



GREEN NEWS

with Gabrielle Utton



Down on the farm

HELLO, I'm Thomas and my brother and I visited a Conservation Grade farm. The farmer, Robert, owns 1500 hectares of land in Hertfordshire. His average working day is 15-18 hours long!

by Thomas Abbott

Being a Conservation Grade farmer means that Robert has to plant at least 10% of his farm with wildlife habitats; places where all sorts of wildlife can feed and make their home.

Robert's farms are mixed which means they have animals and crops. The Conservation Grade crops he grows are wheat, barley, oats and rye. He sells these crops to Jordans, to go into breakfast cereals, and to Allinson, for their Nature Friendly flour.

After Robert answered our questions in the farmhouse kitchen, we went for a ride in his Ford Ranger. On the ride we saw lots of hares darting about, we saw a couple of partridges in the grass and a buzzard circling overhead. Robert took us to see some of the habitats on the farm, like seed bearing plants to feed the birds during the winter, and wild

flowers, which provide food for bees and butterflies.

Next we went to see the sheep. The sheep had lambs with them and they were everywhere. Robert has 2,500 sheep and lambs!

I asked Robert what the best thing about conservation is and he said that he found it very rewarding to give something back to the countryside and encouraging the wildlife also benefits his crops by eating the pests.

