing. To supplement their grassland diet at the end of the season, the lambs are also fattened on highly nutritious stubble turnips which gives them just the right amount of fat to produce a succulent, extremely tender meat.

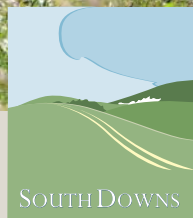


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JACK SMALLMAN SOUTH DOWNS VENISON AND GAME



Gamekeeping is in the blood for Jack Smallman...

...and something he feels passionately about. The son of a gamekeeper, he was brought up on the Cowdray Estate in Midhurst where he revelled in the great outdoors. Today, Jack sources his produce from 3,000 acres of woodland on various South Downs estates.

A commitment to best quality and sustainability

Jack is committed to providing the highest quality meat, produced humanely from a sustainable source. The South Downs is home to one of the UK's largest populations of deer. Both fallow and roe deer roam freely here, feeding on grasses and young trees. However, it's important that numbers are kept under control. Managing deer by regular culling helps to maintain their population and protect the woodland habitat for generations to come.

All South Downs Venison is sustainably sourced and butchered locally. The result is meat that has a truly outstanding flavour and comes with a low carbon footprint.

What is stalking?

Stalking is the process by which an animal is pursued and killed. It's a skill that takes years of practice and an intuitive understanding of animal behaviour. Jack is an expert stalker and takes great pride in killing in the most humane way possible. He goes out in the early morning and evening to intercept the deer as they move in and out of their woodland resting places. When a deer is startled it gets stressed, something which affects the quality of the meat. However, Jack's skill as a stalker means he's able to take the deer by complete surprise to produce a more tender and flavoursome venison.

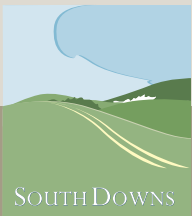
Once killed, the deer is hung to enhance the flavour further and tenderise the meat. Following this, the legs, heads and guts are removed, a process called gralloching. Jack does all of this himself before taking the carcasses back to his farm for refrigeration.

As well as venison, Jack produces pheasant, partridge, rabbits and pigeon - all sourced from the South Downs.

Preserving our beautiful woodlands

Much of the South Downs woodland is over 400 years old and originates from the last Ice Age. Because they have no natural predator, deer, if left to roam unchecked, can destroy woodland areas by stripping off tree bark and any new growth.

When you buy South Downs Venison, you are helping to protect these ancient woodlands, enabling their rich variety of plants, animals and insects to thrive.

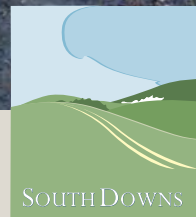


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ALAN & JO WALTERS WILDWOOD CHARCOAL COPPICE



If you go down to the woods today...

...you might come across Alan and Jo Walters, hard at work. This husband and wife team is keeping old traditions alive in the heart of the South Downs with a thriving charcoal and coppicing business. Alan and Jo burn charcoal and make traditional woodland products including hurdles, thatching spars and rustic fencing using coppiced wood.

What is coppicing?

Coppicing is an ancient woodland management tradition whereby trees are cut back at ground level, prompting them to regrow many different stems promoting healthy woodland. This method creates sustainable timber supplies and a diverse, vibrant wildlife, as well as much-needed job opportunities for local people. Coppiced wood is also the key ingredient in charcoal production.

90% of charcoal used in this country is imported. Buy South Downs Charcoal and you will be helping to conserve our vital woodlands and create jobs for rural communities.

8,000 years of charcoal production

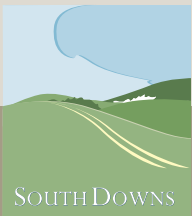
In Britain, we've been burning charcoal for around 8,000 years, and it's been used for everything from cooking and filters to space shuttles and submarines. Nowadays, most of the charcoal we use is for our summer barbecues but, despite a flourishing native industry, about 95% of the 60,000 tons we consume annually is imported. It comes mainly from rainforests and mangrove habitats in South America, West Africa and South-East Asia. Not only are these habitats under threat from over-deforestation but, by importing our charcoal, we're adding to global pollution.

Keeping old traditions alive

Based on the West Dean estate, north of Chichester, Alan and Jo have been using coppiced wood to produce charcoal for 30 years, having learnt their skills from old Sussex coppice workers. They burn mainly beech and hazel - either coppiced wood that they've harvested themselves or tree thinnings from managed woodland. They make their charcoal in a time-honoured fashion. Firstly, the wood is carefully arranged around a metal kiln. A fire is lit and chimneys draw out the smoke while vents draw air in. After 24 hours of controlled burning, the charcoal is ready.

A far superior charcoal

British charcoal has a higher carbon content than imported charcoal which means it's easier to light and burns hotter and for longer. Many foodies also agree that hardwood smoke produces a superior taste. What better reason to buy South Downs Charcoal?



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The European Agricultural
Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



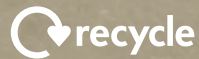
defra
Department for Environment
Food and Rural Affairs

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Why buy South Downs produce?

- It's of consistently high quality and tastes amazingly good.
- Buying seasonal and locally produced food helps to reduce our carbon footprint.
- It's produced using non intensive, sustainable, low-impact production systems.
- You will be actively supporting local producers who are committed to protecting and enhancing the South Downs landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage.

Plantation Pigs Ltd, has been granted an exclusive licence to distribute South Downs Lamb through independent butchers and farm shops. For our list of stockists or to find out where you can buy other South Downs produce please visit www.plantationpigs.co.uk or telephone us on 01483 810113.



PLANTATION PIGS