

Anderson Family



Scottish Borders

As a Scottish border`s hill farming family we produce sheep as a large part of our income. We have suffered greatly at the hands of the fox on many occasions over 30 years of farming vastly reducing our income. We have also had hens, ducks and geese taken, killed, and left behind by foxes so we fully understand the need to control the fox population having first hand experience.

We believe that flushing foxes to guns is by the far the best method of controlling foxes.

- A full pack of hounds can flush good sized coverts in minimum time thus making the job quick and efficient, reducing the time taken to carry out the job and reducing the time foxes are pursued reducing stress on the fox.
- Using anything less than a full pack of hounds to flush foxes to guns would be a lengthy drawn out process for both man and fox.
- Using a full pack enables the huntsman to flush large areas of deep rashes, gorse, woods, and ravines that can in large be inaccessible to people.
- Two hounds in all situations would be a total waste of time and foxes could easily outwit two hounds in these areas and simply not be flushed to guns, thus enabling the fox population to grow out of control. This in our view would be unacceptable on two fronts.
 - Firstly and foremost these foxes have to eat and more livestock at lambing time would be killed.
 - More ground nesting birds (that we encourage on our farm) and more poultry would be taken or killed.

We also believe a higher fox population leads to unhealthy foxes. We have upmost respect for foxes and wildlife and would not want to see foxes with health problems and/or starving foxes. Flushing foxes with a full pack of hounds ensures a good cull, thus keeping fox numbers to an acceptable level that

- Can forage naturally for the food without having to take livestock and poultry or impacting too much further down the food chain.
- Maintains a good healthy population of foxes that can live happy healthy lives along side a growing human population.

My family and I regularly follow packs of fox hounds on foot, horse, car, or quad bike. Hunting is a great activity that can be enjoyed as a family, especially mounted on horseback as there is a code of conduct on the hunting field that has stood for generations and teaches young children life skills -

- To both ride their horse/pony and to look after there pony and tack etc.
- To be well behaved and well mannered
- Physical courage
- Understand nature, wildlife, and ironically respect it.

Importantly the hunt provides a social life line to otherwise a very solitude lifestyle in the countryside. For many people whether hunting on the farm quad, foot, horse, or the older generation following in cars, getting the weekly chit chat is very important for the wellbeing of a lot of people, as trivial as it sounds.

Our local hunt contributes no end to the very fragile rural economy, such as the purchase of vehicles, farrier services, animal feed, quad bike fuel and maintenance, and gunsmiths.

We understand that hunting with two hounds as opposed to hunting with a full pack would be the end for hunting and the professional staff that look after hounds and horses in kennels. This would lead to tom dick and harry style hunting with two hounds and unaccountable people, like the problems with hare coursing, and virtually impassable to police. If the law stays the same as it is today, then proper professional huntsmen and women continue, maintaining proper registered packs of foxhounds operating within the law, who are known and approachable by everyone if any problems arise. For that reason alone it is worth keeping the law as it is.

We also regard shooting foxes at night with a lamp and or night sights a very dangerous way of controlling foxes. Discharging very powerful firearms in the dark is in our opinion extremely dangerous and we know of two people who have been killed in accidents with firearms in the dark controlling foxes. When shooting flushed foxes with hounds the guns used are shotguns and if a fox is only wounded there is a full pack there to instantly dispatch a wounded fox. When lamping and or using night-sights some foxes are left injured and maimed and left to live with horrific injuries, or die from disease. Controlling foxes with a full pack hounds has never ever left an injured fox, the fox either lives or dies humanely.

We have farmed for over 30 years and in our experience we feel there is no demand from anywhere to change any law on fox hunting, so we strongly believe that the law as it stands today works for everyone including the foxes and should remain as it is.