

# A life on the land:

HOW THE COUNTRYSIDE COULD GIVE YOU THE  
CAREER OF YOUR DREAMS



[www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk](http://www.whyfarmingmatters.co.uk)



**NFU**  
[www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)



The NFU champions British farming and provides professional representation and services to its farmer and grower members

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# I am so glad I'm a farmer

This is the best life and the best job I could possibly think of. Yes, the hours are long sometimes and the work can be hard – but then you don't get on in life if you're not prepared for some hard work. The benefits of a life in the countryside are fantastic, though, and I wouldn't be anywhere else.

A life on the land in the 21st Century isn't just about wellies and muddy hands – it's about adapting technology, selling to your strengths, listening to the customer and being the best you possibly can. And all this in an environment that is more beautiful than almost anywhere I have been in the world.

If you've never considered a land-based career before, it's perhaps time that you did. This is a good time to do it, too. We are about to begin the Year of Food and Farming, which aims to show young people how their food is produced, what happens on a farm and what life is like in the countryside.

Alongside this, though, is our desire to get more young people working in the industry. Farmers are getting older and we're on the look out for young people to take agriculture and horticulture on to greater success. Farming needs dynamic, driven young people who are prepared to work hard, develop their skills and take pleasure in reaping the rewards of their labours. Young people like those we feature in the pages of this brochure. Some are from farming families while others certainly are not. But all reflect a common love of the land. I only wish we could show you more examples because there are thousands more out there.

**Our message from this report, then, is take a look, be inspired and come and join us!**





“I want a job that’s different every day.”

# Making the right career choice

Choosing a career path can be one of the hardest decisions you’ll ever make. **Which direction should you go? Are you sure you’re making the right choice?**

For hundreds of young people every year, making the decision to pursue a career in the countryside is the right thing to do. These are the young farmers, vets, machinery engineers, agronomists, conservation advisers, farriers, research scientists, horticulturalists and farmhouse food producers of tomorrow. And they all have a great story to tell, as we will show you over the next few pages.

**Why not think about joining them? You might find that a life on the land is a life well worth living.**

## GROW YOUR SKILLS

Many jobs in the countryside offer plenty of opportunity to grow your skills and help you develop a fantastic career. And there are a range of pay grades available to ensure that the more skills you get, the more you’ll get paid.

## MYTH BUSTING

**Only farmers’ sons and daughters get to work on farms.**

Not true! Many of the young people who choose land-based careers today have grown up in towns and cities or have no family involvement in farming whatsoever. Just take a look at some of our case studies in this brochure.

## FACT FILE

**In 2003, there were 9,324 people under the age of 35 who held farming businesses in their own names. That figure rose to 40,258 if you raised the age to 44.**



## HOW TO TRACK DOWN THE BEST JOBS

There are various methods you can use to find the right job for you.

Defra says that nearly two thirds of rural businesses (65%) fill their vacancies by word of mouth, so the best thing you can do is get on the phone and talk to farmers or company bosses about what opportunities there might be for you.

Over half of rural businesses (54%) place job adverts in newspapers, journals or on the internet. Make sure you get the local paper and any technical and farming journals so you can check out what’s available. There are also dozens of job websites that are often free for you to join.

Then there’s the local JobCentre Plus - this is another really popular way for rural businesses to advertise their vacancies. Find out more at [www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk).

# A word from the very top

**Richard Macdonald**  
NFU Director General

“I was always keen on working in the countryside. I grew up in East Africa but I came to London to study biology at University and decided that, as soon as I graduated, I would look to develop a career in farming.

**“I first joined the NFU as a graduate trainee,** which was great because I got to do a whole variety of jobs. After my year as a trainee, I was pleased to be taken on permanently as a Parliamentary adviser at the London HQ. It wasn’t long before I got the chance to get out in the countryside, though – first I became NFU County Secretary for Devon and enjoyed being able to visit farms and be at the sharp end of the



organisation. A few years later I got the chance to become South West Regional Director.

“After a spell back in London as Director of Membership & Regions I took over as Director General in 1996. While being involved in high level meetings and discussions is now a big part of my job, it’s really important to maintain those farm visits. Only by getting out in the countryside can you really understand what the industry is all about.”

*For more on the NFU’s graduate trainee scheme, turn to page 22.*

## FACT FILE

**Every Day, British farmers supply 31 million pints of milk, 19.5 million eggs and 11.6 million loaves of bread.**





**Q: What's a contractor?**  
**A: Someone who provides key services to farmers, such as hedge laying, crop spraying, harvesting or relief milking.**

# Sharp students

Whether you are a school leaver or an older person wanting to move into agriculture or a related career, there are many ways in which you can prepare yourself through work experience and qualifications.

These can include work based learning and/or pursuing full or part time qualifications at further or higher education colleges and universities.

An early step is to make contact with your local land-based college. Landex is the professional body representing these colleges. The Landex web site shows where all the colleges are and enables you to access each college web site. You may be surprised at the wide range and flexibility of the opportunities that are available.

For more information log on to [www.landex.org.uk](http://www.landex.org.uk).

## MYTH BUSTING

**I live in a town and don't have a car. I'll never be able to get to work in the countryside as there is no public transport there!**

A recent Defra survey revealed that only 7% of rural businesses are more than 13 minutes walk away from a public bus or train station. So, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to do the "green" thing and use public transport to get to work.

## CLEVER COLLEGES

Rural colleges are the obvious place to start looking for the right course if you want to carry on learning to progress your countryside career. There are plenty of courses available in every area of work you can think of, including all the various jobs featured in this brochure.

Hadlow College is based in the heart of Kent. In the 2006/07 academic year, the college had over 2,000 young people studying agricultural courses. Of these, some 535 are studying horticulture alone, while 380 are studying animal care. Hadlow says it prepares students for successful employment and aims to inspire them to run their own businesses.

At Hartpury College in Gloucestershire, over 300 students are taking courses in agriculture, animal care or equine studies – that's over a third more than in 2002/03. Further north, in Cheshire, Reaseheath College reports that nearly twice the number of students are studying agriculture this year than last.

This all adds up to one thing – that young people are looking seriously at all the prospects a life in the countryside can offer, and that many are keen to learn more so they can ultimately earn more.



# My story

Name: **Dave Martin**  
Job: **Student Union President, Harper Adams College**  
Location: **Shropshire**

Farming goes back a long way in Dave Martin's family – his father is a third generation farmer in County Durham. But as the third son, Dave knew that he may have to consider a career away from the family's mixed holding.

Dave has spent the last four years studying at Harper Adams University College in Shropshire for a degree in agriculture and crop management. He says they have been the best four years of his life. "The course has been great and I have absolutely loved the social life. I have learned such a lot from the people I've met here and tested myself in so many ways. I'm determined to work for myself one day and this has given me a great start."

At the moment, Dave is spending a year working as President of the college's student union. He's also working towards his BASIS certificate in crop protection and completing some agronomy work.

Dave's course allowed him to do a year's



work placement with BASF, the world's leading chemical company. "I was testing new agrochemical products and helping prepare them for registration. We did lab work and field trials – a real mix."

Dave really believes that you have to know what your customer wants if you're to succeed in his line of work. "With crop protection, your processes have to be transparent so your customer will trust you. We must be in touch with what they want all the time."







“I want to be able to learn new things while I’m working.”

# Earn while you learn

Ever heard of the Apprenticeships Scheme? The whole point with the scheme is that you get paid while you learn – sounds good, doesn’t it?

Apprenticeships are work-based training programmes for young people who really want to succeed in their chosen line of work but who feel a full time academic or vocational course is not the right option for them. With over 200 different Apprenticeships on offer, there’s bound to be one for you.

If you know that you want to work in the countryside, the next step is finding the right Apprenticeship programme to suit you, one that combines a job with the right level of learning. You could opt to study for an Apprenticeship in:

- Agriculture, crops and livestock
- Agriculture and garden machinery
- Animal care
- Amenity horticulture
- Environmental conservation
- Farriery
- Floristry
- Food and drink manufacturing
- Meat and poultry processing
- Production horticulture
- Equine industry

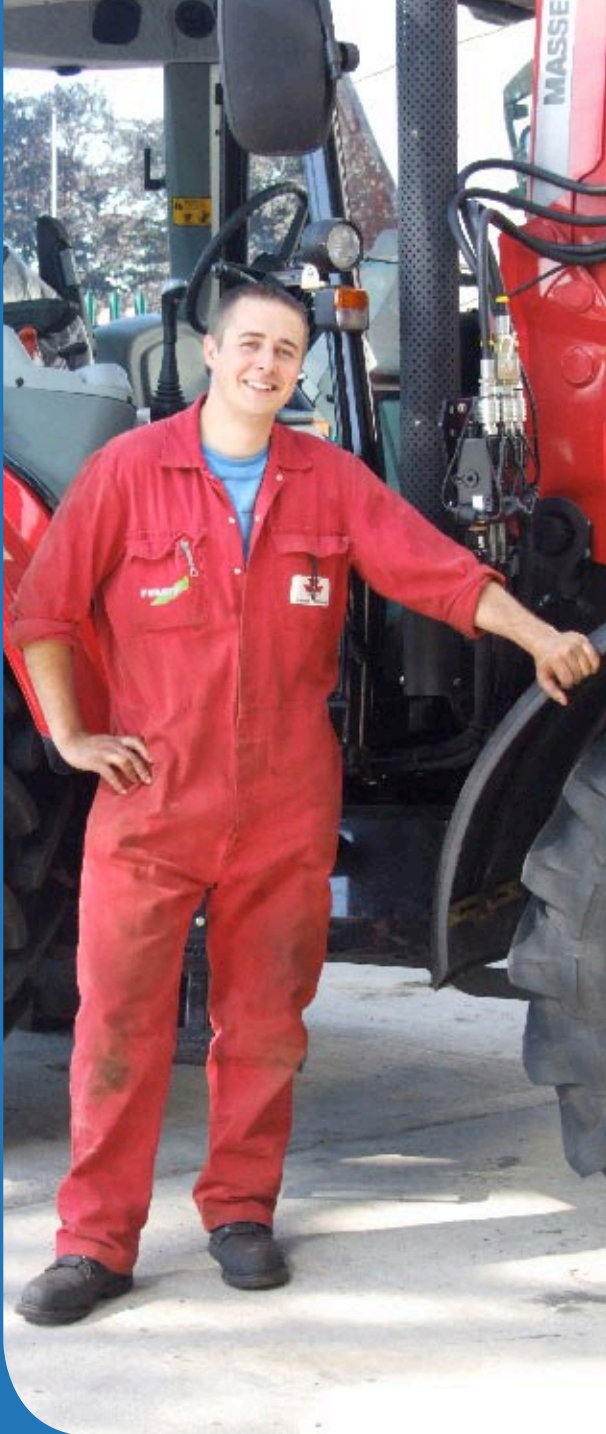
## FACT FILE

The total labour force employed in agriculture in the UK is 541,000 of whom 190,000 are employees and 351,000 are self-employed farmers, partners, directors and spouses.

Over 259,000 young apprentices are currently signed up for the scheme, earning, learning and working towards their goals. They are paid a wage according to their age and experience and allowed time off to attend their training course - and they get paid holidays, too. At the end of the programme they earn a nationally recognised qualification such as a National Vocational Qualification or a BTEC National Diploma.

Apprenticeships are open to any young person in England aged 16-24 who is not taking part in full-time education. To qualify, you need to demonstrate that you’re keen to learn. Eligibility doesn’t just depend on academic achievement – practical skills count for just as much.

Want to know more? Log on to [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk).



# My story

Name: Craig Hayes  
Job: Technician  
Location: Somerset

Craig Hayes is living proof that if you want to pursue a goal in life, you need to seize the initiative – and the earlier the better. The 22-year-old is already a fully qualified technician working with Highwood, the Massey Ferguson dealership, in its Yeovil branch.

But it was while still at school that the seeds of his ambition were sown. Craig decided that he wanted to make a career out of engineering. “I decided to look for work placements at weekends and holidays with local garages. One firm of agricultural engineers was happy to help and the important breakthrough for me came when Highwood took over the business.”

Craig was accepted on the Massey Ferguson Modern Apprenticeship Scheme which is run in partnership with Warwickshire College and follows the nationally recognised City & Guilds/BAGMA modern apprenticeship. The course also included spells at the Massey Ferguson Training Centre at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire. With NVQ Level 2 and 3 in Land-based Service Engineering achieved - which included City & Guilds in Agricultural Machines - the high point in Craig’s training came when he was named BAGMA (Western Region) Apprentice of the Year for 2006.



Now, Craig is reaping the benefits of his hard work and commitment. “I am working on some of the most advanced agricultural vehicles and machinery in the world and continuously updating my knowledge through product training at Massey Ferguson,” he says.

“My week is split roughly between work at the dealership and visiting farms to deal with issues on tractors and fixed machinery. Doing the kind of job I always dreamed about as a kid is one thing – a career which involves getting out and about and helping our customers on their farms is a bonus.”

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Many young people have found permanent employment through first gaining work placements while still at college.

The National Council for Work Experience (NCWE) promotes, supports and develops work experience for the benefit of students in further or higher education, employers and the economy. The NCWE website is a mine of information for those who want to know more about finding a work placement. Find it at [www.work-experience.org](http://www.work-experience.org).





“I’ve always wanted to work with animals.”

# If you love animals – this is the life for you

Good welfare is the top priority on any dairy, beef, sheep or poultry farm.

Any good livestock farmer will tell you, though, that the success of their business often depends on the good working relationship they have with the local vet. Veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses are often regular visitors to farms where they work with the farmer to heal sick animals and deal with injured stock.

Vets and livestock farmers share similar qualities. They need to be cool under pressure, able to work hard and handle animals carefully and with respect. They must work well in a team and be prepared to be called out in all weathers and at all times.

You don’t get to be a vet without studying hard, though. Most vets qualify on completing at least five years at university after first obtaining GCSEs and top grade A Levels (which must include chemistry and biology). Your chosen college will prefer you to also have done work



experience with a vet or on a farm.

But this isn’t the only way. The Veterinary Gateway Course is open to young people from lower income families who aren’t likely to achieve the A Level grades needed for university. It’s run by the Royal Veterinary College and more information on the course is available at [www.rvc.ac.uk/Education/Undergraduate/VetGatewayProg/Index.cfm](http://www.rvc.ac.uk/Education/Undergraduate/VetGatewayProg/Index.cfm).



“I don’t have to waste my time sitting in a car commuting to an office.”

## My story

Name: **Richard Geldard**  
Job: **Livestock farmer**  
Location: **Lake District**

If you ask him, Richard Geldard finds it quite hard to tell you what he loves most about his job. Is it the scenery? “Could be – the Lake District is a pretty amazing place to live in and it changes every day. I’m very lucky to be able to live and work here and my job allows me to take full advantage of it as I’m outside every day.”

Is it the animals? Richard runs a beef, sheep and poultry farm with his brother and their parents. “The animals are great to work with in this environment. They can be a challenge, it’s true, especially in the winter when the snow is falling on the hills, but I love the way that everything changes with the seasons – breeding, finishing, marketing. We care for our animals a lot – you have to if you want to make a success of livestock farming. They are well looked after.”

What about the fact that he’s his own boss? “That’s another big plus with this job, although I do work closely in partnership with the others in the family. Every day I can do something different if I want to. I’m never tied down to just one job.”



Richard knew that working on the farm was what he was going to do and he’s never wanted to do anything else. Moving away to college wasn’t an option, so he developed his skills on the job. That meant learning fast and getting on with it.

“It would have been nice to go to college, but that’s not the only way to get on if you’re determined,” he says. “If you’re prepared to work hard, you can learn on the job and succeed and move up. You still have to acquire people skills, livestock skills and management skills.”

If he’s honest, Richard will say that he loves every aspect of his job – it’s not a life he would swap for anything. “I don’t have to waste my time sitting in a car commuting to an office where I have to do the same thing every day. I work where I live and every day is rewarding.”





“This job is never boring.”

# Focus on... science and technology

**If you're a techie who loves all things to do with machinery, computers or technology, are you aware that some of the best countryside jobs combine all three?**

- Crop sprayers use the most up to date, precision technology available to deliver just the right amount of agrochemical to the crop – that's essential to meet tough food safety laws.
- Research scientists develop new food production techniques to enable rural business people to reach new markets. Innovation is everywhere – from satnav systems in tractors to the latest sensory techniques to test food quality.
- Chartered surveyors work with mapping equipment and computer-based programmes to create new buildings, plan environmental projects and meet sustainable development targets.

## FACT FILE

**A whopping 82% of respondents in a recent survey of young people carried out by the NFU said that they were really positive about their future in the countryside.**

- Farm secretaries use the latest software to keep up to date records for farmers and growers in all the sectors – an invaluable role in an age when effective record keeping can make or break a business.
- Commercial growers of glasshouse flowers and plants depend on temperature-controlling equipment to enable them to meet demanding customer specifications.



# My story

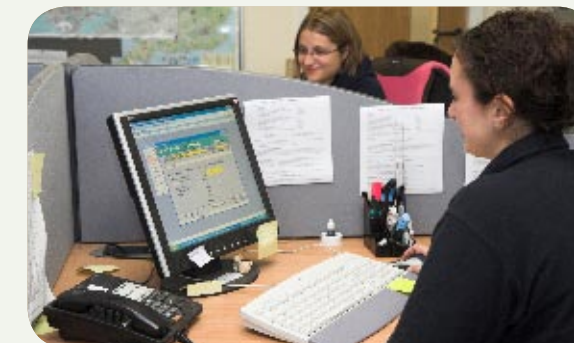
**Name:** Helen Garnhan  
**Job:** Senior Breeding Technician  
**Location:** Herefordshire

Helen Garnhan's job is at the cutting edge of livestock farming – and she loves it that way. She works for Innovis, a company that provides artificial breeding services to livestock producers. On a day to day basis, that means that Helen is directly involved in animal genetics and embryo transfer.

Helen works at the Innovis centre near Ledbury where, from June to November, she co-ordinates the artificial insemination programme for sheep, goats and pigs. She works in the lab, analysing genetic material, and in the office, maintaining records and ensuring good quality control. She also goes out on farm to organise embryo transfers.

While she has a degree in animal science from Writtle College, she has no direct background in farming. Both her parents work for the NHS. “My granddad finished pigs, though, and I always thought the industry looked like such an interesting one.”

Helen enjoys the constant challenges of the job and the opportunities it gives her to keep on learning new skills. “I didn't know anything about



sheep artificial insemination once, now I work with up to 150 rams at the centre here. The company has developed a lot over the past three years and it's been good to play a part in that.

“This is a great time in my career. I get to do a mix of things that involve both science and my interest in animals. I'm glad I've chosen to do this.”

## NFU SURVEY

Recently, the NFU asked young people how they chose to pursue their careers in agriculture.

- 63% said they attended a land-based college full or part time
- 9% attended a non-land based college or university
- 10% trained as an apprentice
- 18% took full-time employment on leaving school





**FACT FILE**

**UK consumers spend £77 billion on food and drink every year.**

# Fancy producing & selling good food?

**Food manufacturing is a huge industry which employs over 650,000 people in the UK.**

An Apprenticeship (see page 8) is one way of gaining work experience and qualifications in the food industry. There are also hundreds of full time courses at colleges across the country. The Sector Skills Council that works for the food industry is called Improve – find out more about it at [www.improveltd.co.uk](http://www.improveltd.co.uk). There are loads of inspiring case studies about people who work in the food industry on the Improve website. Find out about young people who are gaining qualifications and progressing careers in areas such as dairy processing, baking, fresh produce, fresh meat processing, brewing and food business management.

If you want to combine an interest in the food industry with a love of the countryside, why not consider gaining a qualification in food manufacturing or hygiene with work experience with a farm shop or farmhouse food producer? You could find yourself making farmhouse cheese, yoghurt or preserves, or selling delicious

## BETTER CONNEXIONS

Many of you will have already heard of **Connexions** through school. This is a great organisation that aims to give you the advice you need to make the right choices in your life.

Connexions can advise on where to go to get more information about careers in the countryside. It can point you in the direction of job vacancies and help you get hold of loads of helpful guides and publications about the kind of work you're interested in.

If you plan on working in the countryside, Connexions can help you make the right choices at Year 11 and at post-16. Give them a call on 0808 001 3219 or log on to [www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com).

food and drink direct to the public through a farm shop or farmers' market.

The National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association has a directory of farm retailers in all parts of the UK – find them at [www.farma.org.uk](http://www.farma.org.uk). Look up your local outlets and contact them to ask about work experience.



“It’s a good life.”

# My story

**Name:** Jonny Hewitt  
**Job:** Partner in farming business  
**Location:** Cheshire

It's all happening at once at Jonny Hewitt's place. His family farm used to be a dairy and arable unit but recently they have begun converting the crop fields to organic. And they have set up a farm shop and tea room...and introduced seasonal fun activities to draw in customers such as a “maize maze”, Halloween Spectacular and Christmas Fair.

Jonny shares the responsibility of running the farm together with other members of his family, so there's a real team effort going on.

“I haven't been in farming all my life – I have worked outside the industry, but it called me



back, so here I am.” Jonny was a graduate of agrifood marketing at Harper Adams college before moving to Kent and starting a Masters Degree in international marketing at Wye College. He has travelled extensively, learning new skills from around the world that he has brought home to Cheshire.

“I studied for six months in France, which was amazing. I learnt such a lot about selling and marketing, and was able to then apply it to what I loved most, which was the countryside.”

Jonny, whose family are tenant farmers of the National Turst, refutes the claim that there's no fun in farming and that farmers never get to have holidays. “I love holidays and the events we put on at the farm shop and tea room certainly make me laugh a lot of the time.”

Each day, he says, is very different. “You never know who's going to come into the shop or tea room and what they're looking for. We have loads of support from the local villagers and everyone loves the great farmhouse produce we have. It's a good life.”





# How Lantra can help

Lantra is the official organisation that helps promote the development of skills in land-based industries. It works with over 230,000 businesses and 1.5 million workers.

Lantra's main aim is to make sure that rural businesses have the skilled workforce they need to succeed. It can help you find training in your chosen career – whether your interests lie in wildlife and game management, conservation and environmental protection, conventional farming or trees and timber.

One of Lantra's key jobs is to help develop national occupational standards in some of the key land-based sectors, such as equine management, fencing, floristry, fisheries, the environment, aquaculture and horticulture. These help to ensure that those with skills are able to develop their careers and progress well. The organisation also presents awards that recognize hard workers and high achievers.

For more information, log on to [www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk).

## MYTH BUSTING

**You can't get the internet on a farm!**

Wrong – broadband internet access is available virtually everywhere nowadays. In fact, a Defra survey showed that rural businesses were slightly more likely to be on the internet than urban ones – 73% of rural businesses against 67% of urban ones.

## ALL WORK AND NO PLAY?

Farm workers aren't chained to the land, that's for sure, so don't believe anyone who tells you they have no life outside work. It's a physically demanding job, true (you probably won't need gym membership) but, according to Defra, only 11% or so of farm workers in 2005 said they spent more than half their time working on the farm.



# My story

**Name:** Matthew Naylor  
**Job:** Grower  
**Location:** Lincolnshire

Some say that to get big, you have to start small. Matthew Naylor certainly did – he was growing flowers on his own allotment at the age of 16 to sell to locals, now he supplies fabulous cut blooms to Marks & Spencer, Waitrose and Sainsbury's.

Matthew says that, if you like growing things, you can't do better than grow them for the supermarkets because they buy more than anyone else.

"I also grow potatoes and we put our names on the packs. It made me laugh recently when a friend of mine went to Jersey – the so-called home of the best new potatoes – and found my potatoes over there in a shop. I'm really proud that our products are good enough to be sold in the toughest supply chain you can find."

Matthew didn't go to college full time, instead he learned on the job and took on his own farm at the age of 25. He has completed lots of part time courses with local learning providers, though – HNCs and City & Guilds, together with programmes run by the Nuffield Trust and Initiative on Food Marketing. He's a firm believer in developing skills.

## BE THE BEST

The UK's food supply chain is one of the most demanding in the world. Supermarkets, catering outlets and food shops all want the safest, best quality food possible. This is a really dynamic, progressive industry to work in and agriculture and horticulture play a central role in its success. More and more, farmers and growers are encouraged to work closely together – called collaboration – to reduce costs, add value and beat stiff competition from abroad.

What does he love most about his job? "The variety – definitely. I can do the paperwork on a wet day, potter in the workshop when I want, drive a forklift, plough a field, cut the delphiniums and peonies or help wash and pack the potatoes." He also loves being his own boss. "That's great – I get to tell myself what to do."





# My story

Name:	Charlotte Smyth
Job:	Renewable energy consultant
Location:	Cambridgeshire

Charlotte Smyth enjoys the fact that her job focuses on environmental protection.

From a farming background, Charlotte always wanted a career in agriculture. Armed with a degree in natural science from Durham University, she moved to Reading to study for a further qualification in land management. That enabled her to move into agribusiness consultancy.

Today, Charlotte works for Bidwells in Cambridge as a renewable energy consultant. On a day to day basis, Charlotte works with farms, food plants and other businesses and property owners to promote sustainable technologies. “We assess their carbon footprint then recommend ways of reducing it through measures such as introducing biomass boilers,” she says.

Charlotte is adamant that today’s farming industry needs skilled people. “I always planned to be involved in some level with the family farm, but I wanted to do something away from it first,” she says. “When I went to university, some people told me it wasn’t worth it because you don’t need good grades to work in farming. That’s just not true – and it’s not the right message to be sending out to young people today. The more skills the better, I think.”

# Caring for the environment

Looking after the land is one of the most important jobs there is in the countryside. Every farmer and grower takes very seriously their role as a custodian of the countryside.

If you would like to work in this area, there are a lot of choices open to you. One of the key roles here is as a **conservation adviser**. The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group has a national network of 120 trained farm conservation consultants who help farmers make agri-environment scheme applications, create and preserve wildlife habitats and advise on species protection and enhancement.

## FACT FILE

Currently, there are 1 million hectares of land in the UK which could grow crops for non-food uses such as biofuels.

Arboriculturists study and manage trees for commercial, educational or recreational purposes. **Do you fancy planting and caring for some of our beautiful native woodlands, or a commercial forest, perhaps?**

UK farmers are also at the forefront of developing new technologies to combat climate change – many are now growing crops for renewable energy purposes such as cleaner, greener vehicle fuels.



# My story

Name:	Sarah Duffin
Job:	Farmer and contractor
Location:	Midlands

Sarah Duffin, together with her younger brother Robert, always helped out on their family farm during weekends and school holidays, so it was no surprise when they both joined the business full time straight from school.

The farm also has a contracting side which supplies farm workers to other businesses in the area. Sarah really enjoys being part of it all – and the long hours don’t bother her a bit. “I like being outdoors, I just could not imagine being stuck in an office all day,” she says.

On any given day, Sarah will be driving tractors and doing whatever field work needs to be done. But it’s working with the animals on the farm that she loves most.

Recently, Sarah has bought 75 sheep of her own. “I’ve always liked sheep and used to help a neighbouring farmer with the lambing. I wanted to get back into it so I bought

## MYTH BUSTING

**There’s no money in farming!**

Hard times hit every single sector of the economy occasionally and things are no different for the farming industry. But if you work hard to make sure you produce what your customer really wants, prospects can be good in farming. Defra says that that average farm income in 2006 was £21,300. The average cereal farm earned £27,900 while the average specialist poultry farm earned £77,200.

most of my sheep at a local sheep fair auction and the rest privately.”

Sarah is keen to make the most from her stock and enjoys working out when is the best time to market them. “It depends on how much they are making at the time,” she says.

In addition to her main role on the farm, Sarah has also had success showing a neighbour’s cattle. She likes preparing the animals for the show and has plans to exhibit one of her family’s own animals, too, at a local fair.

Having spent her life on the farm, Sarah knows that it’s a challenging career, but she’s determined all the same. In particular, she knows she always wants to be involved with animals. “If it’s not farming it would have to be with horses or perhaps doing cattle artificial insemination.”





**Melanie Hall** is the NFU's Regional Director in the South West. She was appointed at just 31, the youngest person ever to hold such a position within the organisation.

# How about working for the NFU?

The NFU is the largest farming organisation in the UK. We have plenty of opportunities for people to make their careers with us. Our HQ is based in Warwickshire (pictured above left) and we have offices in Wales, London, Brussels as well as having regional and local offices in England and Wales.

**1]** One way to join the NFU is through our Graduate Training Scheme, which is open to graduates of all subjects and all ages. We have developed a two year programme, which trains our graduates in all the key aspects of the organisation's work through a series of placements. Our current Director General, Richard Macdonald, was once a graduate trainee, so that proves that the sky really is the limit if you join us!

**2]** You can also join us as a Group Secretary. The NFU works in association with NFU Mutual, one of the UK's top insurance companies, and in this role you would be the 'front line' contact, representing both organisations, promoting our services and providing support to the rural community. You'll advise new and existing customers on NFU Mutual products, as well as renewing and selling NFU membership.

**3]** The third way into a career with the NFU is to apply for specific job vacancies. These are posted on our national website – **[www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)** - and could be in any sector of the organisation, from web development to policy adviser or press officer.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL OUR HQ HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT ON 024 7685 8742**

Whichever route appeals to you, a career with the NFU will give you the chance to work directly with farmers and growers to promote a successful and socially responsible farming industry.

# My story

**Name:** Gemma Fitzpatrick  
**Job:** NFU Research & Campaigns Officer  
**Location:** Warwickshire

Gemma Fitzpatrick's love of the country life started when she joined her local Young Farmers' Club. She doesn't have a farming background, and her parents are florists, but she knew that she wanted to do something that involved the land.

"I planned to be a vet at first, then I decided I wanted to be involved in the livestock side of farming, but in a communications role." During four years at Harper Adams college studying for a degree in animal health, Gemma won work placements with animal health products manufacturer, Intervet, as well as Staffordshire's Trading Standards Office. Upon graduating she worked with a public relations firm.

Things changed when she saw a job advert placed by the NFU for a Research and Campaigns Officer. "I knew immediately this would be a great opportunity," she says. "I could work for the farming industry, but in a role that saw me use my interest in the media, too."

Since joining the NFU, Gemma has worked on the organisation's high profile "Why Farming Matters" campaign, researched and written articles and campaign materials and helped out with press launches. Recently, she has worked at the NFU annual conference and at the Young Farmers' Club's AGM.

"We do some great campaigns and the work is really varied and challenging," she says. "But it's still all about supporting farmers and growers and developing the farming industry, which is what I'm interested in."





# The last word...

We hope that the last few pages have given you a flavour of the kind of life you can expect from the countryside in the 21st century. It's certainly a great place to live and work.

We also hope that the stories we have told and the information we have given will inspire you to think more about working on the land. You have probably heard some bad news about the prospects for farming – but don't believe everything you hear. You may believe that the only way into the industry is through your parents or by borrowing massive amounts of money to secure a farm tenancy. That's not the case any more, as we have tried to show here.

**In Parliament recently, one MP was heard to say:**

*"In the countryside, agriculture is one of the main sources of employment not only on the farms but in other ancillary trades which depend upon agriculture for much of their business. Any downfall in farming has an adverse effect on all those other trades and at the very least must create more unemployment."*

What we want to do is ensure that doesn't happen. We want to make certain there are plenty of opportunities for young people to work on farms and in supporting businesses across the country. That way, the farming industry will thrive and people can continue to enjoy the countryside they love.



We all have a role to play in keeping the countryside at its best. If you have any interest at all in working on the land, make sure you pursue it.

**Take a look at this graph – this is why the farming industry needs more young people. The working population is getting older and fresh young blood is badly needed.**



## What's Fresh Start all about?

Fresh Start is an industry-led initiative to encourage new entrants into farming and to help established farmers think about how they can develop their business in the future.

Fresh Start aims to secure a sustainable future for farming in England by:

- Signposting sources of help and support to new entrants
- Developing a mentoring scheme
- Promoting farming as an attractive career option
- Stimulating existing farmers to think about how they might respond to CAP reform
- Providing a "matching service" to link potential new entrants to those wishing to leave the industry

To find out more about Fresh Start, log on to [www.defra.gov.uk/farm/working/new-entrants/freshstart/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/working/new-entrants/freshstart/index.htm).

## Where can I get more information?

The following organisations can give you further help, guidance and support. Check out their websites for more about them and to obtain full contact details.

AimHigher

[www.aimhigher.ac.uk](http://www.aimhigher.ac.uk)

Apprenticeships

[www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

Business Link

[www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

Career Track

<http://careertrack.tremulous.co.uk>

Connexions

[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)

Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra)

[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

Department for Education & Skills

[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

Fresh Start

[www.defra.gov.uk/farm/working/new-entrants/freshstart/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/farm/working/new-entrants/freshstart/index.htm)

Land Based Colleges Aspiring to Excellence (Landex)

[www.landex.org.uk](http://www.landex.org.uk)

Lantra

[www.lantra.co.uk](http://www.lantra.co.uk)

(see also [www.ajobin.com](http://www.ajobin.com) and [www.afuturein.com](http://www.afuturein.com))

National Council for Work Experience

[www.work-experience.org](http://www.work-experience.org)

National Farmers Union

[www.nfuonline.com](http://www.nfuonline.com)

National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs

[www.nfyfc.org.uk](http://www.nfyfc.org.uk)

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

Women in Rural Enterprise

[www.wireuk.org](http://www.wireuk.org)



