

## Stocks Farm - Organic lamb, pork, beef, chicken, eggs and apples

Brothers Chris and Iain Learmonth farm 150 acres in Wiston, North Essex which they rent from a local landowner. They have been coming to the Stoke Newington Farmers' market



since the market opened in May 2003. At that time Chris and Iain both had other jobs and ran their small orchard in their spare time. Over the last 8 years, largely thanks to their sales at the

market, Chris and Iain have been able to plant several new orchards and convert the land to organic. They have taken on pigs and beef cattle as well as sheep and now provide the equivalent of ten full-time jobs in their local community.

Iain has pursued his passion for cooking as well as for farming and has developed his own sausage recipes, including pork and leek sausages, (with leeks from Ripple Farm) and his Grandad sausages, based on a recipe Iain discovered which had been written by his grandfather.

*“Stocks Farm is everything a typical industrial farm is not”*

Will Anderson – Homes for a Changing Climate

The animals on Chris and Iain's farm lead the majority of their life outside, the majority of their food comes from the farm itself, (with the exception of the pigs – but even they get their fair share of windfall apples). The sheep spend some of the year grazing in the orchards, along with the chickens. When the animals are killed, the chickens are killed on the farm and the other animals, the sheep, pigs and cattle are taken by Iain to an abattoir just 20 miles from the farm. The aim is to minimise the stress to the animals.

Chris and Iain also sell apples into Growing Communities' organic vegetable and fruit box scheme during the apple season from mid-August to the end of March. Stocks Farm grows over 16 different varieties of apple.

Life for small tenant farmers like Chris and Iain continues to be tough. High feed and diesel prices have made life particularly tricky over the last year combined with the erratic weather that meant that the 2010 apple harvest was down by 40% on the year

before. We're waiting to see how this year's harvest turns out. Coming to the Stoke Newington Farmers' market every week and getting to know their customers here has become an important part of life for Chris and Iain. It makes a real difference to them to be able to talk to the people who buy the food they make and to know that they appreciate the effort that goes into rearing their animals and producing that food



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