

Case Study



Sarah Wilkins

MIAgSA



Sarah Wilkins, Farm Administrator

Sarah Wilkins has been a farm administrator for 25 years. In the past she has worked on many large estates using or changing to KEY Accounts software.

I am Sarah Wilkins, a farm secretary married with two children and we live on our Wiltshire smallholding where we keep pigs and sheep for our personal consumption along with chickens, dogs, cats etc.

I grew up in Surrey with no farming background except holidays staying on farms and a keen interest in the outdoor life. Whilst studying A levels, a careers adviser recommended becoming a farm secretary when I described my love of animals and statistics.

This took me to Hampshire College of Agriculture for a two year National Diploma for Farm Secretaries. I love being a farm secretary now as much as I did 25 years ago, as the job and its flexibility adapts so well with life. I am sad that it

is much harder now to get into this fantastic career because of the lack of college courses and a decline in the jobs with multiple farm secretaries on the same farm who could mentor you. However, there are many farm secretarial jobs advertised, and not enough farm secretaries. I know many farm secretaries who are more likely to apply for a job advertised using KEYPrime, so my advice to farmers and landowners is that KEYPrime is the perfect carrot to be dangled to catch yourself a rare farm secretary!

Throughout my career, KEY Accounts has proven itself in providing the tools to extract all the information from the programme into user friendly reports. I find KEYPrime wonderful to use with its drill down from reports to make changes wherever you are, thus ensuring consistent accurate accounts. Enterprise codes allow full reporting on enterprises regardless of the year end account dates. The budgets are user friendly and any report you would wish for is there.



Sarah Wilkins, MIAgSA

On leaving college, I had the opportunity to work on some amazing large farms/estates. Firstly Cottesbrooke Estate in Northamptonshire as one of four farm secretaries, followed by Roadnight Farms, Oxfordshire (the pioneer of outdoor pigs) as one of two farm secretaries. On the sale of this farm, I moved onto Blenheim Farm Partnership, Oxfordshire starting as one of two full time and two part time secretaries reducing only six years later to one full time and one part time secretary. I have no experience of Cloud Accounting but it seems to be “the talk of the town” and the way forward for the future with less office based administration staff so that Accountants, Agents and multiple users can all see and utilise the data remotely.

When my children came into the equation I changed direction and set up as self-employed. Self-employed normally means that you have many clients from weekly to monthly and even quarterly. I have always kept to one large three day a week client to keep alive the variety and challenges that I enjoy. Cirencester Park Farms, Glos. was my three days a week client for ten years and for the last five years it has been with an Agricultural Consultant.



I love working for clients who want the detail from their accounts to make management decisions and therefore it follows that my work is fulfilling and I have a feeling of being valued. Having a programme that has such good budgeting and great reports (my favourite is Progress Cashflow) saves having to re-enter information into another programme – just click and report and it is all at your fingertips.

