



# Fresh Start

LAND ENTERPRISE CENTRE

investing in the future

## CASE STUDY: THE DAIRY ACADEMY

**Name:** Chris Webb

**Age:** 35

Attended the Dairy Academy in Cheshire in the winter of 2012 - 2013

Chris comes from a non farming background but has always had the dream to farm. After gaining a BA and MA in Maths and a Post grad in Theoretical physics he set up his own web hosting companies. This has taught him a core of business skills along the way but he still wanted to farm and potentially invest longer term in a joint dairy venture if possible. For this he not only required technical skills but needed to learn how farm businesses operated and to gain support, experience and networking in the industry and this is where Fresh Start became the answer.



His determination and passion for the industry was evident from the outset on his application and greatly impressed the selection group. He was already gaining the practical skills by relief milking whilst running his web business but needed that additional help to take the next steps.

On his application Chris said "I am particularly interested in the Dairy Academy programme because it bridges the gap between the practical farming training /skills I have concentrated on building up so far and the broader picture of farming business where I still have little experience and feel a I need a lot of guidance. Before talking to Fresh Start I hadn't properly realised that such partnerships (joint ventures) were feasible or a likely option".

Chris grasped the Fresh Start experience with both hands and soon became the ' academy blogger' with the media partner – Farmers Guardian. For more go to

<http://freshstartacademy.wordpress.com/> but these are some of his comments:

"From the very first session, I was struck by how diverse a group the academy brings together, including agri students close to finishing their degrees, family farmers and herdsmen looking to take the next step, and people like me coming in from careers outside the industry.

As well as organising the evening events, it's clear that stakeholders like Fresh Start and the RABDF are also working hard behind the scenes to give us as much help as possible to get our feet on the ladder as new producers. I think this will be a life-changing opportunity for many of us on the course.”

The support of the group as a whole has been particularly helpful alongside learning about the business side of the dairy industry and being able to talk direct to industry professionals. Fresh Start aims to challenge conventional thinking, offer new ideas and give people the information and tools to choose the path that is right for them in business and not what the accepted norm is. This is complemented further by bringing in farmer case studies to the meetings that have done things differently and are not afraid of innovative thinking.

All dairy academy members are automatically enrolled on the Dairy Pro scheme by Fresh Start and all academy meetings collect CPD points. Where ever possible Fresh Start works with existing industry schemes to benefit their members. Dairy Co has since been working with Chris on this with other potential work in the future following his story.

See: [http://basis-reg.co.uk/media/documents/Dairy%20Pro%20case%20study%20Chris%20Webb\\_Aug%202013.pdf](http://basis-reg.co.uk/media/documents/Dairy%20Pro%20case%20study%20Chris%20Webb_Aug%202013.pdf)

And: <http://www.thisisdairyfarming.com/discover/dairy-farmers-careers/chris-webb/>