

# Hill Farm Apprentices Scheme

## Cumbria – United Kingdom

### Summary

The Farmer Network - a not-for-profit company set up by farmers, for farmers - was approached in 2010 by The Prince's Countryside Fund to ask what help might be needed to address the many issues facing hill farmers. The lack of young people working in the industry was one of the most important issues identified and the Hill Farm Apprentices Scheme has developed from the need to encourage and train young people to be the next generation of hill farmers in Cumbria

### Main Activities

- ▶ **8 apprentices** employed by the Farmer Network over an 18-month period.
- ▶ **Work placements** arranged on 4 hill farms to give experience of different hill farming systems.
- ▶ **A training programme** including a Level 2 Diploma in Livestock Production and additional training covering a range of hill farming skills
- ▶ Over the final 6 months the apprentices become self employed but are **mentored** by the Network to help them find work



### Key Success

- ▶ **Connection with the hill farming community:** The scheme was designed by the Farmer Network which is part of the hill farming community. The coordinator for the scheme and the Chairman of the Farmer Network are both hill farmers and were able to use their connections within the hill farming community to find work placements for the apprentices.
- ▶ **Flexible approach to training:** Noting that young people in hill farming were not keen on paperwork, the training was designed to be as practical as possible and including a range of key hill farming skills including sheep dog handling and walling.
- ▶ **Funding for the project** was a combination of a Prince's Countryside Fund Grant for the main costs of employing the apprentices and for the coordinator, with training paid for by the Rural Development Programme through the Cumbria Fells and Dales Leader Local Action Group.

### Conclusion

- ✓ There is a need to encourage, train and provide work experience for young farmers particularly in the uplands where profits are lower and the work physically demanding.
- ✓ This scheme has been made possible through a combination of private funding through the Prince's Countryside Fund and RDP funding through LEADER. The UK Government needs to take a countrywide approach to supporting young farmers and enabling these schemes to operate in other hill farming areas.
- ✓ Young farmers also need additional help to secure their future - particularly to overcome the issue of lack of capital for those without their own family farm



Contact:

William Rawling - The Farmer Network [wrawling@btconnect.com](mailto:wrawling@btconnect.com)

Martin Holliday - Apprentice & young farmer [mgholliday@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mgholliday@hotmail.co.uk)