

home grown

Want to know more about where your fish, fowl or farm-raised food comes from? DANNI WARD speaks to some popular producers at our local farmers' market



Grant Roffey, Lee House Farm

Lee House Farm, run by Grant Roffey, is one of the last remaining small working farms in Surrey. Based near Plaistow on the border with West Sussex, they produce organic eggs, vegetables, lamb, beef and pork. The farm has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and is home to some of the country's rarest flora and fauna.

Roffey has been at Lee House Farm for over 20 years, after first trying his hand at farming at his neighbour's small holding 25 years ago. Lee House Farm

has been in operation on and off since the 16th century, promoting itself as organic from as early as the 1920s.

While they have stopped breeding organic pigs, the rest of the livestock is born, raised, slaughtered and packed on site. Lee House Farm is a partnership, employing no outside labour. "I am the farmer," says Roffey, "there isn't anyone else to praise or blame!" From collecting eggs to calving to bedding up, Roffey does it all, meaning there is no typical day. All

Roffey's hard work culminates on market day. "I love being at market and talking to all our customers," he says. "It gives a real sense of purpose to trudging through the mud all week collecting eggs because they are so highly valued and appreciated by all our customers". You can find Grant Roffey at Twickenham Farmers' Market every Saturday, come rain or snow. It's no surprise then that Lee House Farm has just been named Twickenham customers' favourite stall for the second year running.

www.leehousefarm.co.uk
info@leehousefarm.co.uk

Richard Waller's Aylesbury Duck

The Aylesbury duck is pretty special says Richard Waller, the world's last pure breeder of this sub-species of the mallard. "The Aylesbury became famous not just because it was close enough to London to supply it, but it's also thought to be the tastiest," says Waller. Mrs Beeton said of the Aylesbury in her 1861 book, *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, that it was "the best duck for eating".

Not only are Waller's ducks pretty tasty, but they're unique too. "We believe we've got the very last ducks.

Many of the ducks you'll see advertised as Aylesbury ducks are just hybrids, that per chance have a bit of Aylesbury in. Ours we've kept absolutely true." And he should know. Waller is a sixth generation Aylesbury ducker, tracing his family's involvement in the industry back to at least 1775. It is still very much a family

"I match them, hatch them and dispatch them"



Tom Dymond/Rex

business, run by Waller and his wife Beverly in Chesham, Buckinghamshire.

As a small-hold farm, turning out just 10,000 ducks, 1,500 turkeys and a few hundred chickens and capons every year, Waller oversees the entire journey of the Aylesbury duck from conception to consumption. "I match them, hatch them and dispatch them," he jokes. "You don't get many farmers or growers these days who breed their own stock, rear their own stock, sort their own stock and market their own stock. To do what we do is certainly unique."

Richard Waller and his real Aylesbury ducks are famous too, appearing on *Rick Stein's Food Heroes* and the *Great British Menu*. Waller knows his product are high quality and sells his ducks only to a few top butchers and restaurants near Aylesbury, at farmers' markets in London and at the farm. You can find Richard Waller at Twickenham Farmers' Market on Saturdays, and also Marylebone, Notting Hill, Pimlico, and Queen's Park markets.

Long Grove Wood Farm, 234 Chartridge Lane, Chesham, Bucks 07850 190 441
www.duckfarm.co.uk

Gary's Fresh Fish

Despite his name, Gary Haggis is not a purveyor of Scottish delicacies. From cod to scallops and from sea bass to, well, whatever's in season, it's all on offer at Gary's Fresh Fish. It's all caught by Haggis and his small team off the coast of Walton-on-the-Naze, Essex (close to where the North Sea meets the Thames), reaching your dinner plate in less than 48 hours.

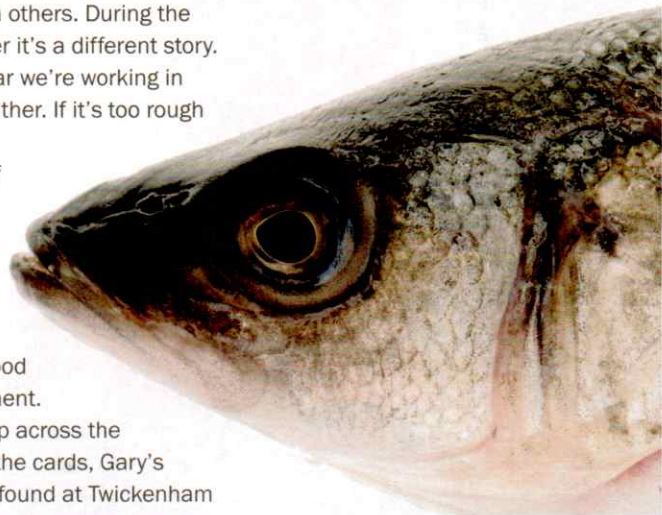
Fishing is in Haggis's blood; his family has been catching fish since 1770 and Haggis himself has been on the sea for 48 years. "I used to fish with my father and grandfather when I was young," he tells Mouth. "I learnt fishing from my grandfather; he was a lifeboat coxswain years ago. I fished with him for about five years. Then I bought my own boat and I've been on my own since."

There's no typical day for Haggis. In summer the sea can be calm and flat some days, and choppy from the onshore breeze on others. During the harsh British winter it's a different story. "At that time of year we're working in seriously poor weather. If it's too rough it's dangerous."

The majority of his catch is sold abroad in France and Spain, especially cod and sea bass, which fetches a good price on the continent. In case a quick hop across the channel is not on the cards, Gary's Fresh Fish can be found at Twickenham Farmers' Market on Saturdays, but also

further across London in Blackheath and West Hampstead, where they've recently been named best stall.

garyhaggis@btinternet.com



Martin Lee/Rex