



Steve and Mary's Farming Year

Springtime

The best but busiest part of the year!

Lambing starts on the 1st April, so we pray for good weather as the lambs are born indoors and go out the next day. The cattle calve and then go out to pasture after being in all winter.

The hay fields are prepared by chain harrowing and rolling and we plant our field with spring barley.

The birds are busy nest building and you can hear the wood pecker hammering away calling for a mate. House martins and swallows return and fox cubs and baby rabbits abound. Hedgerows come to life with wildflowers emerging. Primroses, celandines, blue bells in the horse shoe, and the scent of the hawthorn blossom fills the air.

Summertime

Most of summer is spent preparing for winter. We cut our own silage, which you see big round bales wrapped in plastic, for winter feed. The hay is cut and dried and the barley is harvested. The sheep are sheared in June and the late summer lambs are weaned to give the ewes a rest before they go back to the tups in November.

There is also a lot of wildlife to see and we are very lucky to have hares on the farm,

best spotted when the harvest comes off the fields. There are also deer and at nighttime it's a great place for bat spotting and badger watching.

Autumn

Sadly we say goodbye to the house martins and swallows as they start to head off to warmer places. Animals gorge themselves on the hedgerow fruit to put weight on before the cold of winter and so do we. It is the time for blackberry, apple and whinberry picking and collecting sloes to make some nice sloe gin for the winter.

It's the time to get all the harvest in ready for winter. There are cows to calve and sheep to sort to select which ewes will go for breeding.

Stubble turnips are planted for sheep food for the winter and the winter barley is sown.

Winter

Winter on the farm is mostly spent feeding and bedding down cattle, as they have to come in the sheds as soon as the weather starts to turn.

The sheep stay out all winter but have to be fed every day as there is not so much grass about. On the 1st week in February we scan and sort all the ewes. We look to see how many lambs they are having, so we can adjust their feed.

After a fall of snow its wonderful to see the tracks of all the animals as they go about their business.



Circular Walk 1

A year in Middle Woodbatch Farm

Discover Shropshire

To walk this circular walk once would be a shame. It is a walk with many faces and constantly changing things to delight, a walk of 4 seasons.

Middle Woodbatch farm is a small family run mixed livestock farm that dates back to the 1700s. Here they rear cattle, sheep and lots of other animals. A very large pet pig, called Miss Piggy, a whole flock of muscovy ducks and some very old hens who still manage to provide a few eggs for breakfast. There is also very friendly horse called molly, a very weird looking blue merle sheep dog, with blue eyes and a pink nose that smiles at people and not to be forgotten Swampy the farm cat. A wonderful place to visit at any time of year and see what the seasons bring to the farm.

It has been owned by the same family since the mid 1930s. Now it's farmed by Steve and Mary Austin who also run a bed and breakfast and campsite.

See www.middlewoodbatchfarm.co.uk





Discover Shropshire

Circular Walk 1

For a more detailed map and information visit: www.shropshirewalking.co.uk

DIFFICULTY: Can be wet under foot

★☆☆☆☆

2½ mile walk

