

Name: **Will Cain**  
 Location: **Port St Mary, Isle of Man**  
 Herd size: **80 cows**  
 Adding value: **Campsite diversification**



Will Cain: "This is a prime area for walkers and cyclists"

## Site is set for success

text Rachael Porter

A 'seasonal' diversification is set to add value to one Isle of Man-based dairy business. Will Cain, who farms in partnership with his parents Derek and Jane, runs an 80-cow herd at the southerly tip of the island, on coastal land. This spring he finished building a campsite. "This is a prime area for walkers and cyclists – and we're just 12 miles from the TT and Manx GP route," says Will, adding that there are no other campsites near Port St Mary or indeed on that side of the island. The island's population doubles during TT week, so they should attract plenty of customers. Work began on converting an existing shed, within a 0.75-hectare corner of land, into a kitchen/shower/toilet block. Derek and his brother David have built two shepherd huts

and the site also comprises six static caravans and space for pitching tents. "The first step, once we'd established that there would be demand for a campsite, was to apply for planning permission. That took a while as there were some objections to the silver-coloured shepherd huts, so we've had to paint them green," explains Will. "The local council was keen on our idea though – this area of the island was lacking in camping facilities." The family already has 'hospitality' experience. They've been letting a holiday cottage at the farm for the past 12 years. "Again, that was an old shed that we converted into living accommodation. Its success helped to spark the idea for the campsite." The site opened for the first time in early June. As of 2019, it will open from April to October. "That's when we expect

people to make bookings," explains Will, adding that he already has some for this summer, made before building work was complete. "That's a good sign, particularly as we haven't started to advertise the campsite yet. We'll be doing that through Facebook, a website, and the local tourist information centre."

He will take charge of promoting the business through social media, but Derek and Jane will run the campsite, enabling Will to focus on the dairy herd. The plan is to add more shepherd huts and caravans to the site during the next few years. But for now, the family is just eager to open the gates and get the business off the ground. "The building conversion was a considerable investment, but running the site should be fairly low cost – just cleaning and maintenance. We should see a return on our investment within five years."