

Case Study: Women in Agriculture



Kara Kay and her husband moved to Scotland and started their own farm. With an assortment of animals, Kara along with her daughter, enjoys looking after the animals and running the farm. Having the farm is an important part of Kara's life, enabling her to enjoy the venture as a family.

Tell us a bit about your background and how you got into farming.

'I am from Lancashire, I have had ponies from a young age, and always enjoyed being out in the fresh air. My husband always wanted to move to Scotland so we sold our house and moved to an empty 8 acre field in 2007. When we moved to the field, we brought up with us the ponies, and once we had got our fences "sorted" we got 5 Jacobs ewes, and grew from there. We are a small farm myself and our daughter do most of the work now a days. We sell our meat to local B&Bs.

Describe your farm.

'We now have 12 acres that we own and we rent an additional 270 acres, of which only 50 acres are suitable for grazing. At present we have 3 ponies,

ducks, chickens and turkeys, 10 cows, 25 sheep, 2 pigs, a collie and a cat.'

What is your favourite part of farming?

'Getting up in the morning and having purpose, even if I'm having a bad day and don't want to go out I always feel better after seeing the animals. Obviously all the new babies are a bonus always great to see new life on the farm. And enjoying it as a family, the good and the bad; we are all there to help each other.'

Have you ever come across sexism in farming?

'Yes, but only in a positive way. I think they [male farmers] would help any one they saw struggling with a ratchet strap, be it a young man or myself. The other farmers are very gentlemen like and just want to help.

I believe both men and women have an important role on the farm and that both sexes have strengths. Although I do think that when someone says farmer you automatically see a male farmer, but a lot more women are getting involved now. My role has always been very strong on our farm but around us I can defiantly see women getting out in the field more.'

What are the biggest challenges for Scottish farmers at present?

'Brexit is a big threat, as is losing our EU payments. For us the distance to the abattoir, and transport cost to the good sales are also a challenge.'

What are your goals and aims for your business?

'To keep going and to encourage our daughter into this wonderful life. I hope to be able to continue farming as long as we are able.'

Have you implemented any changes on the farm recently? If so, what were they and why?

'We are in the process of applying for a woodland, to help towards heating costs in the future. The woodland will be self sustaining through regeneration. We also applied for a wind turbine some years back,

unfortunately this did not progress'

What are the constraints to where you are farming?

'Wet ground and the inability to get more good ground.'

What hobbies other than farming do you have?

'I enjoy baking, and the sugar hit goes down very well after a long day on the farm, and also spending time with my family.'



What are you particularly proud of in your farm?

'We started very small and with no handed down equipment or knowledge. We have learned a lot and grown a lot. We breed our numbers up ourselves.'