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COMBI CLAMP

USER TESTIMONIAL

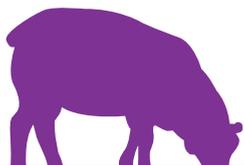
Combi Clamp Helps Overcome Life's Farming Difficulties

A broken neck would end most farmers' careers but Wiltshire based farmer Charles Harding and his wife Anne have persevered to maintain a life based on farming and their love of sheep. An accidental slip whilst opening up farm barn doors led to Charles falling, breaking his neck and damaging nerves within the spinal cord. Hospitalised for six months Charles was under nursing instructions of 'if you want to live and possibly walk, don't move'! Sixteen years later, Charles and Anne now farm their own 320-acre mixed farm, which with the recent full time addition of son Richard's help, they manage and work themselves even though the accident has left Charles severely disabled.

Growing up with sheep was a way of life to them both and so sheep have formed the backbone of the Harding's life together after the accident occurred. Sheep, and the will to work with them again with his wife's help, provided Charles with the focus to overcome the difficulties of farming with disabilities.

Worth its Weight in Gold

The Harding's flock had started out as 50 ewes and had increased over the years to 200. A decision in 2006 was made to simplify farming requirements in that either the shepherding had to become easier or the sheep went. The requirement of managing the flock was becoming too great for Charles' physical ability.



Farm helper Chris Farnsworth, a shepherd himself, suggested a visit to the Malvern Sheep event where a Ritchie Combi Clamp sheep handling system was being demonstrated with a pen of sheep being regularly run through it.

"I thought the sheep had been show trained to demonstrate how easy it was to drench, inject or handle them by one operator," remarked Charles. "The system looked too good to be true!"

The Ritchie Combi Clamp restrains sheep by holding them between two side panels, with a soft grip rubber matting being effective as one of the panels. The shepherd simply steps on an adjustable sprung pressure plate to hold the sheep firm. With no doors to open or close, the sheep flow through the race quite naturally and quickly, as they see no barrier to hold them in. The shepherd no longer needs to struggle to restrain, hold or turn the sheep over. Feet trimming and clipping can also easily be carried out.

A Combi Clamp was delivered and has remained a 'God send' on the farm. Wife Anne is now able to inject every animal precisely as required whilst carrying out regular health checks on their flock. The trailed Combi Clamp is towed to the flock behind a RTV machine and set up wherever required. A lightweight mobile race on a separate trailer makes the job as easy as possible. Once the system is fully erected Charles parks his indispensable RTV close beside the Combi Clamp to ensure he has something to fall back on and lean on if required. The sheep, now being easily accessible due to the height of the system, require a lot less bending over; something that son Richard's back and spine is already appreciating.

With luck and 'good health' the Harding's remain optimistic that they should be still tending their sheep in their 70's thanks to the Ritchie Combi Clamp.