

RUTLAND ORGANIC POULTRY

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Cuckoo Farm, Ketton
RUTLAND

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Rutland Organic Poultry Farm Facts

- 113 Acres
- Sloping; limestone brash; clay caps
- Joint owners with bank since '94
- Organic conversion began in 1999
- Conversion completed in 2007

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Rutland Organic Poultry Farm Enterprises

- Arable – wheat, oats, red clover rotation
 - 90 acres, contractor cultivated and harvested
- Year Round Poultry – table birds & layers
- Xmas Poultry – turkeys, geese, cockerels
- On Farm Slaughtering and Processing
- Venison – 60 strong herd of Fallow Deer
- Farmers' markets & Xmas customer list
- Turkey Breeding – Fully Organic, naturally bred traditional breeds

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Rutland Organic Poultry Credit Crunch Experience

- End '07 reduced year round poultry
 - Granddaughters arrival in early '08
 - Tired of weekly catch/slaughter "treadmill"
 - Summer months always poor
- Concentrate on Xmas Poultry
- Concentrate on Turkey Breeding
- Sufficient Poultry to maintain profile locally
- Use farmers' mkts to promote Xmas Sales

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Rutland Organic Poultry Credit Crunch Experience

- '08 experience OK
 - More time to do turkey breeding/sales
 - Not caught out by summer slow down
- Turkey poult and grower sales good
 - High % of v. small producers; many not Organic
 - Many large producers reluctant to take traditional breeds
- Xmas Poultry sales broadly similar to '07

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Rutland Organic Poultry '08 Analysis

- Have lost some customers / gained others
 - Generally lost 'fashion shoppers' - what we call the "*Is it free range?*" set
- Despite economic conditions equal to '07
- New & loyal customers tend to be quality / taste driven
- Organic is often a bonus not necessity
- Many tell us: your birds / eggs are proper stuff; supermarket organic ones taste the same as free range

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Rutland Organic Poultry The Future – Negatives Aspects

- Hassle Factor – Legislation, DEFRA, EU etc
- Current Economic Climate
 - NB: customers more likely to abandon Organic due lack of taste/flavour difference with 'ordinary free range' than price
- Certification Organisations
 - rule bound; practical aspects often ignored
 - not interested in quality, taste

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Rutland Organic Poultry The Future – Positive Aspects

- The Market exists & can be exploited, but
- It is taste, flavour, texture, quality driven, and,
- The consumer is still willing to pay a premium for a genuinely premium product, well differentiated from 'ordinary free range'.

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Rutland Organic Poultry Public Perception/Marketing

- Public should want Organic for:
 - No chemicals / artificial fertilisers / taste
- Instead, many get 'no' taste but pay more
- Multiples jump on small producer bandwagon & copy things like Veg. boxes, naming producer on label
- The small producer is laying foundation stones for multiples to build on.

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Rutland Organic Poultry Small Producers / Marketing

- Our experience suggests that:
 - Know your customer, get contact details
 - Keep details updated & customer informed
- Caution when dealing with large retailers
 - We almost had a salutary lesson
- **Small Producers and Multiples are not the same & the customers needs to know this**

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