

ACCOUNTANTS HOW WE CAN HELP YOU AND YOUR FARMING CLIENTS

A difference in approach

Brown&Co are unique in having both one of the largest agricultural business consultancy departments in the country, together with the largest land agency practice operating in East Anglia, Yorkshire & Humber and the Midlands. We are a very practical, down to earth firm who have always taken real pride in our clients' success and our team's professionalism. Please do come and meet with us to find out how we can help your business as well as your clients.



Proactive & practical advice for professional services from your local experts at Brown&Co.

BROWN & CO

Residential. Commercial. Agricultural.
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Innovation in farming

Our business consultants are at the forefront of farming both in the UK and internationally. We are now working with some of the most innovative and dynamic farming businesses in both Europe and the Americas, learning the lessons of what is working and what does not. If you are working with forward thinking and dynamic farmers we can help them with advice around innovation, precision farming, new technologies and strategies to cope with market forces. This may simply be an open meeting to explore opportunities but we believe your forward thinking clients will value a discussion.

Acquire and manage land for non-farming clients

Over recent months and years we have been acquiring land for non-farming clients who are interested in diversifying their asset portfolio as well as taking advantage of the current Inheritance Tax advantages of land as an asset class. Given the price increases over recent years the returns are now lower, but it still holds attractions to high net worth individuals. We have both land agency and agricultural business consultancy arms, so we can report on prospective profitability as well as a detailed appraisal of the current farming operation. If the purchase does proceed we can organise and manage the farming operation for the owner, maximising his yield whilst enhancing the asset value.

Project and major investment appraisal

Farmers' business plans and future projections can look good, however, they may well be based on false assumptions and optimistic price levels and income streams. Brown&Co can 'run a ruler' over these projects to see which are realistic and which are higher risk. This is of course in the farmer's interest to prevent future problems. Projects might vary from a new milking parlour to a new irrigation scheme to enable the growing of vegetables or new processing and packing facilities.

Releasing value for clients enabling diversification

We are increasingly working with our client base to release value from their assets. This may simply be selling land for gardens through to major development opportunities. A knowledge of local plans, planners and influencers is vital, whether it is converting redundant farm buildings or, working with highways to enable land to come to market. We also have our own in-house architects who understand what might or might not comply with planning restrictions. There are excellent opportunities in the current planning climate for many landowners, many of whom then go on to diversify their businesses in different areas from holiday lets to renewable energy.

Benchmarking the farm's true performance

We all know that annual accounts and cash flow forecasts can tell many stories! We have probably the largest and most professional team of agricultural business consultants in the country and so we have unrivalled knowledge of different farming systems and more importantly comparative results across similar soils and rotations, which can in turn then be compared to your own firm's benchmarks. We can work with your customer to identify how the farm is performing versus both of our benchmarks for comparable sizes and systems and more importantly advise them on how to improve profitability and identify potential weak areas.

Generational change

Farming is a personal and family business unlike almost any other. Managing generational change is often difficult and emotional, requiring the skills of both an accountant and a farming advisor to achieve an outcome, which is effective and efficient, whilst being acceptable to all parties.

Coping with struggling businesses

All too often, it is the loss making farming business that does not take advice and keeps making the same mistakes, only exacerbating the problems. Recent increases in land prices have meant that the security level is higher for landowning farmers, however this has often only allowed problems to get larger, as they have not made the changes necessary to restore profitability. Tenants have not even had that luxury. If you have clients who are not heeding your advice, or who have intractable problems, we can go and conduct a full appraisal and then give an independent authoritative opinion as to the routes open to them for the future. This in turn can reduce the level of bad debts and help farms out of the struggling category.

Structuring effective, long lasting contract farming and share farming agreements

We understand that the best agreements benefit both parties and there needs to be clarity and mutual understanding on both sides. As a firm we have probably constructed more share farming and contracting agreements than any other business in the UK. We can find appropriate partners; we can recommend the best way forward and can resolve differences if and when they occur. Our benchmarking and experience means we understand what is realistic and how best to share any rewards for mutual benefit.

BPS and Stewardship Schemes

You will be only too well aware of the increasing importance of grants and farm subsidies to farm profitability given volatile commodity prices. Many of our farming clients use us to undertake their BPS and Stewardship applications because they know it will be professionally undertaken and this takes out any risk from what is an increasingly vital source of income to the farm. Our costs are small compared to the potential loss.

Compliance

Our team can ensure that your clients are staying compliant with the law in the operation of their farms and estates, whether it is in terms of standards of health and safety, environmental legislation or simply deposit schemes for tenants. The law is increasingly complex in terms of letting houses, industrial units or grazing pasture and most landowners and farmers need practical common sense guidance on what they can and cannot do.

Accessing grants and public funding for projects

Brown&Co have a very successful track record of accessing grant funding for new development work ranging from reservoirs to renewable energy or further processing plants, which may enable prospective projects to go ahead in the first place. We can undertake a project evaluation and complete all the paperwork, ensuring that all the information is relevant and up to date.

AMC Agents

Brown&Co are AMC agents for East Anglia, Yorkshire & Humber and the Midlands. We can discuss a finance proposal with your client in confidence and provide an early indication as to whether funding would be available and the likely rates available to them. AMC specialist funding is often competitive compared with the banks and available for up to 30 years. This review would be at no cost to your client as our fees are covered by the valuation fee we receive from AMC.

Managing property and farms in insolvency

We offer a full range of rural practice services and our considerable strength in depth means we can manage everything from an industrial park to an in-hand farm. Insolvency practitioners often call on our services to provide an efficient, cost effective service for the continuity of assets in insolvency prior to sale.

Selling land and assets

Selling is often emotionally charged and has considerable consequences, not least of course the taxation. All sales are important to us, not just the 'big estate' but also the small outlying field and we treat the two with the same seriousness and professionalism. Good sales are all about detail. Land is often sold to neighbouring farmers and due to our local knowledge we are best placed to maximise interest in the property and achieve the best value.

Doing the paperwork

Many farmers do not enjoy doing the paperwork and you may well be given cardboard boxes of invoices and receipts at the end of the financial year. In an increasingly complex and litigious world this is now no longer an effective way to farm. Brown&Co can supply a complete farm office enabling the farmer to get on with the farming but to leave the paperwork to us; in turn meaning that you can provide proactive accountancy advice in good time rather than having to react often too late to difficult tax issues. The farmer has management advice to hand whenever he needs it and can make better, more informed decisions.

Valuations

As you would expect we undertake red book valuations, across houses and commercial property, as well as land and an agricultural portfolio. Brown&Co have qualified Valuers spread across the Midlands, Yorkshire & Humber and East Anglia ensuring that valuations can be done in a timely and accurate manner taking into account realistic local conditions as opposed to national norms. We also act for farmers and calculate and produce stocktaking valuations for year-end accounting purposes. Please do call us as we are always ready to quote for this work.

Let us help your team

All of our offices are more than ready to help individuals in your accountancy teams find out more about agriculture and the complexities of modern farming. We can provide detailed information on areas such as the Basic Payment Scheme, environmental schemes or planning and development and we can organise farm walks and tours for your staff. Property and agriculture aren't always straight forward. We are happy to advise your team where necessary, so we can both work closely together to improve client profitability and ensure the protection of their assets.

BROWN&CO—CREATING PROFITABLE FUTURES FOR OUR CLIENTS

Find your local expert team at brown-co.com



Improving profitability
Enhancing assets
Realising value
Doing the paperwork

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