

Red Deer Farm Rare Breeds:

A Rural Enterprise Exmoor business case study



Red Deer Farm Rare Breeds are a traditional, family run smallholding in the heart of beautiful Exmoor, Simonsbath. They are newcomers to the moor having moved here early 2018. They began with their first sheep in the summer of 2018 and we have been slowly building their business ever since. Their business is entirely based on Exmoor. Wherever possible they strive to use only local suppliers for feed, fencing and other farm and family needs.

They are passionate about saving and promoting British rare breeds and have several successful breeding programmes currently running. On the farm you can find pigs, sheep, goats, geese and turkeys; either as breeding animals or destined for the table. Without exception all of their animals are all slowly reared outdoors and organically fed, offering a more authentic flavour.

They do have a few local customers however, much of their produce is currently sent around the UK. They would love nothing more than to encourage and engage with local customers providing produce right on your doorstep.

Red Deer Farm Rare Breeds are hoping to build further links with other exmoor based businesses throughout the summer months to increase their reach and continue to support local as much as possible.

Benefits and challenges of working on Exmoor

Benefits

Louise believes their business benefits from being based on Exmoor:

- As a family we have been welcomed into the wonderful Exmoor community and have never felt more settled. It is an incredible place to live and we are excited to further build our business and links with our local community.
- We believe our meat tastes better because it is all slow grown and reared exclusively outside; we have excellent forage on the farm and access to great local feed merchants.
- We have been fortunate to meet many local farmers and contractors who have offered endless practical advice; even our local abattoir is always available to give us help and advice.

Challenges

Some of the challenges they have faced running a business on Exmoor are things such as:

- We have found the weather to be a challenge, even in the summer we have days where we don't leave the clouds.
- The lack of infrastructure on the farm is a challenge and as a small family business we have had to 'make do and mend' rather a lot.

Aspirations and advice

Aspirations

“Our aspirations over the next 3-5 years are to grow our meat box business locally and nationally.

We plan to be a breeding ‘centre of excellence’ (for want of a better phrase) for rare breed sheep, pigs and poultry.

We would like to run smallholder courses and farm tours for families (by appointment rather than a drop-in).”

Advice

“One bit of advice for others doing business on Exmoor, get to know other local businesses, there is a wealth of knowledge and advice out there”.

