

# New Entrants to Farming Programme



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## Case Study Stewart Wilson



**“If anyone wants to start farming they should. There are plenty of people to speak to so don't be shy to ask for advice from the older generation or other farmers as they have all been through the same process.”**

## Where There's a Will There's a Way - Seasonal Grazing and Combining Several Jobs Can Work

### A short biog...

Stewart has a farming background, with his grandparents being tenant farmers. Unfortunately for Stewart he is not the successor of this tenancy. To fulfil his dream of having his own agricultural business he has ventured off on his own. With drive and enthusiasm he did this at the age of 20.

Four years later he now rents 47 acres of grassland for grazing his 25 pedigree Simmental and cross cows. In addition to this, he also cuts a crop of haylage on an annual basis from the land.

He is a busy man, beginning the day as a relief milker, then feeding his own cattle before going to his full time employment of a stocksman for 120 head of pure Simmental cows. After this he returns to tend his own cattle which he turns out for shows in the summer months.

Stewart does not have a tenancy or permanent holding and so lives in the town of Kilmarnock, which is some 15 minute drive from his cattle. This can be especially tricky at particularly labour intensive times such as calving for the high value stock.

Stewart's ultimate goal is to gain a tenancy and run his own business that would allow him to work for himself.

### What is your main motivation to farm?

My main motivation is to be successful.

There is nothing more rewarding than watching a new born calf maturing into an animal that you can show or sell, and know that you have achieved that.



## What has been your biggest challenge as a new entrant?

My biggest challenge has been finding affordable land to rent. It is very hard as a new entrant to compete against more established farmers who are willing to pay a high rent for land.

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## What hurdles have you had to overcome?

Capital and cash flow have been my largest hurdle. I don't want to borrow money to establish my business due to high interest rates as a young business.

From buying my first cow, it took four years to sell her progeny at two years old and realise some cash to reinvest in more livestock.

Juggling time is also difficult, with different jobs and commitments.

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## What financial & advisory assistance have you received?

I have attended the New Entrant Workshops and found them to be really useful. They provide opportunities to meet young entrants like myself and hear how others have overcome obstacles, and help in identifying new information such as the potential funding under the new CAP reform, business planning, etc.

I have received no financial assistance to establish or grow my business.



Pedigree Simmental Cattle

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

I would recommend developing and maintaining the biggest possible network of contacts as possible. People are generally willing to be supportive and are very helpful.

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## What are your future ambitions?

To grow my business by being financially self sufficient. I don't want to have large bank repayments from borrowing capital. This process will mean my business will take longer to grow but at least I know I will have achieved my objectives using my own efforts and minimised the risks taken.

### 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)