

Fresh Start for farming



The demand for quality British pork is continuing to grow, so both existing farmers and new entrants should look afresh at pig farming as a viable opportunity.

The award winning Fresh Start Pig Academy is an initiative set up by BQP, the farming division of food manufacturer Dalehead Foods. It aims to support and provide production and business knowledge to entrepreneurial people, from both agricultural and non-agricultural backgrounds, looking to set up or diversify.

Now in its third year, the award-winning Academy has guided a further sixty students through a course which gives delegates an understanding of what's involved in setting up in commercial pig farming. It also demonstrates the integrated supply chain of which BQP and Dalehead Foods are part of. Dalehead Foods has been operating in the UK fresh meat industry for over forty years and is a dedicated supplier to Waitrose of over 350 own label products including pork, sausage, bacon, ham, lamb and added value products. BQP works with approximately 250 pig farmers, producing outdoor bred pigs, finished in straw bedded, airy barns.

This year's Fresh Start courses took place at Harper Adams University and Moulton College and covered effective

supply chains, optimising production and how to build a pig shed, complete with farm visits to demonstrate the opportunities on offer.

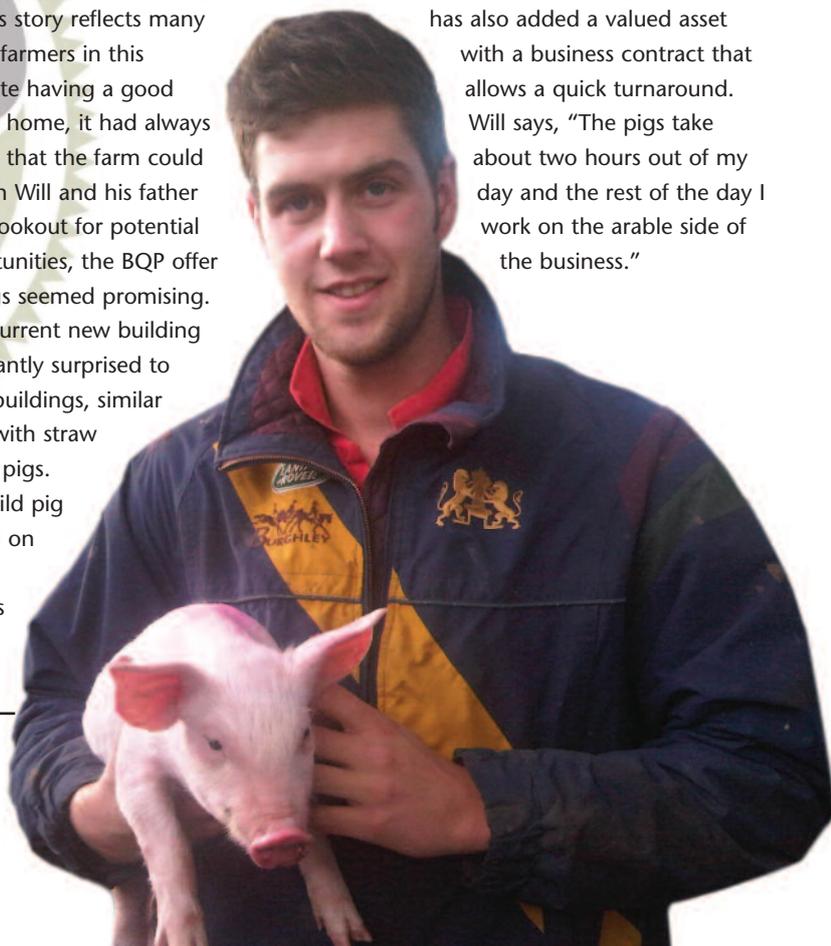
Fresh Start is proving to be particularly popular amongst young farmers at college who are looking for alternative enterprises to take back to the family farm, often arable, to ensure its longevity.

Will Gladwin's story reflects many young aspiring farmers in this position. Despite having a good arable set up at home, it had always been a concern that the farm could not sustain both Will and his father Roger. On the lookout for potential business opportunities, the BQP offer for growing pigs seemed promising. They visited a current new building and were pleasantly surprised to find two large buildings, similar to grain barns with straw beds and clean pigs.

Will's new build pig shed was based on a bespoke BQP design. Will was involved throughout the

process, with the experience teaching him how to cost out and oversee the build. Will says, "BQP fieldstaff are always there to answer any question you have and never make you feel silly for asking them."

The Gladwins have managed to find a business that has not only allowed the pair to carry on farming together, but has also added a valued asset with a business contract that allows a quick turnaround. Will says, "The pigs take about two hours out of my day and the rest of the day I work on the arable side of the business."



For more information, call Richard Gooding on 07802 596697 or Mark Jagger on 07802 596702, or visit www.dalehead.co.uk/farmingopportunities.