

The Land that Made Us is the story of eighty years of farming in the South West Peak. Christine Gregory and Sheila Hine have collated the personal accounts of local farmers and land managers, many of whom have lived and worked in this often challenging landscape for generations. In their own words, the farmers recall the changes to traditional farming in this remote and rugged landscape in the decades since the Second World War. The interviews also reflect the much bigger national story about the changing priorities in land use and food production.

The book and associated oral history archive created from these interviews were undertaken in partnership with the Farming Life Centre and the Peak District National Park, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Sam Slack 4/7/17

Sam Slack is the son of Peter Slack and grandson of Arthur Slack. Sam and his brother Matthew farm with their parents, Peter and Sylvia, at Overton Farm at Taxal above the Goyt Valley.

Sheila Hine talked to Sam about the challenges in farming in July 2017.

SS. Public perception of farming is a hard one; you're trying to do the best for your cows and everyone thinks you're doing the opposite. Public support is a big one. Milk price—feed price chasing it; if milk price goes up, everything goes up with it. And of course, the weather.

SH. How do you find TB?

SS. Yes, TB is getting closer and closer, frightening really, I don't know what you can do about it. We seem to have a lot of badgers and they are vaccinated but how long the funding will last for the vaccination, I'm not sure.

SH. You have a lot of footpaths; are you pestered with people with dogs?

SS. Yes, lots of dogs. We suffer with Neospora which is spread by dogs and foxes. We've got about 10% of the herd with it and out of the cows that have got it about 15% abort so not every cow that has it aborts but there is that risk of spreading it.

SH. But if they are carrying it, could they abort the next time?

SS. Yes, they can do. If you do have an abortion and see the foetus you know they have aborted but if they re-absorb after they have been PD'd in calf (pregnancy diagnosed) and you haven't seen anything, you dry them off and they never calve.

SH. I don't suppose you always see an early abortion.

SS. No and with having slats as well makes it a lot harder to be detected. People always say they pick the dog muck up then leave it in a bag and pick it up later which rarely happens.

SH. Are you confident of your future in farming?

SS. Yes, I think so. **There is a lot of negativity about dairy farming in the press and on social media** and its worrying that a video that doesn't even tell the truth about the industry can be shared and viewed thousands of times in a matter of days! However, there is always going to be a demand for food.