

Image of Guardswell Farm
by Claire Fleck

PASTURE FOR LIFE

# Direct Selling Toolkit

## Understanding Your Product, Growing Your Orders and Scaling Up

Written by Andy Rumming for Pasture for Life. Funded by the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

# Introduction

**This series of bite sized guides aims to inspire you to sell your product direct to consumers and give you key information on how to do that. Its aim is to get you thinking about the products you produce, assets you have access to and the stories you can tell to build a profitable, fulfilling and enjoyable business. However remember that selling direct is all about communicating and talking to real people - your customer, so you have to love doing that not once but over and over again.**

# 1 The WHY?

Why do you want to sell direct? Is it about increasing profitability? Resilience to commodity price fluctuations? Community engagement? Ideological aims around nutrition or the environment? All of these or more? **What is your objective in doing this?**

Let's explore some of these in more detail:

### Profitability

How profitable is your existing farm enterprises? How confident are you on the answer you have just given? You need to know exactly where you are on your core enterprises BEFORE embarking on what is a new enterprise. Adding value to your farm produce must be viewed as an enterprise (or enterprises) in itself, with costs and income attributed to that additional post farming activity.

If you have a farm enterprise that is loss making or in poor health try and address the route causes before trying to recoup that loss by selling direct. External face to face help can be very useful in this situation.

The aim is that by direct selling you will add an additional profit line into the overall business – but profit has to be planned, do not assume it will 'just happen'. You should with the right story telling be more likely to be a price maker (you dictating the price) than a price taker (just accepting the market price) but this involves upskilling in marketing and markets – are you willing to do this? For the added value product you are looking to sell you might like to do a sensitivity analysis on it. How much is the expected profit margin and how does this change if the costs or input price changes? If the agricultural commodity price rises is your margin seriously squeezed?



Image of Nick Green with Horton Farm by The Green Butcher



Image of The Green Butcher by Nick Green

## Resilience

The art of being able to bounce back, to be able to weather the storms and make the most of the good times when they occur. By selling direct you can bypass the commodity agricultural markets and the fluctuations in them, but you are now operating in a different market. This may have fewer fluctuations, which is a good thing, but it will be dynamic to some extent – make sure you are attuned to this new market by looking at competitors' pricing and industry body market analysis regularly. Selling direct may also make you more resilient to animal disease issues such as geographical zoning (e.g. blue tongue) or herd restrictions (bTB) as you can normally sell direct to slaughter when not allowed to sell in an open market live, but this is very product specific.

Currently [Spring 2025] we are seeing record commodity beef prices. The liveweight prices and deadweight prices have been rising for over a year but climbed steeply in early 2025. Retail prices are rising. Good quality market intelligence suggests this is not just a blip, but at some point there will be a price stabilisation or a drop. Even if you do not sell into the commodity market these conditions will affect the value of your stock and opportunity cost of selling direct.

## Community Engagement

Selling to a community of people who value your product, spread the word and give you feedback can be very rewarding. When it goes really well these customer relationships can fire you up, give you personal fulfilment, drive and resilience and spread through your whole business to do the 'next right thing' and steer you on your path to achieve your farming objectives. Whether this community of customers is in a local geographical area, virtual community or mix, if you are doing your marketing right your farm and personal profile will rise – make sure you are ready for this. Are other people in your business and family ready for this?

At a day to day level you will be communicating with customers or potential customers. Do you enjoy this side of things? Can you keep your cool and convert an issue into an opportunity? Can you listen (or read carefully) and solve the customer's problem? Do you have the confidence and drive to just ring the customer and bypass the email or messages? Can you do this day after day, week after week?

By joining PFL you can be peer supported doing this through the forum, and if certified connect with the right sort of customers through the "where to buy" pages of the PFL website.

## Ideological Aims

Are you wanting to bring your 'whole self' and strong personal ideological values to selling your products direct? You don't have to do this but people do. Having clear values that underpin your business and life, and that by selling direct you can express and live these is a fine reason. With the right storytelling, high social, environmental, nutritional standards, and business values can attract loyal and engaged customers.

Do pursuing these ideological aims have additional costs? Ask yourself, do I need a series of stepping stones between where I am now and where I want to be to take customers with me or can I get there in one go? Have I got enough 'wriggle room' if I advertise that my product is always delivered to a particular stretching value?

For example you might aspire and want to sell produce from animals farmed in an antibiotic free, pasture fed, organic system, but if you are just starting out or currently farming in a very different system how do you get there practically whilst making money? Am I happy to be quizzed, questioned and challenged by the public about my values – how do I communicate my values?

## Other Drivers

Other drivers to sell direct may include building a brand, keeping control, having a very limited market for the raw agricultural product, to utilise under used physical resources or personal skills (i.e. I have an empty building facing a busy road, I trained in marketing/worked in website development) – **the list is long so write a list for yourself now:**

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**'Be clear about what you want from your direct selling enterprise – your objectives, why you are doing it and what you want to sell. Look after your customers well and treat everyone like a potential customer. Be open and transparent.'**

**– Denise Walton, Peelham Farm**



Image of Guardswell Farm by Claire Fleck

# 2 Considerations

As a minimum YOU are going to have to invest time into selling direct, but probably upskilling and capital outlay. Try and be realistic about what you currently have, and what might be able to be available going forward.

## Time

How do you currently use your time? How do you prioritize your time? How many hours a week of good quality time can you have available? What tools can I  can you use to make the most of your time?

An adding value business normally features some of the following roles to be performed;

- Managing relationships – suppliers, family members, people in the processing chain i.e. haulier, abattoir, butcher, vending machine service engineer
- Logistics - Collections and deliveries of product, supplier/materials deliveries
- Marketing – emails, social media, writing newsletters, sourcing photos, preparing banners, posters and fliers
- Customer service – dealing with orders/ issues by email, phone, messenger services, face to face

And don't forget regular and seasonal farming demands.

## Skills

What skills do you have? Stop and think. What do you feel you are really good at? What do you enjoy doing most? They might not be the same thing.

E.g. Hands on food processing, business administration, managing and organising others, marketing, selling?

All these can be learnt, updated or improved. Are there others who can do parts you can't or don't enjoy doing?

## Physical Resources

Do you need premises or equipment to run your direct selling enterprise? Can you sweat other peoples assets (ie use other people's capital assets like contract cutting and packing for meat and minimise your investment), what's the minimum investment in premises and equipment needed to test the market? Is there actually a legislative barrier to entry that means you have to build a cold room, milk processing area etc?

## Money

All of these above cost money. Either cash or finance for training/upskilling you or others or wages, and physical costs or in time. How much is your time worth? What could I get paid per hour if I wasn't learning marketing, packing mince, stood at a farmers market. Where is that money coming from?

Fill in the table below of the human and physical resources you have available or could have if you ask;

| Physical Resources | | Human Resources | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Buildings for storage | | Food processing | |
| Buildings for processing | | Business administration | |
| Vehicles for collection / delivery | | Sales and marketing | |
| Money for investment | | Strategic business planning | |
| Money for working capital | | Managing others | |
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## Dealbreakers

Even with the lowest level of investment these are the elements you cannot start a new direct selling operation without:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Meat** | |
| **Packing area** | Clean and dry space to pack/ sort meat |
| **Fridge** | Standing fridge to store orders which are not picked up same day |
| **Freezer** | Chest freezer to store meat not sold same day |
| **Scales** | Weigh cuts and write weights on labels |
| **Marketing** | Write up of products shared in emails/ flyers/ website |
| **Collection/ Delivery** | Host collection at the farm in all weathers OR organise local delivery/ courier |
| **Dairy** | |
| **Fridge** | Standing fridge to store milk or processed products |
| **Freezer** | Chest freezer to store milk or processed products |
| **Packaging** | Bottles for liquid milk, packaging for processed products |
| **Marketing** | Write up of products shared in emails/ flyers/ website |
| **Collection/ Delivery** | Sell at the farm gate (honesty shop, shop, vending machine) and/or local delivery/ milk round |
| **Wool/Textiles** | |
| **Packaging area** | Clean and dry space to pack/ sort products |
| **Storage** | Vermin and dust free (and temp controlled ) storage of products |
| **Packaging/labels** | Product labels, Packaging for post/ retail shop |
| **Marketing** | Write up of products shared in emails/ flyers/ website |

## 'It can be tough but you've just got to get on with it – be patient because it can take a while to get things rolling smoothly but it will get easier.'

## – Cathy Boyd, Whittington Lodge

**Go at your own pace and structure your setup in a way that fits in with your life. Starting your business doesn't have to be onerous. This is an investment in your lifestyle as well as your business, so minimise stress as much as possible.**

### Meat

At the very least you need to spend time finding your first customers, and pay to have your animal slaughtered, butchered and packaged. At the most you can invest in your own butchery, a refrigerated van and so on. Pre-selling meat before it is ready is a good way to support your cash flow.

### Dairy

If you bottle at home, at the least you need a pasteurizer (if you don't sell raw milk) and designated area to bottle milk. For processed products, at the least find a friend who has a processing unit and rent it from them, so you can learn about the equipment first, and invest later. Start small and learn about your market. If you bottle more milk than you can sell it is lost income and it would have been better going onto a tanker.

### Return on Investment

Financial planning such as creating a Profit and Loss and projected Cash Flow will help you understand your business. If you keep your setup costs low, your cash flow will be better, whereas if you need to invest a lot, your cash flow will be more tricky. If you have savings to invest you will make a profit more quickly, if you need to borrow money to invest it will take longer. Make sure that your business has the potential to be profitable, otherwise you will not be able to pay off that initial investment. **If you can take a lean approach and keep initial investment low, you will make your money back faster, and open the door for reinvesting and scaling up.**



Image of Old Hall Farm
by Rebecca Mayhew

# 3 Understanding Your Product

In order to convince someone else to buy your product you need to understand it yourself. You need to be an expert in your own product. Don't see this as a chore – in fact you probably have a lot of knowledge, but explore, ask questions delve into the detail and record this. You need to know exactly how your produce was farmed, and understand all the steps between the farm and the customer, and how these steps affect the product in terms of quality. For your product you also need to define quality.

To add further complexity, you need to understand the options that may or may not be available to you at each stage in the chain from farm to fork.

For example, what are the options for having my minced lamb back from the butchers? Vacuum packed, overwrapped, tray sealed are all used, but what is possible and how does it affect quality and price?

| Characteristics | What do you know about your product and possible options |
|---|---|
| Farming method - details on the system, certification, animals feed, health and welfare | |
| 'Harvest method' - Slaughter, milking frequency, notes on shearing | |
| Processing - Eg. Hanging, cutting and packaging, pasteurisation, homogenisation, bottling, scouring, carding, spinning, weaving | |
| Delivery or collection methods | |

Let's explore some variables which are all controllable and affect the end product:

## Meat

Fat cover, confirmation, hanging time, butchery options, packing types, storage options, cooking and nutritional properties, "Quality" could be (beyond method of farming): length of hanging, marbling, fat cover, shape of muscle, butchery presentation/consistency, taste, tenderness, Omega 3 ratio.

| | |
|---|---|
| Fat cover | Different markets may require different levels of fat and see it as either a positive or negative. Excessive fat is a negative and financially costly both in terms of cost to produce, waste and less salable product. Hone your selection for slaughter skills with hands on training. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Confirmation | The shape of the animal and potential meat yield. Poor confirmation has a big financial penalty and some cuts can look poor. Hone your selection for slaughter skills with hands on training. |
| Hanging time and temperature | Each day hanging costs money in terms of refrigeration costs and if the animal is too lean loss of weight by evaporation. Talk to your abattoir about this. |
| Choice of cuts | You need a range of cuts that people generally recognise and know how to cook, plus are the correct size for the customer. Look at your competitors. |
| Packing types | What is practical for your processor or you to use? What gives the best shelf life and freezer protection? How much labour or specialist equipment is needed for each method. |
| Taste | Related to fat levels in the meat, diet of animal, hanging time. |
| Tenderness | Related to hanging time, growth cycle of the animal, age of animal, genetics of animal, hanging time, quality and type of butchery, cooking method. |
| Nutritional content (inc Omega 3 ratio) | Diet of animal, cooking method |

## Milk

| | |
|---|---|
| Constituents (milk solids) | Fat and protein levels - have a regular analysis done. |
| Specific proteins | |
| Freshness | You need to know the shelf life of your product. |
| Pasteurization | Are you selling raw milk (unpasteurized) or not Research the pluses and minuses and practicalities of both yourself. |
| Homogenisation | Do your customers expect a layer of cream at the top? It's often a point of difference for direct milk vending. |
| Packaging type | Glass, plastic, already filled, self filled at a vending machine? |
| Taste | Related to fat levels, diet of animal. |
| Nutritional content (inc Omega 3 ratio) | Diet of animal, cooking method |

## Wool

| | |
|---|---|
| Staple length | |
| Softness/Fibre diameter | Next to the skin garments are generally made from soft small diameter wool. Depends on breed and age of animal, and area of fleece used. Knowledge of sheep genetics and grading fleeces essential to end markets. |
| Wool processing | How does the scouring, carding and spinning process affect your product and its performance. Are their options. |
| Choice of end product | What are you selling? Balls of knitting wool, garments, cloth? For each of these there are 100's of varieties and options so significant research is needed. |
| Packaging type | For the market and route to that market what's the best packaging that is practical for you to access. |

## Tasting and Testing Your Own Products

For meat you need to eat your way around the whole animal. You need to understand different cooking processes can produce very different outcomes and see how YOUR meat performs. You will be asked for cooking advice, so find good cooks (start with family, friends), give them your meat and collect feedback on what it was like and how they cooked it.

For milk think about how customers will and could use it and try these out yourself. Are there particular uses where your milk excels – coffee, ice cream? How variable is your milk across the year?

With wool get test batches processed - is it as soft as you hoped? What's the loss in terms of kg of wool sent away to product returned?

# 4 Approaches to direct selling

**If you've never tried direct selling before and would prefer to start with a lower cost and time investment we recommend you test your market with a simple setup.**

As you start to find out who your customers are and grow orders, you can reinvest your profits and take your set up to the next level. It helps to know your costs inside out.

Choose the setup which you feel most comfortable with, and when you have a sense of the cost and time investment you can assess how well the enterprise works for you.

## 'Keep a record of how much time you invest. It will help you to understand the true costs.'

## – Will Howard Davis

### 1. Testing the water: low cost/time investment

**The lean and simple approach. Test your market with a 'minimum viable product'. Consider what the maximum cost is that you can spend and write off; and try to make this back with your plan.**

- Set up a simple information website, share product descriptions and prices, and a simple order form customers can fill in and submit which pushes order details into a spreadsheet OR set up a simple e-commerce website, write descriptions of your products, price them, add photos and take payments in advance.
- Email a link to your website to your local friends, family and community, and ask them to forward on.
- Set up a social media channel you feel comfortable with.
- Ask your customers to come to the farm to pick up and pay by bacs or cash.
- If you don't sell everything, consider any local chefs/ restaurants/ other outlets you can sell to, and make sure you have enough freezer space in case you can't sell it.
- Collect feedback from your customers, get a feel for who they are, why they buy, what they want to see.

**Meat**

Minimum viable product is a box of meat. Boxes make it easier to sell the whole carcass, carrying less risk. Find an abattoir which can take care of the slaughter, butchery and packaging for you. Use a haulier to take your animals there - make sure it is within 2 hours so you can safely pick up the meat yourself in your car. If this goes well, look at the next level of cost/time investment.

### Dairy

Minimum viable product is bottled liquid milk OR one type of cheese OR one type of yoghurt OR one type of butter OR one flavour of ice cream. Trying one product to start with allows you to test the market, get customer feedback, and adapt based on what our customers want. Find a local processing plant you can rent to make your product. Ice cream is a good product to start with as it has a 12 month shelf life. If you are bottling, can you borrow or hire a pasteurizer before you invest in one? You can bottle milk with a jug, there is no need to have a machine.

## 2. Growing your orders: medium cost/time investment

When you have a better idea of your market, who wants to buy your produce and how they engage with you, think about scaling up your marketing and logistics. Take time to photograph your individual products and upgrade your website. Set yourself up with an email marketing software like Mailchimp so you can prepare nice emails to send to your potential customers. Scale up your social media activity - use it as a shop front. Offer card payments when customers come to pick up from the farm.

### Meat

Adaptations to processing - do you need to create your own labels or change your cutting list based on customer feedback? If you are looking to change up your butchery then research what other options you have and consider how the meat will be transported there and back to you.

### Dairy

What feedback have you had? Do you want to invest in branded milk bottles, or cheese labels, or a customer loyalty system? What other processed products can you make? Try working with a local cheese maker, or expand from ice cream into liquid milk.

## 3. Scaling up: high cost/time investment

When you have a good idea about your time and cost investment and the viability of your direct selling enterprise, consider investing in longer term infrastructure. Take time to build and update your website with juicy information. Add an area for people to sign up to your mailing list on the website and connect the form with your email marketing software so the signups automatically join your mailing list. Send regular email newsletters sharing about your products, recipes and special offers. Put more time into social media, really use it to tell your story. Partner up with other businesses to sell your products and theirs.

### Meat

If you would prefer to butcher at home now is the time to look at these costs; the equipment is expensive and there is time involved in getting your kitchen set up and certified. Think about whether you want to offer delivery and what refrigerated transport you might need. Invest in resources you need if you want to scale up your supply: more fridges, freezers, space, staff etc.

### Dairy

Do you want to invest in your own equipment, based on what you have learnt from hiring and borrowing? A pasteurizer is a good place to start, perhaps a vending machine.

# 5 Marketing

**You can have the best product in the world, but if no one knows about it, no one will buy it. However it's potentially worse than that — even if people know about your excellent product, they may well not buy it — the diversity of choice for consumers, competition for eyeballs/ attention and your story is at an all time high.**

If you want your adding value business to be successful, remain successful and grow, a significant amount of your time will be 'doing marketing.'

The good news is that with modern technology, distributing information about your values and your stories far and wide, or even local and targeted has never been cheaper or as easy.

## 1. Value proposition

**What problem does the thing you are selling solve for your customer? The customer may have a clear problem that needs solving or may not have realised they have the problem that needs solving – either way you are in the business of problem solving. This could be:**

- Finding a local supplier of lamb
- Finding beef with better flavour
- Finding milk where they know the details of the production cycle
- A combination of ecologically farm meat that they can order online and is delivered hassle free
- A 5.5kg rib on the bone joint for the 15th May

Look back at your "why" and your product's qualities – this should give you some of the answers to potential customers' problems – your value proposition.

## 2. Marketing resources needed

**Before you can shout from the rooftops you need a range of things at your fingertips. These include :**

a. **Photos** – as good as you can get and from your farm – not stock images unless used as a stopgap. Put together an album you can use in the future.

b. **Words** – stories about the farm, you, your products. Long form or short and snappy depending on the communication method. Write things up for future use, keep a list of things to communicate about.

c. **Pricing and volume information** – get organised!

d. **Dates and times** – plan ahead, some folks like lots of notice and have very organised lives.

e. **Product specific info** – this is where your knowledge on your products kicks in eg. 'cook rare - these cannot be cooked well done'

f. **Time** – the above all takes more time than you might think. Especially at the start and if you are doing it all yourself, however it has the potential to be the best paid job on the farm in terms of effort turning into money.

## 3. Branding

**Do I need 'a brand'? The answer is yes, but this isn't really about a logo.**

You do need a name to trade under, this can be the farm name, your name, something completely different, but what is more important is a fairly consistent and clear way of doing things behind this name. Again going back to your why, and your values. You may well like to get a logo designed and a colour palette, and these are useful for customers recognising you, but don't overthink or overspend on this element at the beginning, graphics and visuals can evolve over time.

## 4. Routes to customers

a. **Email** – a newsletter using a list like 'Mailchimp' can be very effective for certain customer groups. It's probably underrated compared to social media. However you first have to get those email addresses. To start with this can be stood with a clipboard and poster at an event collecting emails and handing out fliers. Make sure your website has a sign up form on, plus use social media to circulate your email sign up form.

b. **Word of mouth** - talking to people about your product works, especially if you can hand a flier over as well. Recruit your family and friends to spread the word.

c. **Flyers and poster** - Hard copy still has a place. Put up posters printed on correx board on your road facing field gates and outside the farm. Why not add a flier dispenser? Use both sides of fliers to get the info to your customer.

d. **Website** - An essential part of the offer. A self built template style one will get things off to a good start and most have lots of growing room and can add features over time. Pictures, info about the farm and the products are the minimum. Blogs, online ordering, farm walk booking etc can come later. Make sure Google finds your website as soon as possible, claim your profile on google and add the information requested.

e. **Phone** - Whilst collecting email addresses you can collect phone numbers. Some farmers have built very successful businesses based partly on phoning customers. This can be a useful route when you have excess product to sell.

f. **WhatsApp groups** - Broadcasting direct to your customers via a WhatApp group can work and some businesses are doing this at scale. You adjust the settings of the group for your purpose.

g. **Local events and networking** - Get out there, physically find your customers, offer to do talks. Have fliers and business cards in your pocket at all times.

h. **Farm events** - Having a farm walk with a cup of tea at the end is a way of cultivating solid relationships with potential customers. It only needs to be an hour and don't be over ambitious. Potentially manage numbers carefully. Require booking (that doesn't mean you have to charge) and make sure it's a quality experience This is a great opportunity to get photos and material that can be used for marketing resources. If you have product people will buy at the end if you make it easy.



Rotmell Farm, photo by Clem Sandison

i. **Partnerships and certification** - Working with a third party to get exposure or send customers your way can be effective. However with partnerships make sure the deal is fair for you. How much commission is a listing website taking? Is boosting a social media post really worth it? Are they really making it easier for you and your customer or are they a gatekeeper between you and a customer? Are you being lined up with other farmers in competition?

*Certification can be a great way to underpin your values and farming system, particularly to customers which you won't meet face to face. Look at the reach and reputation of the certification body. Pasture For Life has a great 'where to buy' page that attracts committed high spending customers who will ask a lot of questions about your farm and product.*

j. **Social media** - An important tool, but only one tool of many. Likes are not the same as customers. Which is the right platform for your product and you? Don't spread yourself too thinly. Use good pictures, tell stories, interact with others and monitor if it works from a finding customers point of view.

Note on holding personal data - If you are holding people's personal data, you must abide by GPDR rules. Also you may want to spread your risk and not have all your customer data in one place/ reliant on one platform.

# 6 A direct selling cycle

**Think of selling direct as a set of activities in a cycle. You may have these in a different order, you may 'start' the cycle at a different place. There will probably be smaller intermediate steps.**

**Thinking of your direct selling as a set of interlinked activities which are repeated will help you look at efficiency and which elements need investment of time and or money.**

A note on cycle length - for dairy it might be a daily cycle, for meat a weekly or monthly cycle or it could be seasonal once a year. Knowing what length your cycle is important for being organised and time efficient.

## 1. Marketing campaign

**Have a plan of where and when and which types of marketing are you going to do for the next cycle. Plan your campaigns.**

They could be seasonal, they could be based on what you need to sell more of, they could be focused on trying to get more of a certain type of customer. What is the frequency of each type of marketing? For example it might be that you email your list twice a month on a specific day, but post to social media every Friday and attend events quarterly - get organised.




## 2. Taking orders - The sales funnel

**You have your marketing resources, you have your marketing campaigns, you are pursuing a range of routes to customers, but you need them to fall into the 'sales funnel and actually buy'.**

The messaging and information must lead them to a place or places to actually make a transaction. That might be attending the farmers market stall, ordering online, sending you an email or message with an order. What is your call to action and where is it? Is it on the marketing resources or on the website?

"click here to order your steaks now"

"buy your lamb between 10-12 on the 14th April at Park Farm"

"email your order to hello@thefarm.co.uk today"

### Collating orders

If you are doing any kind of pre ordering this is very important. Be aware that customers communicate in different ways - how can you marshal and keep track of orders? A spreadsheet is excellent for this. Customers may will attempt to order in the following ways, how does this work for you? Do you need to be clearer on your messaging, set boundaries?

- Email
- Online order
- Online third party
- Chat function on website (did you even know this was active?)
- Phone message (can you decipher their name)
- WhatsApp
- Facebook messenger
- A paper note through the letterbox
- Via your mother whom they saw in town

**When are you taking payment and how?**

Pre-ordering is great for cashflow, and takes the pressure off face to face sales, but you can mix both.

In terms of taking payment your options are:

- cash
- card in person (including contactless by phone)
- bank transfer
- via a online store with a 3rd party eg paypal, stripe, etc
- emailed payment links with a third party
- cheque

Different options are appropriate for different situations - with all of them look at the cost of using them, even paying in cash to a bank will have a cost. Be sure to add the cost onto your product.

If selling face to face having the ability to accept contactless card payments definitely increases sales. However make sure you have good reception or wifi connectivity and make sure the software is updated prior to use.

## 3. Processing

**Whether you are doing this yourself or with a third party, you need to have a check list of what will happen by whom and break this activity down.**

For meat processing you will need a cutting list that has been agreed with your butchery and that relates to any pre orders. You need to know the weights of the animals and predict the yield you expect back. You will need to keep the required legislative records. For ideas on cutting options start with what your butcher can actually offer, and go from there.

## 4. Distribution

**Getting the product from you to the customer is key and there are a range of options;**

- Face to face collection
- Self service collection
- Vending machine
- Honesty stall
- Farmer market
- Local delivery
- 3rd party courier

Collection is normally the most cost effective route but limits the customers who can access you. Delivery can be convenient for the customer but can be expensive and may require specialist packaging to buy and store.

Do you have a suitable venue to host collections, can you marshal people into one slot every week or month? What's the best use of your time? With deliveries what are the practical options available to you? Can you even access the 3rd party services you would ideally like?

## 5. Monitoring

**How did the cycle go? What was the actual yield in terms of volume and money?**

What was the wastage - is anything left? Is my pricing right? How much time did each activity take me? Which parts did I enjoy and which were a chore? Do I need to order consumables, improve facilities for next time? Do I need to mould customers' choices and behaviours to make the cycle easier and or more profitable? What are the key actions I now need to carry out?

Work out a way of easily recording the above information. It can be a printed table on a clipboard, or an online note.  Include checkboxes for when actions are carried out.

# Appendix

Sources of help for business planning and analysis:

- Your accountant
- an online accountancy package like Xero https://www.xero.com/uk/

Commodity and retail prices: AHDB

Website DIY options (lots out there):

- Wix www.wix.com
- Squarespace www.squarespace.com
- Shopify www.shopify.com
- Woodpress www.wordpress.com

Mailing list options (lots out there):

- Mailchimp www.mailchimp.com
- Mailerlite www.mailerlite.com
- or as an add on provided within the above websites

Legislation around selling food: https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/getting-ready-to-start-your-food-business

Business model canvas: https://www.strategyzer.com/business-models-the-toolkit-to-design-a-disruptive-company

Data Protection: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/advice-for-small-organisations/whats-new/blogs/15-things-all-small-businesses-need-to-know-about-data-protection/

Certification and listing: Pasture for Life www.pastureforlife.org

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Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Chilterns National Landscape

Cotswolds National Landscape

North Wessex Downs National Landscape

PASTURE FOR LIFE

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