



## **Case Study: MTS Agricultural Services Limited**

Mick Kirk and his two business partners, Tim Summerfield and Mark Armstrong, set up MTS Agricultural Services at the end of 2004. The company installs milking parlours, dairy equipment and bulk milk tanks and, between them, the original three partners had almost 40 years of experience in this sector when they set up the business. Since then the work has evolved to cover other aspects of electrical installation, domestic and commercial.

"Our dairy work is a specialist field and we gather new jobs by reputation as much as anything else. We're busy fitting a couple of new milking parlours at present and have recently installed a 28 000 litre bulk tank, the size of a road tanker!"  
Mick Kirk

### **Longtown Market Town Initiative involvement**

The team at MTS Agricultural Services was first referred to Longtown MTI by Business Link and the connection has been valuable in a variety of ways since start-up of the business.

"We have had grant funding towards the costs of vehicles, electrical testing equipment and our IT system but the advice from Bev and Catherine on other aspects has been equally valuable to us – things like how to deal with the banking and managing our cash flow."  
Tim Summerfield

### **Achievements**

The three partners now employ four people on the electrical engineering side plus a part time administrator and an additional contractor – more than eight jobs in all. One of the engineers was employed initially two years ago as a trainee electrician and, with an investment in training and development, he is now working more and more independently on installation projects.

"We envisaged five people in all when we first set out our business plan but we are already up to eight and it still doesn't seem enough to cope with demand. The challenge now is to retain these good people that we have on the team."  
Mark Armstrong

### **Challenges**

The dairy industry in Cumbria has gone through tough times in the past few years and MTS has had to cope with this challenging business environment.

"At the start of 2008, the industry seems much more buoyant than it has been, even though the higher milk prices have come at the same time as increased feed and fuel costs for our customers. We have work planned through for the next six months and the challenge is maintaining our service levels as we continue to grow."  
Mick Kirk

## Future plans

MTS Agricultural Services would like to continue to grow, extending its reach in the area around Longtown and providing the quality of installation and service that has earned them such a strong reputation so far.

**“To grow further, we need to look at taking on someone with sales and marketing expertise and, even with current demand, we may need to take on another fitter. Finding the right person to join a team is a challenge but we are keen to grow.”**

Mick Kirk

If you are looking for expertise in electrical installation, particularly in a farming context - whether you need to upgrade your parlour, replace existing electrical equipment or increase dairy storage - contact MTS Agricultural Services.

**Nature of business:** Electrical installation, domestic and commercial as well as the dairy work that is MTS’s traditional core business.

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This project is being part financed  
by the European Community  
European Regional Development Fund