

# New Entrants to Farming Programme



National Advice Hub  
T: 0300 323 0161  
E: [advice@fas.scot](mailto:advice@fas.scot)  
W: [www.fas.scot](http://www.fas.scot)

## Case Study

### Craig and Jack Hendry



**'If you want to farm, then just go for it. Take the chance if the right opportunity is out there'**

## A short biog.....

Brothers Craig and Jack Hendry were brought up on a family farm in Keith. Encouraged by their father, eldest brother Craig sought an apprenticeship after leaving school at the age of sixteen as the family farm wasn't big enough to justify him working at home full time. Advice which Craig admits has got him to where he is today as without the income secured from his fabrication job, he wouldn't have had the finances behind him to pursue purchasing his own farm.

Younger brother Jack followed Craig into engineering for the oil and gas sector. Despite working outwith the agricultural industry (working at home evenings and weekends) both brothers had future intentions of farming in their own right, and set about trying to find a suitable farm within travelling distance of their family farm. This led to a number of failed attempts at securing land. After being turned down for a tenancy on a nearby estate, Craig decided he and Jack should try to buy a farm, they didn't have long to wait until a suitable farm came onto the market. A neighbouring 160 acre farm came up for sale and after compiling a business plan they set about looking to the banks for funding.

Unfortunately a closing date was set and the farm was sold. However undeterred and now even more determined they set the ball rolling and the pair started searching for other suitable properties.

Within months another farm less than 10 miles away came onto the market. Craig and Jack saw the potential of Craibstone Farm despite it being in a rundown state, with poor buildings and derelict houses and successfully placed an offer. In October of 2017 the brothers commenced their farming partnership with the purchase of Craibstone Farm. The land extended to 135 acres of arable and grassland with 31 acres of woodland.

As well as the farm house a further two cottages were purchased however these like the farm buildings were in a poor state and in need of complete modernisation. The land at Craibstone had since 2014 been cropped under a contract farming agreement which meant that the farm was only partly fenced and at the time of entry the Hendry brothers had bought stubble land with only 20 acres of grass.

Since making the purchase Craig and Jack have reseeded 20 acres of grass to use for grazing and silage. They have made a start on restoring the buildings and have already converted one of the sheds into a cattle court with the intention of converting another of the Dutch barns.

The area of spruce woodland was felled just last year with the wood being bought by a local sawmill. It is hoped that the money generated from the sale of the trees will be used to renovate the farm cottages (planning permission has already been granted).

Due to the deterioration of the main farm house and the amount of work that would be involved it has been decided to demolish this property and rebuild.

Currently the pair have a herd of 18 Limousin and British Blue cross cows along with a handful of pedigree Limousin cows which they hope to increase.

### What has been your biggest challenge?

Getting started with a suitable farm has been a challenge. Although there were tenancies and farms for sale in the area, there was also a lot of competition for these which made it difficult from the onset.

The pair found the high cost of the solicitor fees on top of everything else, tough. Despite the process of buying the farm being relatively straightforward the fees associated with the sale were costly.

### What is your motivation?

We have grown up on a family farm and wanted to farm on our own, we want to breed good quality suckled calves. *Craig Hendry*

To be able to go home and work for yourself rather than work for someone else the rest of your life. I'd rather be farming than have to work to retiring age doing what I am doing just now. *Jack Hendry*

### What hurdles have you had to overcome?

The major hurdle was the condition of the farm. The buildings were old and falling down with the steading being unsuitable for housing cattle. This meant that cattle had to be housed for winter back home which put pressure on stocking and supplies.

The land had been mostly cropped and in order to comply with the three crop rule there were areas of fallow and field margins which we had to keep. We found this frustrating because we wanted to use every piece of productive land especially, when we were just starting out, but we couldn't.

We found out very quickly that you spend constantly in the first year, without any return.



### What financial and advisory assistance have you received?

We used a consultant to help produce a business plan, budgets and cashflows to take with us when we were looking for the bank to facilitate us. We were fortunate that only a few years previous, Dad had bought the family farm from his landlord giving us good connections and a relationship with the bank. This made the process less daunting and we were able to secure mortgage funding.

The basic payment for the farm was included in the sale which has given valuable income to help with maintenance of buildings and fencing.

We went along to the FAS new entrant meetings which were useful and helped give us a better idea

The brothers having no experience of arable crops turned to a local agronomist to who gave advice on malt barley production and carried out soil sampling of the whole farm.

Jack added that 'Dad keeps you right everyday' and provides valuable help and support.

### What is the plan for the future....

The brothers plan to continue upgrading the farm buildings at Craibstone, to allow the full use of them.

The farm cottages will be renovated, with the intention of renting them out to generate income to help with further farm improvements. The farmhouse will eventually become a home for one brother.

There are plans to increase the cow numbers and also add to the Pedigree herd of Limousins. The herd has recently been established, with the pair already looking forward to seeing the offspring from their new stock bull purchased just last year.

### What advice would you give to someone thinking of entering the industry?

Be open minded with opportunities and look at all options and opportunities as they come. Don't put all your eggs in one basket - *Jack Hendry*

Buy potential and improve what you can get - *Craig Hendry*



## New Entrants to Farming "get with the" Programme

There is a network of new entrants across the country at various stages of developing their businesses. You can join in:

- [www.facebook.com/NewEntrants](http://www.facebook.com/NewEntrants)
- [www.fas.scot/new-entrants/](http://www.fas.scot/new-entrants/)
- Regional workshops

For more info contact Kirsten Williams, Consultant, SAC Consulting, Clifton Road, Turriff, 01888 563333, [Kirsten.Williams@sac.co.uk](mailto:Kirsten.Williams@sac.co.uk)

There are useful free resources on the website too:

- Case studies—learning from the experiences of other new entrants.
- Guidance notes—benefit from advice tailored to assist new entrants to farming.
- Also see [www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/NewEntrantsToFarming](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/farmingrural/Agriculture/NewEntrantsToFarming)

