

Getting your foot on the farming ladder is tough. Opportunities to rent land do arise, however, so you need to make sure you're perfectly placed to take them when they do – and coming up with a winning tender is a key part of that. So how do you do that?

1. FORGE A RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL FIRMS OF AGENTS AND TELL THEM THAT YOU ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR A TENANCY

Not only will you become a known quantity to them but you will also be more likely not to be overlooked; you might be surprised how many opportunities for a new tenancy never make it to the open market and a bit of inside knowledge may save you expending valuable time and money when the likelihood of success may be limited.

2. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

If there is a viewing make sure you attend, and while there, if not having done so previously, introduce yourself to those overseeing the tender. Also, take the time to understand the aims of your prospective landlord. If, for example, shooting is a key facet of the estate will your proposals work alongside it?

7 TIPS FOR YOUNG FARMERS WHEN TENDERING FOR A TENANCY

3. CONSIDER YOUR OWN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

While it is clearly a good idea to construct a proposal that you are likely to do well, it is never a bad one to consider any potential shortcomings, not least so that you can prepare for any questions should you be shortlisted.

4. PUT YOURSELF IN THE LANDLORD'S SHOES

They will want to know that you will be a good steward of the land. Don't just tell them what you plan to do in order to keep the land in good heart, where possible cite examples where you are doing this already.

5. DON'T TRY AND MATCH YOUR TENDER TO THOSE OF OTHER APPLICANTS

Work out what you think is affordable for your enterprise and stick to that. Attempting to win at all costs will only lead to problems down the line.

6. MAKE SURE THAT THE NUMBERS ADD UP

Produce costings for all the enterprises involved and cash flows to at least the first break date. Make sure you know how any foreseeable price changes of both inputs and outputs will affect the profitability of the proposals.

7. PRESENTATION IS KEY

However good your proposal may be in reality, a poorly presented tender will be marked down, even if subconsciously, by those assessing it. Enclose a covering letter and ensure the bid and associated documents are not riddled with grammar and spelling mistakes. A handwritten bid on one side of A4 is unlikely to impress!

Finally, although the recent news from Michael Gove in the guise of the Agriculture Bill, will necessarily create a great deal of uncertainty when it comes to tendering for a tenancy there may be a silver lining with the news that (Defra jargon alert) 'delinking' may free up more land for new tenancies by removing the requirement to actually farm land from current claimants. The hope being that those tenants approaching retirement will see it as a golden opportunity to do exactly that.

74



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