

Name:	Charlotte Pearman
Location:	Belbroughton, Worcestershire
Herd size:	450 cows
Hobby/enterprise:	Cake decorator

Charlotte Pearman: "I can make a cow using fondant icing in five minutes"

Cake-based creations

text Rachael Porter

Charlotte Pearman is particularly good at scraping up, according to her family. But that's probably not the reason why you'll also find her scraping cake mixture and icing from bowls in her kitchen-cum-cake decorating unit, which is set up at the bottom of the garden at the family's Belbroughton-based unit.

Charlotte made her first cake – for her mum for Mother's Day – when she was just six years old. "And I've loved baking and cake decorating ever since," she says. After completing a three-year baking course at Birmingham Food College in 2015 she set up her cake-making enterprise and moved into her own purpose-built kitchen in February 2017. "It's a Portakabin with two ovens, a hob, a fridge and lots of baking equipment. And I've already had to expand it a little – things are really taking off," she says. Eventually she'd like to turn what started as a hobby into a full-time job. "I do have busy months when I'm flat out. But there are also quiet periods when I work on the family farm, with milking and other day-to-day tasks."

So far she's made 16 wedding cakes this year and she's lost count of the number of other celebratory cakes. "I do prefer making wedding cakes – they're more challenging. It's a huge responsibility making what is, for most couples, the centre piece of their big day."

By her own admission, cows are her speciality. "I've made so many cow-themed cakes that I can now make a three-dimensional cow with fondant icing in about five minutes!" The most memorable cake, so far, has been a Gruffalo-themed wedding cake. "And what made it really special for me was the look on people's faces when it was 'revealed' at the wedding," says Charlotte. "The family was expecting a 'boring' traditional cake. It was covered and the looks of surprise on the guests faces when it was unveiled will stay with me," she adds. "All the hard work was worth it for that moment."

And it's a moment she strives to recreate every time she makes a cake. "It's always good to get a reaction. I had a lady cry just the other week when she picked up her daughter's first birthday cake. She loved it. If I can make someone feel like that then I've done a good job."

Charlotte is hoping to do a good job with her next big challenge – a seven-tier themed wedding cake. "It's a castle design and it's going to take me at least 150 hours. A little daunting, but I'm looking forward to getting stuck into that." Little wonder that she needs a bigger kitchen!

