

I am 42 years old and have been a dairy farmer since 2002. My wife Anja and I run a tenancy farm in the southern highlands of Sweden, where we keep a herd of 110 Ayrshire/SRB cows. My wife runs a small artisan dairy on the farm using a small part of the milk produced, selling all products locally. The rest of the milk is sold to Arla.

We try to keep things simple - adapt the system to the farm and the cows to the system. Our part of the country is mostly woodland with small, scattered fields, many of them not at all arable but good for grazing. The arable fields are used to produce grass, maize and whole crop silage.

All animals are grazed from late April to late October, the milking cows are buffer fed silage the first weeks and last months and fed a mixed ration of some grain and different kinds of silage in the winter, with concentrates fed to yield all year around in the parlour. The breeding target has always been a low maintenance, feed efficient and long lasting cow. As there is no reliable market for in-calf heifers only necessary replacements are reared.

In order to make the breeding decision final, we use 50 % beef semen on those with the lowest expectation and if not in calf on two services. On the rest, quite a wide range of pure Ayrshire bulls is used, the latest young bulls together with old favourites aiming to keep inbreeding as low as possible. For the last eight years, these have mainly been Cattle Services bulls, some Canadian and a few Swedish. Currently used are Hector, Hawaiian, Vitality and a stock bull by Victory. Those mainly used earlier are Winston, Prodigy, Napier, Real McCoy and Hilltown Oblique.

I am honoured to get the opportunity to judge this On Farm Challenge and as I know the high quality of UK cows I really look forward to it.