

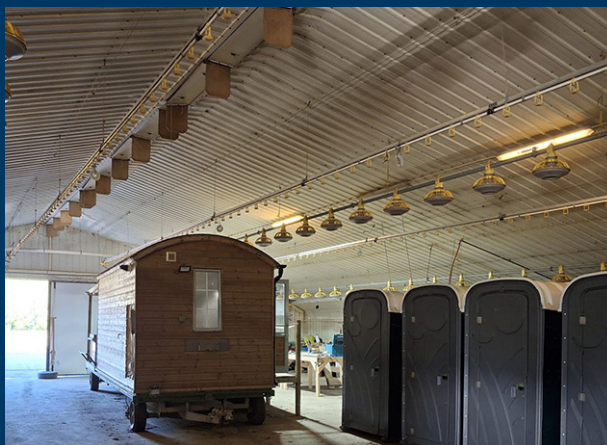


Last year whilst Pilgrims were at LAMMA a young lady (Esme) visited the stand looking for a diversity project she could take home to the family farm to enable her to work with the rest of the family.

Based in Derbyshire, the family had been in poultry for some years. Following an outbreak of Avian Flu four years previous the family had resisted going back into birds and the shed had been used for storage for their other diversification project of porta loos.

Pilgrims visited the shed and the family in the first week of February. Within a couple of days, we got back to the family with how we would lay out the building in readiness for pigs and a projected cashflow for the next 20 years, complete with our package of covering the mortgage up to the base rate of interest.

The following week the family agreed this was something they would like to do; a contract was drawn up for security whilst they talked to the banks to help finance the project.



Quality Equipment of Suffolk (QE) visited the site to measure out and finalise the quote for the building. Then timing for the work to be done was agreed.

In June, QE swung into action after the family had put concrete panels around the inside of the building a few weeks earlier. The conversion moved on at a quick pace with pigs being placed the first week of August.

Esme's learning curve has been steep but importantly not alone; Rebecca her fields person has been on call and visiting at least once a week during the batch. Offering both physical help and advice on how to run the building to achieve the best performance from the pigs and the building.

Esme tells us "It was a shock at first doing the work and being responsible for the pigs but now three weeks in it is much easier as I have routines in place and know I am not alone".

Andrew, Esme's father, stated "We love the pigs, they have so much more personality than chickens, the farmyard has come back to life and even Zoe (Esme's mother) is getting involved and enjoying it. My son just loves the muck coming out of the building, our land needs good organic matter and this fits the bill."

The whole cost of the project came to £120,000 including the muck pad and dirty water storage. Turnover is estimated annually at a minimum of £50,000. Out of this comes, labour, straw, water, electricity and general maintenance.

The muck produced, we are told by our arable farmers, is valued at around £7,000 worth of P&K per 1000 pigs annually plus the benefits of the organic loading in the soil.

