

AGROECOLOGY PATHWAYS LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY

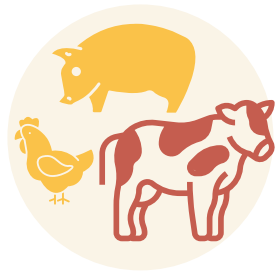
for startups and scale ups
as a part of the new entrant
support scheme



A career in the Livestock and Dairy industry can involve rearing cows, goats, sheep, pigs and other farm animals for meat or dairy products.



AGROECOLOGY PATHWAYS



DAIRY/LIVESTOCK



ARABLE



HORTICULTURE



This document outlines the agroecological career pathway for the livestock and dairy industry and offers information, tips and links to resources and further sources of support.

This is a PDF version of an interactive pathway located on the LWA website and was made to support new entrants planning to start up or progress their agroecological businesses, as part of the Defra funded New Entrant Support pilot.

VOLUNTEERING



Volunteering is unpaid time working on a farm – this can take the form of regular volunteering days (weekly, monthly) or intensive periods from a few weeks to months

Experience needed: None

Qualifications needed: None

Skills needed: None

Qualifications gained: None

Pay/benefits attached: Many farms offer lunch and refreshments on the day of volunteering and longer term opportunities often offer food and/or accommodation in exchange for labour

Where does this lead me? After volunteering you will be eligible to go on to get further training, an accreditation or qualification, paid work as a Seasonal Worker or start your own business

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Short term or ongoing volunteering opportunities

Volunteering can be useful to you if you have the time and resources to support yourself whilst taking on an unpaid opportunity.

It is a very open and flexible way of gaining skills as you can choose how often you attend volunteering sessions. Many farms across Wales, Scotland & England offer

volunteering days on a weekly or monthly basis while some offer longer-term opportunities.

Volunteering is a great way to:

- ✓ Gain hands-on experience
- ✓ Network with people with similar interests
- ✓ Get a feel for the different areas of the Livestock and Dairy industry
- ✓ Build confidence on the land and with animals
- ✓ Develop a relationship to Nature
- ✓ Gain skills in things such as rearing animals, milking, processing dairy products and other tasks relevant to jobs and further opportunities in the Livestock and Dairy industry

Longer term volunteering opportunities

Longer term opportunities are more intensive ways to gain access to skills and experience on the land. They usually require a set amount of time commitment to living and working on a project (usually from a week upwards) and work on the basis of a work exchange i.e. your time and labour exchanged for on-farm accommodation and/or food. This minimises your outgoings during this period.

Longer term opportunities can be great for anyone with the resources to support themselves during this time and offer:

- ✓ An intensive understanding of running a farm business

- ✓ A high level of responsibility in a short time
- ✓ Access to a large variety of tasks
- ✓ An immersive experience of living and working on a farm
- ✓ Opportunity to learn the daily skills involved with running a dairy or livestock farm

Sources of support

We recognise that starting work on the land with animals can be a daunting prospect for those who have had little access to nature and outdoor spaces previously and that many do not have the time and resources available to engage in unpaid opportunities.

Organisations like the [Landworkers' Alliance](#), support members who are often marginalised in landwork and have unequal access to opportunities. Members organise a LGBTQIA+ working group (called Out On The Land), a BPOC (Black and People of Colour) working group (called REAL) and a youth arm (called FLAME).

[LION](#) or Land In Our Names are a Black-led collective who also work to support those looking to get into landwork but are unable to access traditional routes.

[Ubele](#) also offers sources of support and empowerment for Black and Minoritised communities in the UK.

[Shared Assets](#) work to reimagine what we can do with land and support communities to gain access.

HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Short-term or ongoing volunteering opportunities

Many farms around the UK practising agroecology, calf at foot or regenerative practices will offer volunteer days on a weekly or monthly basis. We have outlined some information on how to gain

access to these volunteering opportunities below.

- Go to your local farmers market and speak to farmers selling meat or dairy products directly to find out about any opportunities they offer – this is a great way to meet like minded people in your area and express your interest to learn locally
- Search online by typing in your location followed by 'agroecology' 'dairy or livestock farms' or 'regenerative'. Take a look at websites or social media accounts that come up because they will often advertise any available opportunities via these channels. You could also email or direct message them to express your interest if it is not clear from your online search.
- Signing up to local facebook groups will often point you in the direction of local farms practising agroecology – the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) has regional Facebook groups linked here: South West England, North West England, South East England, East Anglia, Cymru/Wales, Midlands
- This [Regenerative Farming UK Facebook group](#) is a great place to chat to farmers and learn about their training or volunteering opportunities
- The [Cow-Calf Dairies](#) website has a directory of calf at food dairies around the UK so you could contact any farms in your area!
- [Keeping Cow with Calf](#) also offers a directory for Scottish calf at foot dairies
- You can also sign up to the newsletters or visit the website of organisations such as the [Landworkers' Alliance](#), [CSA Network](#), [Permaculture Association](#), [Soil Association](#), [Social Farms and Gardens](#), [PFLA](#) and the [Nature Friendly Farming Network](#)



to get signposted to their members volunteering opportunities around the UK

- [Social Farms and Gardens](#) have a directory of their members across the UK who offer volunteering opportunities
- To help you get started, here are a few farms to check out across the UK that offer opportunities: [Slade farm](#) (Vale of Glamorgan, Wales), [The Ethical Dairy](#) (Castle Douglas, Scotland), [Dyfi Dairy](#) (Talybont, Wales), [Stroud micro dairy](#) (Stroud, England), [The Calf at Foot Dairy](#) (Kidderminster, England), [Street goat](#) (Bristol, England), [Mountain hall farm](#) (Glogue, Wales), [Surrey Docks Farm](#) (London, England), [Ouseburn Farm](#) (Newcastle Upon Tyne, England), [Lucky Ewe](#) (Fife, Scotland), [COCA CSA](#) (St. Davids, Wales), [Hollis Mead](#) (Dorchester, England), [Holden Dairy Farm](#) (Lampeter, Wales), [Barnside Farm](#) (Abbey St. Bathans, Scotland), [Redwoods Farm](#) (Tiverton, England), [Tablehurst Farm](#) (Forest Row, England).



Long-term volunteering opportunities

- If you are looking for more intensive, longer term volunteering opportunities, [WWOOFing](#) (see [WWOOF UK](#)) is a very common entry point for those working in agroecology. Hosts across the UK and around the world usually offer you accommodation and food in return for your labour. Placements range from 1 week to a few months depending on the project. Check out the website to find projects that suit you.
- [HelpX](#) is another site offering longer term volunteering opportunities in many areas of agriculture

TRAINING



Training opportunities in agroecological or regenerative livestock and dairy farming and processing mainly consist of undertaking non-accredited courses offered via distance learning, classroom learning or a mix of on-farm and off-farm learning.

Traineeships, internships and informal apprenticeships on agroecological or regenerative farms are still an underdeveloped entry route for this industry and so are rare to come by. Training opportunities in the more conventional dairy and livestock industry do exist more readily and so any skills learnt in this way can be transferred to the agroecological sector.

Experience needed: Most courses and training opportunities have no prerequisites however others do require an entry level of practical experience in dairy or livestock farming (see the 'Volunteering' section to find out about opportunities).

Qualifications needed: Training opportunities will vary on entry requirements, most do not require a qualification as these training opportunities are not accredited.

Skills needed: Some may require a basic level of skill in the day to day activities of working on a dairy or livestock farm. A commitment to learning as well as good organisational and work management capabilities and the ability to work well alone and in a team.

Qualifications gained: Many opportunities will offer a certificate on completion of your course or

training opportunity but be aware that these certificates are not formally accredited certificates and are simply an acknowledgement of your training (please see the next section 'Qualifications and Accreditations' for more details on formally accredited learning).

Pay/benefits attached: Some traineeships are paid or offer a small stipend as well as on-farm accommodation.

Where does this lead me? After completing a course or other training opportunity you can go on to undertake further training, gain a qualification or formal accreditation or get paid work as a Seasonal Farm Worker, Herdsperson or Stockperson and possibly a Flock Manager, Head Shepherd, Head Stockperson, Herd Manager or Farm Manager. Many also go on to start their own dairy or livestock businesses.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Non-accredited courses

Accessing training via non-accredited courses allows you to:

- ✓ Gain relevant skills at any stage of your career in agroecology and regenerative livestock or dairy
- ✓ Access valuable expertise
- ✓ Engage in a focused learning environment
- ✓ Meet like minded people

- ✓ Gain access to useful skills
- ✓ Access in-depth knowledge relevant to dairy and livestock farming and product processing such as soil health, regenerative grazing practices, high welfare requirements, butchery, cheese making and more.

On-farm traineeships

Skills learnt on these traineeships can be useful to:

- ✓ Level up your volunteering experience
- ✓ Gain valuable skills and knowledge in the industry
- ✓ Live (in some cases) and learn on a successful business
- ✓ Take on many of the day-to-day tasks and responsibilities
- ✓ Learn the practical aspects of running a successful farm business
- ✓ Gain understanding in the processing opportunities and routes to market
- ✓ Understand and gain experience in the diversity of tasks involved in rearing different livestock animals

Navigating these spaces, funding and sources of support

Traineeships, internships and informal apprenticeships on farms are not accredited and so the type of training provided will vary from farm to farm. Make sure to do your research into the farm to make sure it is the right opportunity for you. You could even ask the farm to speak to previous trainees about their experiences and what to expect.

It is acknowledged that accessing these types of training opportunities, particularly in more conventional farming spaces, can be daunting and difficult, especially if you are from a non-farming background or part of a Minoritised community. Organisations like the [LWA](#),

[LION](#) and [Ubele](#) work to break down these barriers for new entrants, particularly those less represented in land based work. Reach out to these organisations and join many new entrants like you who experience barriers in entering land based industries in the UK.



Many courses offer funding or a sliding scale so what you pay reflects your income bracket. If they do not then make sure to email the course leader to find out about funding opportunities.

HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Non-accredited on-farm training opportunities (agroecology/regenerative)

Traineeships, Internships and informal apprenticeships in agroecology or regenerative livestock and dairy farming are still an underdeveloped entry route for this industry and so opportunities are rare, but there are some ways to keep your ear to the ground about any opportunities that may arise.

- Nature Way Farm offers [internships](#) in regenerative livestock practices
- Henbant (Wales) offer [training opportunities and internships](#)
- The [Calf at foot dairy](#) is planning to provide teaching, cow handling sessions, workshops and dairy hygiene training.
- Go to your local farmers market and speak to farmers selling meat or dairy products directly to find out about any training opportunities they offer – this is a great way to meet like minded people in your area and express your interest to learn locally
- Search online by typing in keywords such as your location followed by 'agroecology' or

'regenerative', 'dairy or livestock farms', 'training'. Take a look at websites or social media accounts that come up because farms will often advertise any available opportunities via these channels. You could also email or direct message them to express your interest if it is not clear from your online search.

- Signing up to local facebook groups will often point you in the direction of local farms practising agroecology – the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) has regional Facebook groups linked here: South West England, North West England, South East England, East Anglia, Cymru/Wales, Midlands
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- You can also sign up to the newsletters or visit the website of organisations such as the [Landworkers' Alliance](#), [CSA Network](#), [Permaculture Association](#), [Soil Association](#), [Social Farms and Gardens](#), [PFLA](#) and the [Nature Friendly Farming Network](#) to get signposted to their members opportunities around the UK
- [Social Farms and Gardens](#) have a directory of their members across the UK who may also be good to contact
- Farms offering work exchanges on websites like [WWOOF UK](#) or [HelpX](#) may also be able to offer longer term training opportunities
- [Farmstart](#) is a fantastic training opportunity for you if you are considering starting your own farm business. You are given a piece of land attached to

a larger farm business as a part of this incubator programme to allow you to kick start your own farm business whilst getting support and training in the first 1-2 years of your business.



- [Roots to Work](#) is also a great place to look for traineeship opportunities around the UK especially in processing areas such as cheese making or butchery
- Mentoring is also a valuable tool for knowledge transference and training in this sector. The [Landworkers' Alliance](#) offers [mentoring opportunities](#) which will be made available to members. You could also reach out to farmers or landworkers in your area to ask if they would be willing to teach you the specific skills and/or knowledge you are looking for. There are many exchange programmes and networks that operate around the UK.

Non-accredited on-farm training opportunities (conventional)

It is possible to find on-farm training opportunities in the conventional livestock and dairy industry and transfer this knowledge over to the agroecological and regenerative sector.

- Websites like [Indeed](#) advertise trainee positions on [farms](#) and in processing work such as butchery
- [WS Training](#) also advertise farm traineeships in dairy and livestock
- [Farmers Weekly](#) host job/trainee adverts
- [Velcourt](#) offer a traineeship in [dairy farm management](#)
- This [Facebook group](#) is for internships in the dairy industry around the world

- This [farming forum](#) is also a great place to talk to farmers and hear about opportunities

Non-accredited agroecology, regenerative and processing courses (livestock and dairy)

- [The Courtyard Dairy](#) offer cheese making courses
- [Wildes Cheese](#) also offer classes
- [Perrys of Eccleshall](#) offer [butchery courses](#)
- [The School of Artisan Food](#) offer a [6-day butchery course](#)
- [Garlic Wood Farm](#) offer [butchery and sausage making courses](#)
- [Wilderculture](#) offer training via short courses and day long workshops
- A new [Agroecology Learning Programme](#) has been launched for Farmers and Crofters
- [Earth Trust](#) offer [Regenerative Agricultural training](#)
- [Henbant](#) offer a course in [Regenerative Agriculture design](#) which includes integrated animal systems
- [Regenerative agriculture revolution](#) course by EIT
- [Regenerative farming workshop](#) – one day event
- [How to farm](#) course offered by Newbie Winner [Lynbreck Croft](#)
- [FarmEd](#) also offer many courses that may be useful to you at a later stage in your career, [How to Set Up a Care Farm](#), [An, Introduction to Care Farming](#), [Pastured Pigs](#), [Pastured Poultry](#), [Holistic Planned Grazing](#) (in partnership with 3LM), [Regenerative Farming: Grassland and Grazing](#), [Herbal Ley Establishment & Management](#) (in partnership with [Cotswolds Seeds](#)),
- [Richard Perkins](#) lists [training opportunities in regenerative farming both on farm and online](#) on his website

- [The 3LM Network](#) offer [regenerative pathways](#) or farmers
- [The Earth Trust](#) offers [regenerative agriculture training](#)



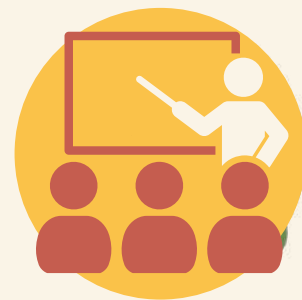
Non-accredited agroecology and regenerative courses (not livestock or dairy specific)

- Many of these education centres offer short courses in regenerative and agroecological practices relevant to farm and land based work: [Apricot Centre](#), [Biodynamic College](#), [Schumacher College](#), [Black Mountain College](#), [FarmEd](#), [Plumpton College](#)
- You could also take this short course in [Agroecology](#) to add to any more conventional on-farm training
- There are many gatherings, conferences, fairs and meet ups across the UK that may be useful for you to attend when trying to access knowledge and training in regenerative livestock and dairy production. Some places to check out are: [The Land Skills Fair](#), [Groundswell](#), [Oxford Real Farming Conference](#), [Wales Real Food and Farming Conference](#)
- [FarmEd](#) also offer courses that may be useful to you at a later stage in your career: [Leadership for a Sustainable Future](#), [Wellbeing & Communication](#) (in partnership with the [The Farming Community Network \(FCN\)](#)), [Holistic Financial Planning](#) (in partnership with 3LM), [Holistic Management Fundamentals](#) (in partnership with 3LM), [Holistic Ecological Monitoring & Land Planning](#) (in partnership with 3LM), [Regenerative Farming: Soil & Crop Health](#) (in partnership with [Niels Corfield](#)), [Regenerative Farming: Soil Health Fundamentals](#) (in partnership with [Niels Corfield](#)).

- The [Soil Food Web](#) offers online courses in soil health
- Organic Growers Alliance offer a [Farm planning programme](#)
- [Plumpton College](#) offer many short courses
- [Chagfood CSA](#) offers a course in [Setting up and Scaling up CSA](#)



QUALIFICATIONS AND ACCREDITATIONS



Gaining a qualification or accredited certificate in livestock farming and/or dairy production via online or in-person training on courses or accredited apprenticeships

Experience needed: Some courses and apprenticeships may require previous experience on a dairy or livestock farm

Qualifications needed: Accredited courses usually require a minimum of a GCSE or equivalent in Maths and English (or Welsh if learning in Cymru)

Skills needed: A good level of written and spoken English or Welsh (depending on where you take your course), ability to lead self study, capacity to undertake coursework as well as carry out practical tasks and a good level of organisational skill

Qualifications gained: This will range from college level certificates to undergraduate and postgraduate university degrees

Pay/benefits attached: Accredited training will be provided at a nationalised standard and quality and will be internationally recognised

Where does this lead me? After gaining an accreditation or qualification you are able to pursue opportunities in further training and accreditations at a higher level, paid work as a Seasonal Worker, Herdperson, Stockperson, Flock Manager, Head Shepherd, Head Stockperson, Herd Manager or Farm Manager and start your own business

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

Accreditations and qualifications can:

- ✓ Validate your commitment to livestock and dairy farming and building a career or business in this sector
- ✓ Certify a certain level of knowledge, skill and experience
- ✓ Level up your skills
- ✓ Offer invaluable, in-depth insight and expertise into specific elements of meat and dairy production, processing, agroecology or running a land based business
- ✓ Give you the opportunity to meet people in the industry

Accredited courses

Undertaking an accreditation or qualification can be time and money intensive and so each course should be considered carefully and weighed up against the other opportunities available to you.

Is it going to teach you what you want to learn? Is there a way you can learn practical skills alongside your course if it doesn't offer this opportunity? Is this the best way to learn the skills you need? Are there any grant or funding opportunities available to you?

Accredited apprenticeships

Accredited apprenticeships are a great way of learning and getting hands-on experience whilst being paid, however formalised, accredited apprenticeships in this industry operate only in the conventional livestock and dairy sector. However these skills and the knowledge learnt will be transferable to the agroecological and regenerative sector.

Funding, access and sources of support

It is important to note that conventional agricultural spaces that offer on-farm apprenticeships can feel quite overwhelming if you are not familiar with this industry or from a farming background. Reaching out within the [LWA](#), who support identity-based organising can be hugely beneficial. They have an LGBTQIA+ working group (called Out On The Land), a BPOC (Black and People of Colour) working group (called REAL), as well as a youth arm called FLAME).

[LION](#) or Land In Our Names are a black-led collective who also work to support those looking to get into agroecology but are unable to access traditional routes.

[Ubele](#) also offers sources of support and empowerment for Black and Minoritised communities in the UK.

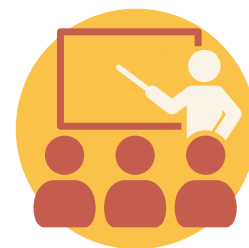
Many education centres will offer support in finding funding for your course.

HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

College level accredited courses (regenerative/agroecology)

- [Crossfields Institute Level 4 Diploma in Regenerative Land Based Systems: Food and Farming](#)
- [Foundation in farm homoeopathy](#) at Whole Earth Agriculture
- QLS Level 3 in [Organic Livestock Farming](#)

- FdSc in [Sustainable Agriculture with Livestock Management](#)
- Foundation in [Organic Farming](#)



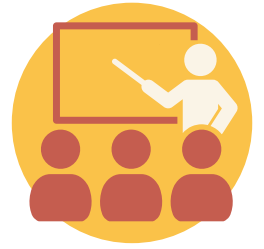
Higher level accredited courses (regenerative/agroecology)

- BSc (HONS) in [Regenerative food and Farming](#) at Schumacher College
- MSc in [Regenerative food, farming and enterprise](#) at Schumacher College
- BSc (Hons) [Agriculture \(Regenerative Systems and Livestock\)](#)
- MSc [Organic Farming](#)
- [Harper Adams](#) offer a PgC / PgD / MSc / MRes in Agroecology
- [Black Mountain College](#) offer a BA (Hons) in Sustainable Futures: Arts, Ecology and Systems Change

Accredited apprenticeships and courses (conventional pathways)

- There are many [government apprenticeship opportunities](#) available to you
- [See a directory of opportunities in the dairy industry here](#) (multiple level qualifications)
- [Capel Manor College](#) offer a range of agricultural certificates
- Level 3 apprenticeship in [Livestock Unit Technician](#) (equivalent to Flock Manager, Head Shepherd, Head Stockperson, Herd Manager, Unit Manager)
- Hereford and Ludlow College offer an apprenticeship in [Mixed Farming, Crop Production and Livestock](#)

- Myerscough College offer many apprenticeships and training courses in agriculture and livestock
- Royal Agricultural university offer many courses in livestock and dairy farming as well as professional development
- Plumpton College offer apprenticeships in dairy and livestock farming as well as dairy processing, butchery and baking



WORKING



Working on an already established livestock or dairy farm in exchange for money

Experience needed: A reasonable level of knowledge and experience in livestock or dairy farming which ensures appropriate standards of animal welfare and mitigating and identifying illness (usually gained via ongoing or long term volunteering, accreditations or qualifications)

Qualifications needed: Not all jobs in the livestock and dairy industry will expect an accreditation or qualification, however it is a benefit to have one

Skills needed: Ability to carry out heavy lifting and intensive practical tasks around the farm, capacity to use initiative and take the lead on tasks, an ability to work within a team as well as alone, ability to manage competing workstreams, good organisational skills and knowledge of all day to day running activities of a farm including relevant tool and machinery usage, knowledge of animal husbandry and how to deal with certain illnesses or spot signs of disease

Qualifications gained: None

Pay/benefits attached: The national minimum wage or more

Where does this lead me? Paid work can lead to further training and mentoring opportunities as you progress your livestock or dairy farming knowledge in agroecology. From here many will go on to start their own businesses or become Herd, Flock or Farm Managers. Possible sideways moves into other sectors/adjacent careers are also available, for example

campaigning, farm advisory positions, research, teaching, business development/support, policy and advocacy work, community engagement etc.

THINGS TO CONSIDER?

Finding paid work is a great way to:

- ✓ Put all of your previous skills and learnings to use
- ✓ Gain access to many skills and responsibilities not otherwise available to you via volunteering or training
- ✓ Gain experience in the industry
- ✓ Learn from your wider team members and farm managers and glean experienced knowledge
- ✓ Deepen your understanding of the dairy and livestock industry
- ✓ Give you the opportunity to develop your interests in certain areas of meat and dairy production
- ✓ Give you an in-depth understanding of how to run a farm business
- ✓ Expand your knowledge and skills in the processing of raw meat and dairy products

Whilst paid work is beneficial in many ways, finding relevant paid work is highly competitive and opportunities in the agroecological sector are few and far between.

Even if you cannot find a paid position on an agroecological farm, perhaps starting with a larger organic farm who may have more resources to support

paid staff is a great place to start. This knowledge will be transferable to the agroecological and regenerative sector.

Lambing seasons are also a great way to get your foot in the door and find introductory paid work.

It is also the case that many livestock or dairy farms will keep on volunteers as paid staff when the opportunity arises. So being linked in to a farm or business near you is a great way of eventually finding paid work in the sector – have a look at the ‘Volunteering’ or ‘Training’ section of this pathway to start to find relevant farms.

Accommodation

Another thing to consider is that accommodation on the farm or close to your place of work (particularly in rural areas) can be a challenging find and especially on a relatively low wage. If you don't already live in the area of your new work position, make sure to speak to your manager to find out about accommodation opportunities either on the farm or nearby. Some farms will offer accommodation with the job for a reduction in your wage. However if they do not then be sure to check out local accommodation options before making the move as this can sometimes be a barrier to working, particularly in rural areas with limited options.

HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Jobs in the agroecological or regenerative sector

Jobs in the agroecological and regenerative sector are hard to come by and many opportunities will come via word of mouth, but it is worth looking into the links below and keeping your eye on these networks to find suitable positions when they come up:

- The [Landworkers' Alliance](#) often advertise paid work opportunities via their newsletters and membership communications
- Organisations such as the [CSA Network](#),

[Permaculture Association](#), [Soil Association](#), [Social Farms and Gardens](#), [Biodynamic Association](#), [Pasture For Life](#) and [Nature Friendly Farming](#) also advertise opportunities on their website



- The [Great project website](#) is also a good place to find paid work
- [Roots to Work](#) is a job site in good food that sometimes advertise paid farm work opportunities as well as work in other supporting areas of agroecology such as campaigning, policy work etc.
- [Environment job posts](#) work in both the on-farm and off-farm agroecological sector
- [Agroecology Europe](#) is a great place to look for EU based positions
- Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media channels are a great way to find paid work opportunities directly from organisations – so make sure to follow all prospective work places
- Also visit the websites of prospective farms (outlined in the ‘Volunteering’ and ‘Training’ section of this pathway, to find out about upcoming work opportunities.

Jobs in the more conventional dairy and livestock industry

- Check out job sites such as [Jobs in Agriculture](#), [Farming UK](#), [Farmers' Weekly Jobs](#), [Agricultural and Farming Jobs](#), [4XtraHands](#) and [Indeed](#). Jobs via these pages will be useful if you wish to learn on the job and then transfer this knowledge into your own agroecological project or eventually on a regenerative farm when opportunities become available.
- [Careers Wales](#) is a great resource for finding work in Wales

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS



Starting your own livestock or dairy farm

Experience needed: It is essential to have a good amount of on-farm practical knowledge and experience with rearing animals before starting your own business, usually gained via volunteering, training and apprenticeships, paid work, accreditations or qualifications. **Qualifications needed:** No qualifications are needed but they will be advantageous to your level of skill and knowledge.

Skills needed: An understanding of how to run a business and of UK business requirements e.g tax, health and safety certificates, insurance etc., entrepreneurial thinking and operating, a high level of flexibility and adaptability, ability to manage customers and volunteers, basic accountancy, ability to carry out heavy lifting and intensive, repetitive practical tasks, capacity to use initiative and take the lead on tasks, ability to manage people and work within a team as well as alone, ability to manage competing workstreams, good organisational skills and knowledge of all day to day running activities of a dairy or livestock farm including tool and machinery usage, marketing or promotional skills or willingness to learn, the ability to mitigate and/or identify illness in your animals and a good level of knowledge of high animal welfare standards.

Qualifications gained: None

Pay/benefits attached: You will be in charge of your profit margins and therefore your own wage.

Where does this lead me? Starting and establishing a business can open up a world of opportunity into:

- Many areas of agroecological or regenerative livestock and dairy farming
- A variety of processing possibilities from the raw product to cheese, yoghurt, butter, dried meats, charcuterie, fermented products and much more!
- Expansion and diversification into other industry sectors and land based practices such as horticulture, poultry, arable, forestry and woodland management, conservation, rewilding and more
- Community/social based enterprise structures and land management models
- Carrying out specific agroecological or regenerative on-farm training via courses
- Participating in knowledge exchange networks with other similar businesses for local or national support
- Expanding your career into creative media, policy, advocacy, campaigning, teaching, farm advisory services and other supportive work streams that share the stories and knowledge you have gained from running your own business
- Joining land based networks, unions and movements that advocate for better land working and animal welfare conditions
- Linking in with networks and alliances that want to do research into agroecological livestock and dairy farming
- Experimenting with not-yet-trialed practices and ideas that increase farm biodiversity and community wellbeing

- As the agroecological livestock and dairy sector is a growing sector, you could play a key role in developing networks, skill and knowledge sharing, training, mentorship and other opportunities which will allow for others to enter into the industry

THINGS TO CONSIDER?

Setting up your own agroecological business offers you the opportunity to:

- ✓ Put all of your skills, knowledge and expertise into practice
- ✓ Have a positive impact on the land and community around you
- ✓ Help build the food sovereignty and agroecology movement in the UK
- ✓ Learn whilst you work
- ✓ Deepen your relationship to the land
- ✓ Experiment, play with and explore agroecological and regenerative practices
- ✓ Offer your community healthy, nutritious food
- ✓ Support others to get into the industry
- ✓ Add an experienced voice to wider social and political conversations around our food and farming systems in the UK
- ✓ Build on an area of agroecological livestock and dairy farming research that is in need of development

Seeking Business Support

Before you embark on setting up your business, reaching out to business support schemes is a great place to start, as they can offer you advice and support in writing a business plan, choosing a business and land model, finding land, funding and routes to market, planning promotional and marketing activities and generally offering guidance in all

aspects of your business idea to ensure your business is viable.

Community / Shared Business and Land Models



The task of setting up alone and getting your business off the ground can be long, arduous and lonely, so sharing this responsibility and passion with others is often the best way to start a successful business. There are many business and land models you can choose from such as partnerships, community interest companies, stacked enterprises, leasing land and share farming. Finding the right one for you from the beginning is important as it will be directly related to the success of your business.

Accommodation

Another thing to consider is that accommodation on the farm or land plot (particularly in rural areas) can be a challenging find and especially on a relatively low wage. Organisations like the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) and the [Ecological Land Cooperative](#) campaign for access to affordable, location appropriate housing in landwork.

HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

New entrants experience a multitude of barriers in setting up their own land based business, however there is an increasing amount of resources and support out there for you should you be looking at taking this next step in your career in agroecology.

Land and Finance

- The [Ecological Land Cooperative](#) supports access to setting up smallholdings for ecological agriculture use. They have a [call out for land for sale or rent](#) and a whole host of amazing resources on their website. Their lease agreement is one of the most accessible and innovative models in the UK so they are certainly worth checking out

- Land sharing is one of the most accessible ways to get access to land for any new business so it is worth considering this model when developing your business idea. Examples of Land Sharing are: [Biodynamic Land Trust \(UK\)](#), [Earth Trust – Farm Step Programme \(England\)](#), [Soil Association Land Trust](#), [Big Meadow CSA](#), [Stream Farm](#), [Farm Ed](#)
- [Shared Assets](#) support the development of new models of managing land. They have some very useful information here on [supportive land share agreements](#) and [sharing assets](#), as well as some good [case studies](#).
- [CLAS](#) – Community Land Advisory Service have some very useful resources, including their [heads of terms templates for community groups wanting to lease land](#). Sadly their services are no longer being funded in England and Scotland, though it continues in Wales.
- [AHDB](#) offer useful resources on [community models and trusts](#)
- [The Scottish Crofting Federation](#) offers support in land access and funding in Scotland
- [One Planet Development \(Wales\)](#) is a government supported, innovative land use model that supports you to start your own agroecological business and build agricultural buildings and your own dwelling in a low impact way.
- The [Land Mobility Scheme](#) works to find [collaborative land opportunities](#) (Northern Ireland)
- [Access to Land](#) facilitates land access and works with local authorities (EU)
- The [NEWBIE Network](#) offers support in land and finance (UK)
- The [Farmstart Network](#) is a fantastic starting point opportunity for you if you are considering starting your own farm business. You are given a piece of land attached to a larger farm business and join an incubator programme which allows you to kick start your own farm business whilst getting support, training and mentoring in the first 1-2 years of your business (UK)
- The [Loans for Enlightened Agriculture Programme \(LEAP\)](#) (UK) is a great place to find funding for agroecological food and farming businesses
- Check out [Wakelyn's farm](#) to learn more about enterprise stacking
- The [Community Farmland Purchase](#) resource is there to help you with looking, finding and securing land in the UK
- You could also contact your city or area council / local authority to find out about land opportunities as they often arise



Business Support

- Business start up support is available from all governments in the UK and so is a good place to start: [Wales](#), [Scotland](#), [England](#)
- [Pasture for Life](#) is very useful for small to large livestock farms and dairies as they offer farm visits, online talks, open days and many more resources to support you and your business in regenerative farming
- [Farming Connect \(Wales\)](#) can help with access to land, business advice, progression support and mentorships. They also have grants available to help you learn in your sector once you have an established business. On top of this they help to facilitate some interesting match-making services for joint ventures. In particular they have a [Venture Handbook](#) which is a useful starting point for

those considering a joint venture, much of which is relevant for those outside Wales too.

- [Tenant Farmers Association \(UK\)](#) has a lot of support for tenant farmers leasing land
- [Tyfu Cymru](#) is a good place to look for resources to help with your business if you're based in Wales
- The Landworkers' Alliance offers and facilitates business support which can be found [here](#).
- The Scottish government is working towards [farming Opportunities for New Entrants \(Scotland\)](#)
- The [Farm Advisory Service also offers support via a New Entrant Programme \(Scotland\)](#)
- The Landworkers' Alliance has done a lot of work on agroecological business planning – [Agroecological business planning guide](#) – and direct sales and short supply chains – [Direct sales and short supply chains](#)
- [Skillshare](#) offers a free one month trial during which you can learn about marketing, social media, video editing and many more digital skills that will help with the success of your business
- [The Food Centre](#) in Wales offers funded time with a food tech to develop a recipe or process, they will also walk you through business plans and offer guidance in the best products for your business and routes to market (Wales)
- [Whole Health Agriculture](#) are a great resource for high welfare, regenerative practices and career progression in the livestock and dairy industry and they offer classes, courses, online farm visits and much more.
- [Agricology](#) has a lot of free resources for livestock and dairy farmers
- This [Regenerative Farming UK Facebook group](#) is a great place to chat to farmers and exchange knowledge and business support

- This [farming forum](#) is also a great place to talk to other farmers and get business support from others in the industry



- Join [farmers running their own on farm trials](#) and expand your knowledge and practice and contribute to research in your area
- BASE-UK is a [farmer led knowledge exchange organisation](#) for regenerative practices
- The 3LM Network offer [regenerative pathways](#) or farmers starting businesses
- [Neal's Yard Dairy](#) offer resources on becoming a cheesemaker professionally

Other Support

- [LION](#) – Land in Our Names is a Black-led collective that works for land reparations and supports those from BPOC communities to begin working and living on the land, they have a whole host of resources and support available
- [Ubele](#) also offer support, advice and finance for BPOC communities setting up enterprises across the UK
- Organisations like the [Landworkers' Alliance](#), support members who are often marginalised in landwork and have unequal access to opportunities. Members organise a LGBTQIA+ working group (called Out On The Land), a BPOC (Black and People of Colour) working group (called REAL) and a youth arm (called FLAME).
- Also see the 'Further Resources' section of this pathway for other links to support and resources that you may find helpful when setting up your own arable business

BUSINESS & CAREER PROGRESSION



Business & career progression is for those seeking to expand, diversify or build on their existing career or business

Experience needed: A paid working or equivalent level of knowledge and experience is necessary to access some further training opportunities and certain types of business support.

Qualifications needed: If you are looking at progressing your skills and knowledge in the way of getting an accreditation then the minimum level of qualifications needed are usually a GCSE or equivalent in English (or Welsh if studying in Cymru) and Maths. But entry requirements will vary depending on the level of accredited training you are seeking (see 'Accreditations and Qualifications' section of this pathway).

Skills needed: A paid working or equivalent level of skill is required for accessing advanced progression opportunities

Qualifications gained: If you choose to progress by gaining an accreditation or qualification then you are able to gain a certificates from a Foundation level to Postgraduate Masters or PhD

Pay/benefits attached: Progression, expansion and diversification can lead to higher level job opportunities which usually equate to increased wages or increased business profits. You will also be gaining more knowledge and skills to practically apply agroecology.

Where does this lead me? Whether you are progressing your career in agroecology into a managerial position, expanding or diversifying your agroecological business or progressing your current business into agroecology, then this can lead to a diversity of outcomes:

- Advancements in your experience, knowledge and expertise, business offerings, level of responsibility, financial incentives, skill set and support for biodiversity and community wellbeing
- Expansion into other sectors in the wider social and political spheres of your work including creative media, policy, advocacy, campaigning, education and other supportive work streams that share the stories and knowledge you have gained from running your own business or working on the land.

THINGS TO CONSIDER?

Progressing your career

If you are currently working in a paid role on a dairy or livestock farm and/or processing these products, expanding your knowledge and skill set in agroecology and small batch products can be a great way to:

- ✓ Progress in your career
- ✓ Learn new skills
- ✓ Develop processing techniques and products from the dairy and livestock industry

- ✓ Meet and network with like minded people working in similar areas to you
- ✓ Gain a deeper understanding of what it takes to manage/work the land in line with agroecological principles
- ✓ Access a higher level of responsibility at work
- ✓ Increase your ability to apply for more senior roles as you will have a wider environmental and sustainable application in a time of changing agricultural policy in the UK
- ✓ Access information, knowledge, skills and expertise relevant to starting your own business (please also refer to the 'Starting your own business' section of this pathway)

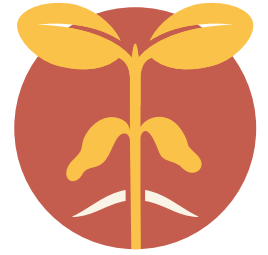
Progressing your business

If you already own a dairy or livestock business then expanding and diversifying your agroecological knowledge, practice and processing techniques is a great way to:

- ✓ Ensure adaptability in changing markets
- ✓ Access more routes to market
- ✓ Advance your skills, knowledge and expertise in agroecology
- ✓ Advance your access to a consumer market that is more climate and community conscious than ever before
- ✓ Grow your profits
- ✓ Grow your social and community impact
- ✓ Grow the biodiversity on your land
- ✓ Safeguard for future generations
- ✓ Mitigate the detrimental impacts from factory farming

Progression, expansion and diversification can be costly and time consuming so you need to ensure you are at the right stage in your career or business where taking

on further training or business development opportunities will be beneficial and not lead to burn out. Running a business and working on the land is hard work and so consider whether this is the right time for you before embarking on something new. Many progression opportunities are available on an ongoing basis and so you will be able to find something you are looking for when you are ready.



HOW TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES?

Many of the resources available in each section of this interactive pathway will be relevant to your progression needs, for example in accessing further training routes, courses, accreditations and qualifications as well as business support, so please refer to each of these sections to find out more detail about the progression opportunities available to you.

Career and Business Progression

- [Pasture for Life](#) offer all sorts of support for livestock and dairy farmers, new entrants and established businesses who wish to transition into regenerative practices
- [Wilderculture Training for Landowners and Managers](#)
- [The GREAT project](#) offers support for new farmers
- BASE-UK is a [farmer led knowledge exchange organisation](#) for regenerative practices
- [Regenerative grazing course plus more](#) for graziers, shepherds, stockspeople, land managers and mixed farmers
- These courses by [FarmSkills](#) will help with the day to day running of your farm and offer specialised knowledge in different areas of livestock and dairy farming
- The Agricultural Recruitment Specialists have information on [career progression in farming](#)

- [Royal Agricultural university](#) offer many courses in livestock and dairy farming as well as professional development
- [Neal's Yard Dairy](#) offer resources on becoming a cheesemaker professionally
- The [Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board](#) also offer [support and advice in business and career progression](#)
- The [NFU](#) offer support for businesses and career progression information
- [Agricology](#) has a lot of free resources for livestock and dairy farmers
- Also see the 'Further Resources' page for other links to support and resources that you may find helpful when progressing your career or business

Business Progression

- [Pasture for Life](#) offer all sorts of support for livestock and dairy farmers, new entrants and established businesses who wish to transition into regenerative practices
- [Regenerative training services can be found here](#)
- Join [farmers running their own on farm trials](#) and expand your knowledge and practice and contribute to research in your area
- The [Farm Carbon Toolkit](#) is a useful resource
- These courses by [FarmSkills](#) will help with the day to day running of your farm and offer specialised knowledge in different areas of livestock and dairy farming
- [Rural Support](#) offers support in [Progression Planning and Succession](#)
- There are some specific support opportunities available to you should you already own your own dairy or livestock business and are looking to diversify into agroecological production. Here are

some links to resources and further reading that you may find useful in this transition: [Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, Transitions to Agroecological Systems: Farmers' Experience, Sustainable Farming Incentive, Environmental Land Management Scheme, Agroecological business planning guide \(LWA\), Direct sales and short supply chains \(LWA\), Linking Environment and Farming, Nature Friendly Farming Network, DEFRA update on government actions to incentivise transitions](#), [Regenagri](#) offers farmers support in [transitioning to regenerative practices](#)



- You could consider entering your farm business into a farming award which will widen your customer reach and validate your practices: [British Farming Awards, BBC Food and Farming Awards, Farmers Weekly Awards, Sustainable Food and Farming Awards, NFU Community Farming Hero Awards, ORC Young Organic Farmer/ Grower of the Year Award](#)
- There is now [governmental support in England](#) if you wish to transfer your farm into organics
- [Farming Connect \(Wales\)](#) can help with access to/ securing land, ongoing business advice, progression, expansion and diversification support and mentorships/knowledge exchanges. They also have grants available to help you progress your learning once you have an established business. On top of this they help to facilitate some interesting match-making services for joint ventures which may be a route you are considering should you already run your own business. In particular they have a [Venture Handbook](#) which is a useful starting point for those considering a joint venture, much of which is relevant for those outside Wales too.
- Also see the 'Further Resources' page for other links to support and resources that you may find helpful when progressing your business

FURTHER RESOURCES / PLACES OF SUPPORT

- Organisations offering wider support are [LWA](#), [PFLA](#), [LION](#), [Ubele](#), [CSA Network](#), [Permaculture Association](#), [Soil Association](#), [Social Farms and Gardens](#), [Nature Friendly Farming](#) and the [Biodynamic Association](#)
- [New Entrants to Agroecological Farming: Example Business Start-up Costs and the Case for Public Support \(2021\)](#)
- [New Entrants to Agriculture and Land Based Work: Survey Results \(2020\)](#)
- [Supporting the Next Generation of Farmers \(2019\)](#)
- [Hand on the Land: New Entrants in Agriculture \(2017\)](#)
- [DEFRA Future Farming Blog \(England\)](#)
- [Ten years to Agroecology in Europe \(Soil Association\)](#)
- [An Agroecological UK 2050 \(FFCC\)](#)
- [Transitions to Agroecological Systems: Farmers' Experience](#)
- [Agroecology traineeship programme \(LWA\)](#)
- [The Attraction of Agroecology and the barriers faced by new entrants pursuing agroecological farming and land work \(LWA\)](#)
- [Agroecological business planning guide \(LWA\)](#)
- [Direct sales and short supply chains \(LWA\)](#)
- [Whole farm agroecology scheme \(LWA\)](#)
- [Improving small farm productivity \(LWA\)](#)
- [8 steps to get started with regen grassland management](#)
- Farmer's Weekly ['Know How'](#) guides to farming
- The [Land Skills Fair](#) is a great place to go and network with like minded agroecological farmers, growers, foresters and fibre producers
- A short course in [Agroecology](#)
- [Groundswellis](#) also a great place to go and network with like minded regenerative and agroecological farmers and growers
- Farming for a better climate: [Integrating Livestock Guide](#)
- [Agricology](#) has a lot of free resources for livestock and dairy farmers
- Here is a video on [how to build healthy soils and stop using fertilisers in livestock systems](#)
- The [Northern Real Farming Conference](#) offer [lots of free recorded sessions](#) on regenerative farming practice
- The [Farm Carbon Toolkit](#) is a useful resource
- Youth Employment UK have this useful resource in [beginning a farming career](#)
- The [Oxford Real Farming Conference](#) is a annual gathering of people working in the food sovereignty movement

FURTHER RESOURCES / PLACES OF SUPPORT

- The [Wales Real Food and Farming Conference](#) is another annual gathering based in Wales
- These [resources](#) from Agroecology are a great place to get practical, technical and theoretical information
- The Soil Association has lots of [technical information](#) available on their website for farmers and growers
- The [Jumping Fences report](#) by LION, the Ecological Land Cooperative and LWA is an amazing insight into understanding and addressing the barriers to access to land for agroecological farming for Black people and people of colour (BPOC) in Britain.
- Support for [Farmers and Growers in need of mental health support](#)



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