

● STORIES FROM THE FARM

Fergus Lyon

Easthall Farm, Hertfordshire



Providing Habitat

Through his careful management, Fergus's farm has been committed to wildlife for many years, and being a part of JFP has allowed him to do even more.

"My family have been farming for a long time" Fergus recalls, "I want to make sure that I leave the land as I found it, or ideally, in an even better state". Farming for wildlife is incredibly important to Fergus and he knows things don't always happen overnight – so much so, he has developed a 200-year strategy for the farm!

"I know that thinking about things like leaving standing and fallen deadwood, trees and branches that have come to the end of their life that are left in situ, is vitally important for providing habitat for a variety species, in particular bats". Fergus's farm advisor from the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has worked with the Herts and Middlesex Bat Group looking at barbastelle bats, one of the rarest bat species in the UK. Fergus was delighted that "through surveying on my land, they found one of the largest barbastelle maternity roost populations in the whole country!" Up to 12 different roost sites have so far been discovered on the farm, along with the bats' foraging areas.

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Through his JFP farm plan, Fergus is now working to encourage greater insect numbers on his farm in order to support the bats. He is creating and restoring habitats, including new wildflower areas, grasslands and ponds which all benefit insects and provide enhanced foraging opportunities for bats. Fergus knows that connectivity between the habitats is also important, so that foraging and commuting routes are maintained.

His farm is 4 miles north of Frank's and the connectivity on their farmland provides the opportunity for wildlife to move through the environment to find food and shelter, establish territories and reproduce.

Fergus believes that JFP farms are key wildlife areas and along with Wildlife Trust nature reserves, other landowners can connect to these areas giving wildlife the opportunity to move throughout the landscape.