

Keeping family farms alive

A government incentive to make sure the younger generation can continue the family tradition

THE Welsh Assembly and Farming Connect have joined forces to offer a new incentive to young farmers to stay working on family farms and develop business.

The incentive is specifically targeting existing farms where the younger generation have a bright idea for business development. The aim is to encourage young farmers to stay working the land which will lead to a sustained agricultural tradition and strong growth in this sector.

An example of the perfect applicant is Helen Beale, a Monmouth young farmer. She has worked part time on the family farm for years and is looking to take over more of an active role to develop a modern, sustainable business. "I had the idea that, these days, people want to know exactly where their beef comes from and so many people are interested in low carbon footprint products. Putting your beef into a shop means that your profit margin is lowered and the carbon footprint goes up. What I am proposing is an internet based business where customers can order a box of beef direct from the farm and either have it delivered or pick it up from us."

Helen really wants to make an ecological impact, "I don't want to sell all over the country, just to local people who appreciate artisan products. I'm a real believer in keeping food miles down. My goal is that our beef does not travel more than 20 miles from being a twinkle in our bull's eye to your plate."



Helen and her father, pictured left, raise Galloway cows. They are particularly well adapted for life on a Welsh hill farm, being hardy and doing well on all kinds of grass. This means that they need feeding less fodder, which keeps the environmental impact of the beef production down. "They have great characters too and are always escaping. It's not unusual to see the herd trooping through our little village of Penallt with me and Dad hard on their heels. At least they keep us fit and the neighbours entertained!"

Helen's project is exactly what the Welsh Assembly is targeting: young farmers extending and modifying the family business and bringing it into the 21st century.

The funding is for up to 50% of the capital outlay on items necessary to setting up the new business with a maximum funding of £30,000. The application period for this grant is 15th October 2012 to 7th September 2013.

Call the Farming Connect Service Centre on 08456 000 813 to register your interest or contact your divisional office at Llandrindod Walls Divisional Office on 01597 823777.

You can see Helen Beales business at www.cherryorchardfarm.net.

