

Where do I get the best advice on managing agricultural land?

Owning agricultural land brings a myriad of management options. The expertise, resources and equipment needed to manage your land can be sourced through contracting and partnership, outright purchase or ad hoc hire of help, for example.

The fact is, however: there are as many ways to manage land as there are reasons for wanting to own it. So the best way to answer this question is by being absolutely sure why you wanted to own this land in the first place.

Ask yourself this.

Do you want to keep horses? Do you want to protect your view? Do you want to establish wildflower meadows? Do you want to plant trees? Do you want to develop a shoot? Do you want to be a farmer? All of the above? Some of the above? None of the above?

The detailed management measures will differ according to your answers to these questions, but there are some fundamental points from which a management plan can be developed, so let's focus on these for a moment.

Positive intervention.

Land always requires positive interventionist management in order to be whatever you want it to be – even if what you want is to maintain the status quo.

Farmland needs farming if it is not to become wasteland. Land used by horses needs a lot of care and attention if it is not to become messy and too poor to support horses. Woods need constant felling and replanting to support a range of wildlife and to look vigorous. Rivers always want to be straight and can become choked by weeds and trees.

Some of the necessary management operations will need detailed technical knowledge, and others simply experience and the necessary equipment. Quite often, choosing the method of delivery requires as much thought and planning as your original acquisition of the actual land.

You will need to be aware of and in control of the liabilities, risks and rewards of land ownership. These are all affected differently by the management option you choose, as may be your tax position.

Discuss your aspirations and options early on with your advisors, and you'll avoid false starts which could require expensive and almost certainly time-consuming correction.

Middleton advice.

Start off in the right direction. Think through your aims very carefully before you select your land management plan.

Thanks:

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