

Sue Wrennall, Kingrigg Farm

Another beneficiary of Forest Futures is Sue Wrennall of Kingrigg Livery Stables, just outside Carlisle. A Rural Enterprise Grant has helped her to establish a viable livery stables business, but it is an investment that has been matched with £18,000 from Forest Futures to help her develop 700 metres of woodland trail for her riders across the forested area of her farm. "Without the wood, this simply wouldn't work," she says. "Our farm is on a main road and so the horse side of the business was seriously limited; our customers need to be able to go hacking, an important activity for horse people, and you have to have an area free from traffic and from other distractions such as motorbikes or cyclists."

Sue and her husband John have 64 dairy cows in a closed herd and run a farm that stretches across a total of 50 hectares. They've been running the farm since 1983 but in 2002 they succeeded in buying it from the owner, Cumbria County Council. In Sue's diversified business plan, which she and her husband wrote post Foot and Mouth to develop their business beyond the farm, she set out to create a stable block with room for 20 horses on average; there are 23 stabled there at present. Her customers range from riders as young as six to older people in their 50s. The sunlight is coming through the canopy where the woodland has been thinned out to make way for the trail; new and younger trees are establishing themselves; it is now a well managed woodland that will, "look after itself" for another 25 or 30 years.

For Sue and John, the Kingrigg Livery Stables now represent half of their business turnover and, like so many of the businesses benefiting from Forest Futures funding, Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) represented a marker point for their decision to diversify.



