

Green Career Profile



Name: Gwyn Thomas

Organisation: Blaen-y-Nant Farm,
North Wales, UK

Job title: Organic Upland Shepherd

What I do in my job: *'I look after everything that is within my farm boundaries while considering all that's outside the boundary. This includes visitors, flora & fauna, the soil and water, and my domestic animals'*

The green competences I use to act sustainably in my job are....

- **Working within nature's boundaries** through considering the well being of the land, animals, community and visitors in everything I do.
- **Keeping the 'footprint' of my produce local.** Rearing local breeds that are in balance with the local environment, using a local abattoir to keep transport and animal stress to a minimum and selling products direct from the farm or in local shops rather than to multinational supermarket chains.
- Understanding that successfully farming with and for nature, while still sustaining family and providing quality products, requires the **fusion of traditional and modern technologies and knowledge.**
- **Not being blinkered to the future.** Rather focusing on how I can survive in the changing world of agriculture without changing my way of farming in order to bow to the pressures of multinational companies or the economic restrictions of EU subsidies.
- Understanding the importance of maintaining a range of habitats on the farm in order to **promote biodiversity.** This not only benefits wildlife, but makes the farm more robust to the impacts of changing climate or threat from disease.

The core values I take into my work are....

- **Respect for and understanding of the environment** upon which the health of the farm relies.
- **Working with nature** in the bigger picture of the landscape surrounding the farm.
- Sharing with the local **community.**
- Retaining **traditional knowledge and practice** that fits with modern organic thinking.
- That farming is a **way of life**, not just for economic gain.
- That there is **equality** of opportunity in farming for the next generation.

I have been inspired to work sustainably through...

Growing up with my family on the farm and spending time with local shepherds that practiced traditional farming techniques. In my working life I have spent 27 years working for other farmers around the world. Through this work I have learnt sustainable techniques that I put into practice myself on my own farm, this work also allowed me to see things done in ways that I knew I didn't want to follow in my own farming practice.

Key definitions:

- **Competences** - *The skills, knowledge and understanding, qualities and attributes, sets of value, beliefs and attitudes which lead to effective [...] performance in a given context, situation or role.* (Woodall & Winstanley, 1998)
- **Green competences** – *Competences for sustainable behaviour at work*