



## Apprentice ... You're hired!

### Farm facts

**Name:** Robert Lasseter

**Location:** Corton Farm, Weymouth

**Farm size and enterprise:** 160Ha mixed family farm. 160 sows farrow to finish to Freedom Food Standards

### Background

The farm owner, Robert, has always had contact with Kingston Maurward College, Dorset, and carried out a part time pig keeping course in the early days of his career at the college.

The farm regularly welcomes students from the college and it is through this contact that Robert decided to become part of the college's apprenticeship scheme.

### The system

Michael Crabb was on a Level 2 Diploma course in work-based learning at Kingston Maurward College. This meant that he worked on the farm four days a week and went to college for the other day.

There is a degree of paperwork for all parties involved with an apprentice scheme but the college's involvement was very good. As part of the course the apprentice undergoes some on-farm assessments which were not onerous and are a very positive experience.



*Barry Rabbitts, Head Stockman, has been providing on-farm coaching and development throughout Michael's apprenticeship*

*With the support of a check list that we developed, Michael could run the unit on his own for a day after 6 months.*  
*Barry Rabbitts, Head Stockman*

### Benefits

- Michael has become a full time employee at Corton Farm now that he has completed his apprenticeship
- Although the apprentice part is over, the learning process is ongoing and all new entrants are a 'work in progress'. He attends his local pig discussion group and is undertaking the BPEX Certificates of Competence
- Robert explains that labour can be very 'lumpy', particularly on smaller farms. Taking on an apprentice meant that the cost of labour increased at the same rate as the farm expansion.

### Key to success

- Finding the right person!
- Promoting work in the pig industry as a good career
- Good communication between the college and producer
- Careful placing of apprentices; if the wrong type of person is placed with the wrong farm the placement is unlikely to be a success.



*Michael Crabb, apprentice at Corton Farm*

**If you are interested in having an apprentice on your farm or in becoming an apprentice, contact your local college or Helen Brookes • tel: 07891 214 335 • email: helen.brookes@bpex.org.uk**

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