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The Perridge Farm Partnership owns and manages an organic dairy farm in Somerset, producing and retailing BrownCow yoghurt made with the milk from our 170 Guernsey and Jersey cows. We have been organic since 1996, and since 2017 have been replacing our ryegrass clover leys using diverse herbal seed mixtures for our entirely grass-fed herd.

A series of summer droughts and very wet winters since 2019 have significantly affected our forage production, particularly recently, from soils that have slumped in winter, dried excessively in summer droughts, and become compacted and increasingly anaerobic, in spite of having relatively high organic matter levels .

Over the last twelve months Lorriane has been advising us, providing practical help on site, checked the biology in our soils and composts with microscopic analysis, providing 'thermophilic composting recipes' to increase their biology and demonstrated the process of preparing compost extracts and 'teas'. She has been a constantly helpful and encouraging source of advice, responds to our queries with alacrity, and is a superb source of information and references in assisting us to regenerate our soils using biological techniques.

Last August and September 2024 we coated all our diverse ley seeds mixtures with compost 'tea' immediately pre-planting and achieved the best germination and establishment that we have ever had, in spite of seeding them into some of the most difficult and heavy clay soils on our farm.

This spring we injected the 'teas' into our grazing pastures via a modified pasture slit aerator, leaving untreated control plots, hoping to assess any differences in yield and growth rates using a plate meter for weekly measurements.

Unfortunately, nature has not been kind in 2025, and after an extraordinarily wet winter, we have had only 41 mm of rain here since the beginning of March 2025, and have experienced drying winds on almost every day. Growth rates have slumped accordingly, and we are unable to make any judgment yet on the effect of this biological pasture aeration.

However, there is sufficient evidence worldwide that such techniques are highly beneficial to soils and crop yields. We monitor grass growth rates weekly using a platometer, so when it does start raining with some consistency we have the tool to compare the treated with untreated control areas.

We will continue to continue to use Lorraine' crucial advice going forward.

Stephen Turner
6th July 2025