

ED HARRISON (2022)

I'd like to express my thanks to Future Farmers of Yorkshire for the sponsorship for the Entrepreneurs in Dairying course.

A bit about myself – my name's Ed, I'm 20 years old and live and work on our family farm in North Yorkshire which is mainly dairy. We are milking through three Lely A5 astronauts.

I found the Entrepreneurs in Dairying course really helpful to comprehend the logistical side of running our family farm. I haven't had much involvement in the decision making or looking into farm finances before going on the course, as I'm the youngest in the family.

After the course and discussing the topics of the course with my parents, I've been included a lot more with such things, especially now we're utilising grants for capital investment. It's as if my opinion is respected more now than before.

Since I live and work on our family farm, one day it is likely that me and my brother will be running the farm in place of our parents. On the Entrepreneurs in Dairying course, we discussed in detail what's expected in management positions such as: people and time management, recruiting staff and the importance of retaining staff. I think this will stand me in good stead when transitioning into a management role on our farm in the future.

One thing that the course may not have intended to do which I found helpful, was the fact that it brought farmers together from all over the UK.

Having not gone to university or college to study agriculture, the majority of my farming knowledge comes from my father and brother, so I found this especially helpful as I got to talk to other farmers about practices on their farms and what's working well and what isn't.

Most of what I know is purely based off what we do on our farm.

To sum up, Entrepreneurs in Dairying has introduced me to the behind the scenes of running our farm and I'm now more involved with decisions and meetings which I wouldn't have been before, such as choosing the AI bulls, attending meetings put on by our vets about new practices we should be doing, helping to decide which slurry separator to purchase, and reviewing end of year accounts with the business partners.



GEORGINA FORT (2021)



The RABDF Entrepreneurs in Dairy Course isn't your usual type of course. It can be of great benefit to you personally and professionally.

The course is stretched over a couple of months. Mainly using online meeting formats with a host of professional people discussing different topics for you to learn about and share your own experiences. These topics range from succession to people management to how accounts work on farm. It doesn't matter if you have your own farm or work for someone, as it can help you understand how the business works and how you could implement it to help your business or set yourself up in farming.

There are two overnight stays to do face to face meetings. This is so you can go on farm and see the practical side of what you have been learning. On the other trip away, you explore your own farm accounts and go through what each area means and how things are worked out. This meeting is where I learnt the most. Understanding your accounts gives you more ownership of the way you operate. In my eyes, it gives you more chance to control what is put in the end of year accounts and how you deal with your bank as well.

The meeting also looked at budgeting for each financial year and how changes in each month or quarter can affect your cash flow. By using techniques to breakdown each cost into pence per litre (PPL) then makes you think twice about how you run your business and how a cost in one area of your outgoings might affect your overall PPL but then could yield a return in another area of your business. Any adjustments or spending needs to be methodical and planned to maximise your cash flow.

It was really interesting to see how other farms performed and compared to my own. The majority of the group were on systems of cross breeding cows that had extended grazing periods whereas we are pedigree Holsteins and Jerseys with limited grazing due to our location and weather. There were also farms with robots and some with seasonal calving. We are all year round calving so again it was interesting to see how everyone performed on a yield and costs basis.

It wasn't just the learning side of the course that was valuable but meeting other young like-minded people who all had a passion for dairy farming was fantastic to see and be part of. I highly recommend this course to anyone and do not be afraid if you aren't very good with figures. The accounts side of it was just a small part of the course but that was one area I really wanted to improve. Everything is explained and you're very much encouraged to ask questions.

A huge thank you to Future Farmers and the Yorkshire Agricultural Society for giving me a bursary to attend the course.



JOHN KIRKBY (2020)



I am from a non-farming background, but it has always been a goal and dream of mine to run my own dairy farm. To be able to run a profitable and sustainable farming business, it is important that I have a clear idea and understanding as to what is involved and what is required.

The first session of the course was presented by a representative from AHDB and covered milk contracts and how to select the right milk contract to suit the business. The second half of the session focussed on milk market trends, what consumers are looking for when purchasing milk and how Covid 19 has changed consumer habits. This was presented by a supermarket rep and a milk processor.

Weeks two and three of the course were hosted by Paul Harris from Real Success. The sessions focussed on people management. People management is often overlooked and undervalued by many farmers, but it is one of the key skills needed to run a successful farming business. Not all members of staff will have the same personality and as farms change and expand it is important to know how to communicate effectively with different people. Using different

communication styles for different personalities is something I will use now as well as in the future.

Recruitment and staff retention is a topic that I found very interesting. As the industry requires people to work long hours and sometimes in high pressure situations, it is easy to let emotions run high and get the better of yourself and employees. Finding ways to manage emotions and minimise high pressure situations will bring massive benefits to both the employer and the employee.

Session four was our first session on finance and was led by Tony Evans. Papers and information were sent in the post as the course ran online due to Covid 19. However, some people did not receive the paperwork. Business planning and accounting was the area that really drew me to the course in the first place. The sessions with Tony were really beneficial and gave a useful insight into the business planning and accounting side of farming businesses.

Session five was the second day of the financial section of the course and focused on budgeting. We also completed a third session with Tony to enable us to cover all parts of the financial section. Tony's sessions were practical and got you thinking for yourself which I really enjoyed.

Week six was hosted by Sian Bushell who is an expert on succession planning. Succession planning was something that I've not given much thought to as I am not in line to take over a family farm business. However, it was interesting to hear that a lot of farmers see succession planning as a taboo subject and don't succession plan. Not succession planning can often lead to families falling out.

The penultimate session was with Tony Evans again. This session focussed on Joint Ventures. JVs is an area that I am interested in as I see being part of a JV one of my biggest opportunities to start a dairy farm business of my own.

The final week brought both groups of the EID course together for the first time. The session had many speakers. Caroline Ingamells was the first speaker from the Anderson Centre and spoke about the future of farm support in the UK. We then moved on to focus on consumer

insights, consumer trends and consumer spending habits in relation to dairy products and what consumers want to see.

The final two speakers of the session were previous EID attendees. They spoke about their progress and how the course benefited them. It was great to listen to how their careers and businesses have developed due to what they had learnt on the EID course.

I hope the course benefits me in a similar way and I am looking forward to progressing within the dairy industry and hopefully starting my own business.



LUKE UPTON (2020)



I'm a Staffordshire boy, but in 2020 I moved to West Yorkshire to start a new job on a 280 cow split block dairy unit, with a view to buying into the business and moving into a contract farming position in 6 months.

My parents are county council tenants, so I've been farming my whole life. In my early career I worked on a few intensive farms, but my passion has always been milk produced from forage. I've travelled to New Zealand and spent time working on a 720 cow unit in Canterbury. I also worked on a 450 cow split block unit in Newcastle, before I made the move to Yorkshire.

In 2020 I applied for a place on the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers (RABDF) Entrepreneurship in Dairying Programme. I felt that I still had lots to learn with regards to the financial side of farming and I wanted to do everything to ensure that I was fully prepared for the rigors and responsibilities of running a profitable dairy farming business. I was delighted to be accepted and to receive a bursary from the Future Farmers of Yorkshire, supported by the Yorkshire Agricultural Society.

The Entrepreneurs in Dairying course aims to provide participants, from all areas of the dairy industry, with the knowledge and know-how to take their businesses forward, or to have the confidence to start their own business. As 2020 was an unusual year, the course was delivered via online platforms, where it would usually have been run face-to-face with participants meeting and carrying out the sessions together. However, this did not detract from the delivery of the course as it was still very engaging, with the line-up of top-class

Testimonials – RABDF Entrepreneurs in Dairying bursaries

speakers doing all they could to provide us with the best online sessions they could.

The course ran for 10 weeks, with a session each week on different areas including people management, tax and trading structures, finances, business planning and succession planning. Each session was in-depth and interesting, providing a wealth of knowledge from speakers who were very skilled and experienced in their respective areas. A personal favourite of mine was the people management session in which we had our personalities profiled and learnt all about how to better engage and work with people of different personality types.

Having now completed the course, I have a wealth of knowledge and resources available to me going forward in my career. I now also have a long list of contacts from within all areas of the dairy industry, which allows me access to some of the top minds in their fields if I ever need advice. It has also given me contact with very like-minded people in

the industry in the form of my course mates, who I can bounce ideas off or talk with about similar problems we may be facing.

My partner and I have just secured our first farm business tenancy and I believe the Entrepreneurship in Dairying course has given me the tools and the knowledge to do so with much more confidence.

The course has helped me in all areas of the application process, from business and management planning to budgeting and completing cashflow forecasts for the prospective business.

Without having completed this course I feel I would be far less equipped to make the next step in my career. I couldn't recommend this course any more highly to anyone who wants to increase their knowledge of the dairy industry and take their career forward, it has helped me immensely on my path and it will be equally beneficial to anyone who completes it.

