

Cotswolds LEADER Case Study – Vegetable Matters



Credit Lucy Blyth

In July 2016 a £48,849 Cotswolds LEADER grant was made to Vegetable Matters towards the construction of a new farm shop and café. The build started in autumn 2016 and the new business was opened in July 2017, employing three new members of staff.

The owners, Peter and Amanda Drinkwater, have a long farming heritage producing vegetables for sale regionally as wholesale. They supply a wide variety of businesses such as restaurants and hotels. The new farm shop is a natural extension to the increasing demand for fresh produce for consumers at retail level.

The building is constructed of high quality materials and is low rise. As a result, it is sympathetic and blends into the agricultural landscape. The bricks were reclaimed from a demolition site in the west midlands giving it an attractive and individual appearance. There is a 12 inch composite roof to keep cool in summer/warm in winter so scores well on environmental credentials and is in keeping with adjacent agricultural buildings. Internally, there are some nice features such as a Ferguson tractor wheel chandelier – a nod to the farming heritage. Outside, the farm shop has fantastic views from the terrace overlooking the valley where the vegetable are produced.

The quality of the build has been recognised by Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). On 4th October 2017 Vegetable Matters was one of the winners at the CPRE county awards scheme for its sustainable building design and community benefits. See link for more details: <http://www.cpreglos.org.uk/awards/awards-recipients-in-2014>

Within months of opening, the original job creation forecast had been exceeded owing to the popularity of the farm shop and café. As well as job creation, the business is working with other local producers, stimulating the rural economy. The wider community is benefiting from the daily supply of fresh vegetables from the farm and the café is acting as a hub for the local community.



Jo Burgon, Independent Chair of Cotswolds LAG: *“It has been most heartening to support this enterprise as one of our first LEADER projects. The passion, enthusiasm and vision of the Drinkwater’s, coupled with the response of their customers, is an inspiration in how this type of grant can realise a wide range of business and social development opportunities.”*

For more information on Vegetable Matters visit: www.vegetablematters.co.uk



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