

A modern farmer's life

A day in the life of Chris Knights, Brecks farmer

What time do you get up? At 6 o'clock.

What do you have for breakfast? A banana and a bowl of cereal.

What time do you start work and what do you do first? At half past 6 I go and meet the farm manager and foreman.

During the day what do you do for meals? At half past 12 I take half an hour's break, when I eat a salad or sandwiches at home. In the evening, around 6.30 or 7 o'clock, I eat a meal at home - usually vegetable stew or chops.

When do you finish work for the day? Six o'clock in the winter, 7, 8 or 9 in the summer during harvest.

What contact do you have with other people in your working day? Every day I see the farm manager, foreman and secretary. Often I also talk to the farm staff and maybe sales representatives selling seed or farm machinery.

What equipment do you use in your daily work? A four-wheeled drive Land Rover to get around the farm, a mobile phone, and a computer.

Do you use the Internet? Yes.

Which parts of the day are your most and least favourite? I like the early morning best - first thing. The most difficult part of the day is the part between 9 o'clock and midday when people tell me about all the problems - e.g. heavy rain overnight.

What do you like to do to relax? I go birdwatching or do some photography.

What time do you go to bed? After the news on TV at 11 p.m.

Are there any children on the farm? No - because of the Health & Safety at work rules. Nobody under 16 is now allowed to work on a farm. When I was a boy, I enjoyed helping my father on the farm, particularly at harvest time, picking peas, strawberries and other fruit. I remember long, hot summers, birdwatching and chasing rabbits as they ran out of the fields which were being cut by the combine harvester. We chased the rabbits, killed them with a stick and took them home to eat for dinner.

How long have you been farming in the Brecks? Sixty years.

How much land do you farm? 8,000 acres [3,240 hectares] - owned, shared with other farm-

ers or rented.

What crops do you grow (starting with the ones you grow most of)? Carrots, parsnips, lettuce, salad onions, potatoes, wheat, barley, linseed and sugar beet.

Are they mostly for local/UK consumption? Yes they are used all over the UK, none is exported.

What other - unusual - crops do people grow in the Brecks? Herbs and some grow rye for Ryvita crispbread.

What do you think is the most important or interesting machine you use? The carrot harvester.

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Below: harvesting the lettuces on Chris Knights' farm

