

Daniel and Gideon [Lacey](#) are brothers who farm in partnership at Lane End, Marlow, the family had farmed the farm as tenants for over 100 years before a few years ago the chance came to purchase the freehold.

These opportunities rarely occur and then only once, and Daniel and Gideon took on the extra borrowing partly as Daniel's two sons were at College and were keen to come home to the farm.

There are three strands to the business the Guernsey dairy herd at that time of about 80 milking cows and these are the responsibility of Gideon, an egg production and retail business and quite a large arable acreage which are the responsibility of Daniel.

The cows were being milked through an ancient 4 a-side herringbone prefab parlour and in winter each milking was taking over 3 hours twice a day, not that cow performance and yields were affected as the Beechgroves herd has been amongst the highest yielding in the UK for the last 10 years.

A decision was made to re-equip the farm and a brand new shed containing a 12 a-side herringbone, covered collecting yard and handling facilities was built, and room was created for milk processing facilities to be installed at a later date.

Another general purpose barn was built at the same time to house dry stock and young stock and that has allowed the milking herd to expand to 120 cows. The farm is on very free draining soil and normally the grass is in short supply from July onwards, because of this calving is concentrated from November through to February to allow for the shortage of forage at the end of the lactation.

The milk processing business has now been going for three years and is mainly for Liquid milk, Skimmed milk and Cream and at first was added to the existing egg selling rounds but is now expanding to Hotels and Village Stores in the High Wycombe area.

Customers also call at the farm and can help themselves to eggs and milk and use an “honesty” box to leave their money.

About a third of the total production is now processed and this operation is managed by Gideon's wife Dawn who gave up a job off the farm to develop the retail side, the original equipment is gradually being replaced and the next big step will be an auto labeller as the time spent applying labels by hand is becoming a real bottleneck in the process.

The Lacey family are to be congratulated on the vision and commitment they have shown in what has been a difficult time financially but the business is now growing to allow the fifth generation of the family to see a future on the farm.