

# PETE'S AIRGUN FARM

Graham Allen takes a trip to an airgunner's dream come true

Last year I was asked to carry out some rather detailed pellet evaluation, shooting over 20 different types through a variety of airguns. I obviously wanted to conduct the tests in near perfect conditions, so my usual outdoor range was out of the question. As the elements can have a detrimental affect when it comes to ascertaining performance, so where to go to get perfect conditions? I'd heard of a covered airgun range on a farm somewhere in Essex, so I contacted the owner via his website and he invited me over to see the set-up for myself.

## Perfect Set Up

The venue is very much a working farm, though the owner (Pete) was obviously keen to maximise the property's potential, and diversification is very much the order of the day. And as he's an enthusiastic airgunner, he thought disused cattle shed would make a good place for a zero/practice range for paying customers.

I was very impressed on my first couple of visits, but Pete's been busy lately, improving just about everything. The first thing I noticed was that the lighting has been up-rated, making the whole place a lot brighter. Targets are set out at 5-yard intervals, from 10 to 50 yards. There are various targets to shoot at, but they're mainly reactive, either knockdowns or spinners. Sighting cards can be fixed in purpose made clips, allowing users to zero for different ranges and check grouping. As there's no wind or rain to contend with, it's possible to concentrate on getting the best out of your equipment, and the

benches and tables are rock solid shooting platforms. And easy big enough to accommodate a dozen shooters without any disturbance...

There are new bench rest style tables too, for both right and left-handed shooters, and these are once again well made, the legs are made from cut down railway sleepers... With plenty of room behind the firing point for charging gear etc, it's an altogether well thought out set up. For a small charge there's even a gas-powered heater; now there's luxury.

## And there's More

The building next door houses an 'overflow' range, and there are booths for pistol shooters, and targets out to 40 yards. At the back, there's an FT/HFT practice area, with a covered firing point and some rather inventive targets. There are knock-up knockdowns, and even ones at the top of a telegraph pole, for practicing those dreaded angled shots. The best though has to be the 'running rat' or maybe that should be 'flying rat'? A string leading back to the firing point pulls a rat-shaped target up a steel cable; when it's released, it zooms down at an angle. It's really tricky, but I can see it being very addictive.

As with any farm, Pete's has its fair share of vermin, such as pigeons, crows and rabbits. For an extra fiver, hunters can use the purpose built hides to pick off the pests, or set out decoys. Other activities such as fishing in the lake, metal detecting and rambling are possible, and if you've got a tent, camping is an option too.

Those using the range must have shooting insurance, and abide by the BASC Airgunner's Code Of Practise, so



as long as you behave, you'll be welcomed back. A session is £5, which is an absolute bargain. The farm is west of Chelmsford and close to the A12 and M11, and in turn fairly close to the M25 motorway. Top HFT shooter's Owen Rosser and James Huckle both use the facility, and they obviously know a great venue when they see one. I think Pete's done really well in setting up his shooting complex, and I can see it becoming increasingly popular as word spreads. **SS**

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Rat targets – three of them with 'reduced kill zones'

The enigmatic Pete – a farmer with a passion for airgun shooting and the land to do something about it!



The farm has an indoor range with targets out to 50 yards – ideal for setting a scope zero

