Ansh Restaurant, Cardiff

Read this inspiring case study of a Welsh food business partnership with a big focus on ethical and local sustainability.

Ansh restaurant in Cardiff operates a unique, local supply chain model that prioritises environmental sustainability and the highest animal welfare standards. It is a partnership between Sara and Aled, who run the restaurant, and Shaun from Oriel Jones Butchers, who supplies the restaurant with meat and dairy from his family farm, Llygadenwyn, situated at the foothills of the Cambrian mountains.

Ansh was born out of a shared passion for good food, sustainably and ethically produced, and while just at the start of their journey they have embedded sustainability from the outset and continue to make improvements.

Shaun is a fourth-generation farmer and has made a number of changes to his agricultural practice, including adopting nature and climate friendly, regenerative farming methods, such as no till agriculture and no fertiliser use. They have also reduced stock numbers on the farm, so they have less need to bring in external feed, such as soy and palm-based feeds. The animals graze mainly on pasture, and a partnership with local brewery Crafty Devil, sees waste hops used

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as a nutritious, supplementary feed for the cattle. Currently, the farm is working towards a Pasture for Life certification and plans to grow feed crops to supplement the animals' diets through winter.

For Shaun, conventional farming meant doing the same thing year after year and getting either the same or worse results. However, by working with nature, by actively protecting and restoring the soils and ecosystem he can harness what nature provides. Shaun says that since introducing these changes the animals and biodiversity are thriving.

In the restaurant, lower stock numbers on the farm mean that sometimes certain ingredients are off the menu. However, the reasons for this are communicated to customers, so they understand why certain products are not available all the time, helping to draw attention to the over-availability of intensively-produced meat.

In addition to ethical meat and dairy products, Sara and Aled try to source sustainable ingredients where possible, e.g. the bread is locally sourced and does not contain palm oil, which is often linked to tropical deforestation. Back on the farm, Shaun has created space for biodiversity to thrive, planting nearly 6,500 native broadleaf trees, as well as protecting an area named Cefn Blaenau, which has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) since 1989 for the rarity of its biodiversity and wildlife. This area is grazed with great care, with the cattle helping to control vegetation growth, which in turn creates the ideal environment for ground nesting birds. It is a vibrant example of how sustainable, regenerative agriculture can work in harmony with nature.

You can find out more about Ansh here.

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