



## **PRESS RELEASE**

March 2022

### **Students get on their bikes to boost farming skills**

A bit of mud and rain didn't deter land management students, who have all now qualified to drive quadbikes, thanks to training organised by The Ernest Cook Trust.

The ten students, who are studying for their level 1 land-based qualification at Kendal College, completed the quadbike course at Low Becks Farm, Mungrisdale, Cumbria. The farm is owned by The Ernest Cook Trust, a UK-wide educational charity, which creates outdoor learning experiences for children, young people and their families, on its own estates and with partner estates across the country.

As part of their studies, the students have been spending some of their time learning at Low Becks Farm. The LANTRA off-road vehicle training was an additional course run by the Trust, to complement their studies, and was funded thanks to a grant from the Lake District National Park Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme (FIPL), funded by DEFRA.

"They had a fantastic time, but most importantly they now have an additional skill to offer future employers," said Susie Grainger, The Ernest Cook Trust's Outdoor Learning Officer. "As well as learning how to drive quadbikes safely, they were given information about pre-start checks, maintenance, and health and safety."

But the complementary courses doesn't stop with the quadbikes. Thanks to the FIPL grant, The Ernest Cook Trust will be laying on tractor driving instruction, training in emergency outdoors first aid, and a vet-run course on lambing.

"We are also running two courses which directly relate to health," said Susie. "We will be doing a farm fitness course, stressing the importance of physical fitness for a career working on the land, and one on mental health awareness. Rural isolation is a massive problem for young people in this area. To the outside world, living and working in the countryside seems so picture perfect, but the reality of living out in the sticks with minimal transport and opportunities can be detrimental to anyone's mental health. It can affect anyone, but especially young males, who can find it very difficult to talk about their feelings."

There will also be a session on money management and better finances, kindly provided by the North West team at HSBC.

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As well as catering for the Kendal College students, some of the courses will be available to young people who recently went through The Ernest Cook Trust's Kickstart traineeship programme, and have gone on to land-based employment.

For more information about The Ernest Cook Trust, visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/>.

**Additional information about our Outdoor Futures programme:**  
<https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/learning-from-the-land/outdoor-futures/>

