



# 100 batch award



In 1938 George Hillier senior took on the tenancy to Leys Farm in Norfolk. George kept a ten of old sows and a boar on the farm, as most farms did back then.

George's family grew, with the two boys, George and Simon, both wishing to return to the family farm. So, in 1953 the opportunity arose to buy Leys Farm for the princely sum of £10,600. George (the younger) tells me that they paid 7 times more this year on the deposit for a tractor.

George returned from college in 1958 and went to work immediately on the family farm. With Simon leaving Chad Acre 5 years later.

With the farm being just over 400 acres, Simon and his wife Kate brought a new enterprise to the farm in the form of a 70 sow herd selling the progeny away, alongside running a 80 cow dairy herd.

In the early 1980's George set up the partnership with the two sons and their wives of GCF Hillier and Sons. George juniors wife, Carrie, now joined the team in keeping the office in order on what was fast becoming a busy family farm.

In 1987 Simon and Kate decided to get rid of the sow herd and started to keep pigs for J. Bibby Agriculture which ten years later became BQP. Whilst at the same time taking the golden handshake to come out of dairy and go into Bull beef.

During the initial years Simon worked the pig shed of 240 rearing pigs whilst George continued with the cattle, but in 1990's the cattle industry was hit by BSE and the sad decision was made to come out of cattle in 1997 and convert the Atcost cattle shed into a 1000 place rearing piggery.





The pig contract was doing very well and with David, George's son, joining the partnership in 1996 after leaving Easton college, it was felt there was a need to expand the pigs. So, in 1998 the partnership decided to get out of a turkey enterprise, freeing up another shed for pigs.

During 1999 the pig industry was rocked with an outbreak of Classical Swine Fever. During this time the Hillier Bros were forced to keep the pigs through to 100kg (slaughter wt) as opposed to sending them at 30kg.

As a result, the old dairy shed was utilised to hold the growing pigs until they could leave the farm under licence.



Once the pigs had left the decision was taken to convert the old dairy shed and then the Stephenson Yard to pigs. By the end of 2001 Leys farm took in 3000 piglets. Sold 1000 store away and finished the final 2000 to slaughter.



Over the last few years two more buildings have gone up allowing for an extra 900 pigs, bringing the unit total to 2400 pigs. Growing them now from weaning through to slaughter with no sales away.

The unit's performance is a great reflection on the family's attention to detail with average

FCR's in the high 2.2:1 - low 2.3:1,  
average daily live weight gain 850 – 900 gms per day  
mortality below 4%.



The family's attitude to the pigs is a simple one, "The 400 acres of arable could not support three families. The muck from the pigs is one of the foundations to the farm annually producing some of the top milling wheat that's sent to Haygates".



Time never stands still with the Hilliers in the last year they have invested £14,000 on converting one of the newer buildings to allow for a more mechanised method of cleaning.



As George stated, "Good labour is getting harder to find nowadays, we need to make the job enjoyable to attract new talent".

Other opportunities the partnership is looking at for the future are a solar farm and converting old barns into high grade homes.

Over the years George, Simon and David have 113 batches for BQP and are the second longest serving farmer partner working with BQP.

"Thank you, George, Simon and David for your valued work, commitment to the pigs and keeping all of us fed over the years".