

Heifer Rearing for Cow Hire

Matthew, Mari and Seren Haf
Home Farm Cottage, Tudweliog



July 2012



Background

Matthew Jackson is a 24 year old herdsman working for Padog Farms Ltd, originally from Manchester he worked on a small beef farm. When he was a child, Matthew and his family camped and holidayed in North Wales and at the age of 16 he decided to stay in North Wales for a period of four months to help local farmers with lambing and milking. Such was his success and his enjoyment in North Wales that he settled in the area. After spending time in New Zealand working on farms shearing, fencing and milking Matthew gained knowledge on a wide range of systems and learnt different farming practises. He returned to North Wales and started working as a herdsman with a

plan of accumulating capital and growing a track record as a good stockman.

Matthew explains:

“ I spent time in New Zealand where I spoke to many successful individuals, and quickly learnt that in order to succeed I would need to manage my money correctly. Material objects weren't a priority for me and having seen what others had achieved I soon realised that investing my money in livestock would give me the best return and would stand me in good stead for the future.”

What's happened since

Matthew has juggled his role as head herdsman together with rearing his own heifers for the past three years. He reared 20 heifers during the first year and sold them as bulling heifers. In the second year by using the capital from the sale of the first year's heifers he bought, reared and sold 35 heifers. Using the capital he accumulated Matthew then bought 82 heifers in the third year from three different farms with the intention of keeping them and building up a herd.

Matthew added:

“My intention was to buy, rear and sell heifers and accumulate cash quickly, but after studying the calculations it dawned on me that in order to get the best return and in order to manage my risks as much as possible that I needed to establish my own herd.”

Over the next three years Matthew is looking to build a herd of 210 cows (70 heifers a year) but as he doesn't possess any milking facilities he is looking for them to be milked elsewhere whilst he receives an annual return on those cows.



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig; Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development; Europe Investing in Rural Areas



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Canolfan Datblygu Llaeth
Dairy Development Centre

DairyCo



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Current situation

On 82 acres of rented ground Matthew now operates a low cost grass based heifer rearing system all within a 20 mile radius of his home at Cefnamwlch. He plans to calve the Jersey Friesian crossbred heifers at 24 months of age. Matthew's intention is to hire the heifers out, with the first batch hired out for three years, second batch for two years and the third batch for a year.

As a result of his business plan, Matthew was second in LIC's Young Herds Person competition in 2011 and he also received the Richard John Memorial Bursary, which he used to visit New Zealand and Australia.

He added:

"My intentions are to be in a position where in three years time I have a herd of 210 cows to enter into a joint venture with someone. By then I will have built up my equity, a track record of my skills and therefore, hopefully I'll be in a prime position if an opportunity arises.

"It's not easy, I have to be careful, but the simple low cost system that I run allows me to build up my business through my monthly wage and this has taught me to be more efficient."

Corner stone

Matthew believes that along with his drive and determination, the advice gathered from different people and from being involved in a discussion group has been vital and has helped him to outline a clear goal which he believes he can achieve. Matthew has been advised that good communication and trust is a key part in any joint venture but more so in a cow hire agreement.

Good cow health is an essential part of any successful cow hire agreement. Vaccinations, animal health and a structured breeding program all need to be agreed. A key factor therefore is finding the right stockperson, who you can fully trust to take care of your heifers, and in Matthew's case, his future herd.



The Future

Matthew's business goals are:

- To own 210+ cows, that can be used as part of a future joint venture.
- To build equity and cash through cow ownership.

Personal goals:

- For my family to be in a comfortable financial position.
- Pursue a career in an industry that I am passionate about.
- Raise a family in a safe and enjoyable rural environment.

For more information please contact:

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