

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

FUTURE FARM

SHROPSHIRE

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Upcoming industry events and local news

Details of some of the upcoming industry events happening in February 2025 and the latest local news

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Details of the HAU farm sheep data from year 2023-24 that has been verified by AHDB

An insight into the performance of the farm animals

A visual representation of the performance of our animals and how our farm compares

Industry news

The top news stories in December 2024/January 2025, which are relevant to Future Farm

Did you know...

Our monthly section containing general farming facts.

Thank you and Feedback

A brief thank you to our readers and details on where you can give feedback

Don't forget to check out our website for more information on the farm at <https://futurefarm.zone/>

Industry events

Upcoming events:

Ag Careers 2025 – 4th February 2025 @ *Lincolnshire Showground, Lincoln*

Dairy Tech – 5th February 2025 @ *Stoneleigh Park, Coventry*

Lincolnshire Farming Conference 2025 – 13th February 2025 @ *Lincolnshire Showground, Lincoln*

Local news

We are pleased to announce that individual cuts of meat (beef, lamb and pork) produced on our Future Farm are now available to purchase from the Feed store in the Faccenda building. We have a range of cuts including joints, steaks and mince. All items are frozen and individually priced.

We will be restocking the freezer regularly but if there is something you are after specifically, please get in touch!



On the 20th of January 2025, the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) H5N1 was confirmed in a flock at Griffiths Family Farms – part of Oaklands Farm Eggs, near Wem, North Shropshire. In response, over one million hens are set to be humanely culled. A national increase in cases of bird flu have resulted in the implementation of additional measures in an attempt to control the spread. As such, Shropshire is now under an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone (AIPZ), which means mandatory housing for all kept birds.

Future Farm currently have no commercial or research poultry. However, we are still asking anyone coming to our poultry unit to follow biosecurity procedures and we are looking at any additional actions we may need to take should we introduce birds to site in the coming weeks and months. Please do contact a member of the Farm if you have any concerns.

HAU farm Sheep data:

The HAU farm sheep data from year 23-24 has been verified by AHDB, unfortunately no benchmark data from AHDB is available as there are not enough matches in the database. Once the AHDB benchmark is available the data will be re-released in the newsletter.

Key performance Indicators:

2023-24	Breeding flock
Replacement rate (%)	28.44
Lambs reared per 100 ewes put to the ram (%)	154.07
Lamb losses from scanning to reared (%)	16.87
Avg. weight at weaning (kg)	33

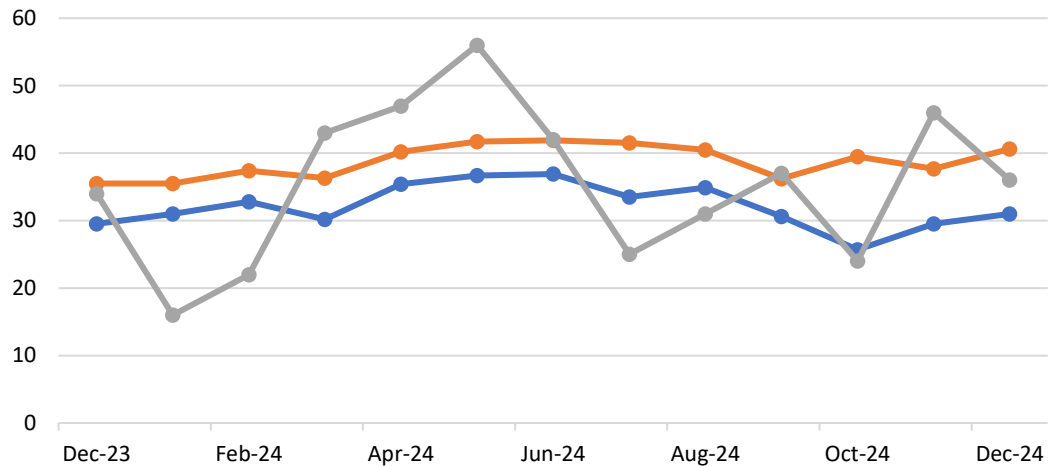
Technical performance:

2023-24	Breeding flock
Scanning percentage (%)	185.33
Lambs born alive per 100 ewes put to the ram (%)	170.07
Empty ewes (%)	2.22
Total liveweight of lambs reared per ewe put to ram (kg/hd)	52.73
Liveweight per reared lamb (kg/hd)	34.22

Future Farm Animal Performance in December 2024:

The Main Dairy milk yield and KPI's in comparison to all NMR recorded herds of a similar herd size (Please note. The data in the graph and screenshot of the KPI table are from Herd Companion)

Herd Production Summary - Main Dairy



	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24
● Avg Yield	29.5	31	32.8	30.2	35.4	36.7	36.9	33.5	34.9	30.6	25.7	29.5	31
● Avg Milking Yield	35.5	35.5	37.4	36.3	40.2	41.7	41.9	41.5	40.5	36.2	39.5	37.7	40.6
● SCC > 200	34	16	22	43	47	56	42	25	31	37	24	46	36

Benchmark	New	Export
NMR14: Holstein herds > 300 cows	Benchmarks	Export

KPIs	'Worst' <-----> 'Best'	Worst	You	Best	Mean
Milk/Cow/Year of life	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	4,094	8,067	8,877	6,023
Milk/Cow/Year	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	6,241	12,217	13,168	9,859
Lactation Yield	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	6,097	11,979	12,995	9,690
305 Day yield	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	6,221	10,710	11,713	8,805
Protein/Cow/Year	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	211	384	430	334
Fat/Cow/Year	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	273	457	684	421
Ave. Protein %	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	3.12	3.14	3.85	3.40
Ave. Fat %	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	3.65	3.74	5.61	4.28
Mean Parity	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	1.99	2.74	3.53	2.74
Calv. Interval<385 %	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	29.17	42.39	77.78	57.07
Ave. Lactation length	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	400	329	258	311
Ave. SCC	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	366	174	69	165
% Cows in Parity 1	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	45.51	27.37	12.50	29.74
Age 1st Calving	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	961	718	669	781
Ave. Calving interval	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	461	407	363	392
Ave. Dry days	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	77	55	31	55
Culling + Death %	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	52	28	18	31
Ave. No. Cows	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	269	399	1,229	492

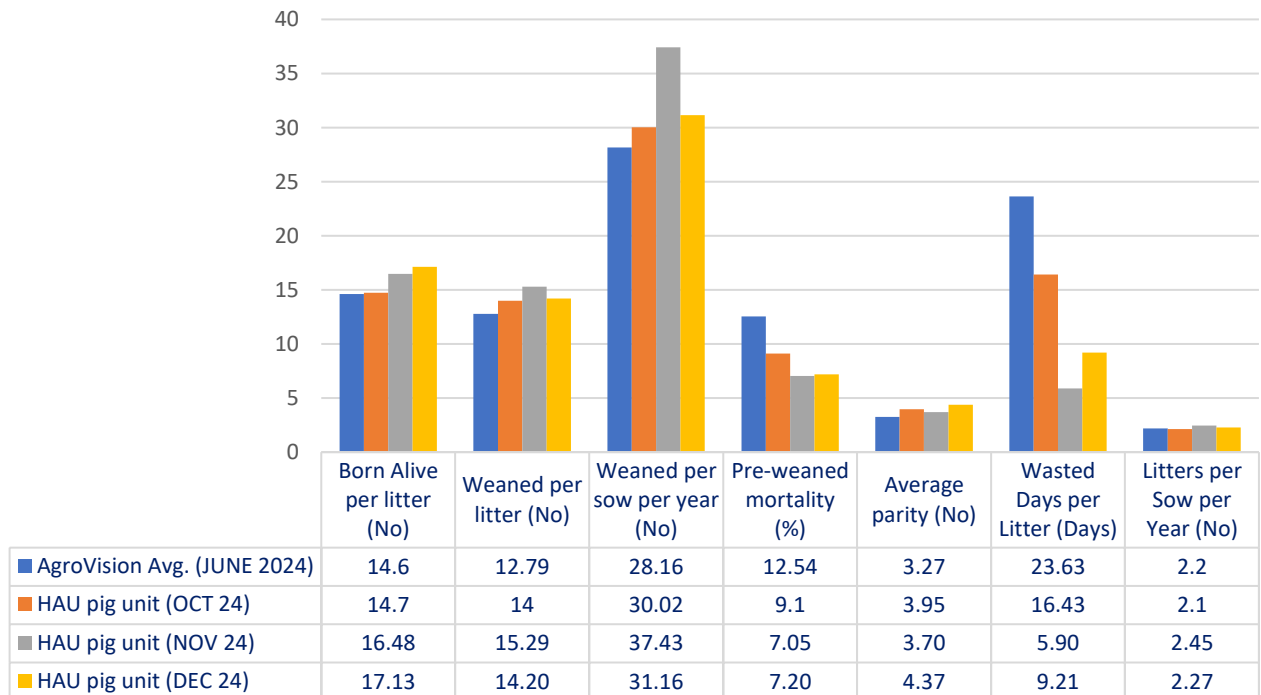
The Main dairy milk quality components in comparison to the Benchmark Muller average.

December 2024

	Main Dairy	Muller Average
Avg Bfat (%)	3.88	4.36
Avg Protein (%)	3.10	3.38
Avg SCC ('000/ml)	159	140
Avg BAC ('000/ml)	21	22.18
Therms (cfu/ml)	150	416.7
FPD (m*C)	524	

The Pig unit production performance in comparison to the AgroVision Benchmark average (Please note. The AgroVision Benchmark figures are produced on a quarterly basis, for this performance comparison the June 2024 report has been used).

Pig Unit Performance vs AgroVision Benchmark



Industry news

The government has taken steps towards banning neonicotinoid pesticides completely. These include investigating legislative options that would legally prevent the future use of three specific neonicotinoids – clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam. The decision, announced on Saturday 21st of December, follows years of debate over the chemicals' impact on vital pollinators, such as bees and butterflies.

This move is part of a broader commitment to reversing wildlife decline, as neonicotinoids have been linked to cognitive problems in bees and persistent soil contamination.

The RSPB chief executive has praised the legislative push to prevent their use, however, farming groups including the NFU will likely view the ban as another burden on an already struggling sector, as farmers argue they lack sufficient alternatives to protect crops effectively.

The government has promised to support sustainable farming solutions, citing research into virus-resistant sugar beet varieties and alternative pesticides. Yet concerns remain over the speed and scale of such innovations. Farmers warn that without viable alternatives, the ban could devastate crop yields and livelihoods.

The National Pig Association (NPA) is calling for proper funding and enhanced inspections at the Port of Dover, following further discoveries of illegal meat entering the country. During the weekend of the 6th and 7th of December, more than 6t of illegal meat was seized by Dover Port Health Authority (DPHA) during a 14-hour period.

The haul included three consignments of pork from Romania – a country badly affected by African swine fever – smuggled in without paperwork or any temperature controls. The latest findings take the amount of meat intercepted by DPHA to 147t since the introduction of new ASF controls limiting personal imports to 2kg per person in September 2022. But given the budgetary pressures on port inspectors after a 70% funding cut by Defra, staff are only providing 20% operational coverage at the Port of Dover.

ASF poses a huge threat to our domestic pig sector and the quantity of illegal product intercepted at the border is a massive concern. The NPA are also concerned that illegal meat will find its way along commercial routes, highlighting the need to fund the inspection units at the border to keep our domestic pig sector safe.

The AHDB are working alongside Quality Meat Scotland (QMS) to quantify the environmental impact of GB farms and has selected 170 farm businesses to be involved in the pilot phase. AHDB has committed to an initial investment of £2.5m, with a further £375,000 of funded by QMS and plans to create a nationwide standardised data set.

Light Detection and Ranging (Lidar) scanning began in December 2024 using drones and planes to measure carbon stocks and identify water run-off areas using specialist firm Bluesky. Lidar scanning provides detailed and accurate terrain data by measuring the height of both the terrain and any above-ground features such as hedges and trees. This is an important first step in beginning to understand the environmental credentials of the farms taking part.

Full carbon audits and soil testing are also planned to get under way on farms in this year.

Harper Adams University applied to be a baselining farm in the pilot phase, as for the past couple of years the farm has conducted carbon audits, however, the project will help quantify and identify our carbon stocks and help towards the farm journey of achieving net-zero emissions.

Foot and Mouth was confirmed in a herd of water buffalo on the outskirts of Berlin on the 10th of January 2025. In response to this, Great Britain has placed a ban on importing live cattle, pigs and sheep (including their products) from Germany.

This is Germany's first outbreak of foot and mouth in 36 years and as a precaution, 55 goats, sheep and cattle were slaughtered on a farm who purchased hay from the water buffalo farm.

There are currently no cases in the UK, but due to the significant economic loss foot and mouth can cause, The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have warned farmers to remain vigilant for any clinical signs of the disease in their animals:

- In cattle - the key signs are sores and blisters on the feet, mouth and tongue with potentially a fever, lameness and a reluctance to feed.
- In sheep and pigs – the key signs are lameness with potential blistering.

Future Farm operates as a closed herd for our dairy, beef and pig enterprise, and we only purchase rams from the UK for our sheep enterprise. The staff at Future Farm remain vigilant for any clinical signs of disease and will follow the appropriate procedure if a suspected case occurs.

Did you know...

- Avian influenza is found in bird populations worldwide and some of these strains have spread from wild birds to domestic poultry ([CDC 2024](#)).
 - African Swine Fever (ASF) is a highly contagious viral disease of pigs. In its acute form the disease generally results in high mortality ([DAERA 2023](#)).
 - Foot and mouth disease (FMD) is a severe, highly contagious viral disease of livestock that has a significant economic impact. The disease affects cattle, swine, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed ruminants. Intensively reared animals are more susceptible to the disease than traditional breeds ([WOAH 2025](#)).
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Thank you for reading the Future Farm monthly update newsletter, if you have any feedback or would like to see something in upcoming updates, please send your request to futurefarmenquiries@harper-adams.ac.uk.

We apologise for anyone who made a suggestion for the newsletter and the content you requested was not included. We are doing our best to gather this information for future issues. In the meantime, if you or someone else would like to know more about the farm and our practices, check out our newly updated website <https://futurefarm.zone/>.