

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

FUTURE FARM

SHROPSHIRE

IN THIS ISSUE

Upcoming industry events and local news

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

An insight into the performance of the farm animals

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

Arable yields from harvest 2024

A comparison of Future Farm arable yields from harvest 2024 against England and West Midland average

Industry news

The top news stories in January/February 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:

Farm Expo 2025 – 5th March 2025 @ Kent Showground

Low Carbon Agriculture Show 2025 – 5th & 6th March 2025 @ NAEC Stoneleigh

UK Dairy Expo – 14th & 15th March 2025 @ Borderway, Carlisle

South West AgriTech Showcase 2025 – 20th March 2025 @ Westpoint Arena, Exeter

Local news

The Future Farm dairy team received some big news at Dairy Tech 2025, they became the first university dairy farm to win the prestigious NMR/RABDF Gold Cup.

Ruminant sector manager Kate Robinson and the dairy team were there at the event to celebrate the win and collect the award. They all were surprised and shocked when the award was announced but the feeling soon turned into pure elation.



Photo: Kate Robinson, LinkedIn. Source: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kate-robinson-9aa73230a_harperadamsuniversity-rabdf-goldcup-activity-7293040575950315520-e7hr?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAB_I5wsBkLCMllpEuVXEQjLuzix1RdDZ5s

We would like to extend our congratulations to the Future Farm dairy team and all those who work closely with the team, as your hard work and dedication to the farm is being recognised.

Local news cont.

Spring has arrived at Future Farm as the first group of lambs have made their entrance into the world!

Lambing is a popular event on the Future Farm; however, frequent visitors can be stressful for our ewes and lambs. As such we are asking that anyone wanting to see lambing attends the remaining session on the 19th of March at 1pm.

This session will be run by Farm staff and will talk you through our flock and the lambing process and may even involve some live lambing action!



There are limited spaces so please book early using this link:

<https://outlook.office365.com/book/LambandSheepwalkandtalk@live.harper.ac.uk>
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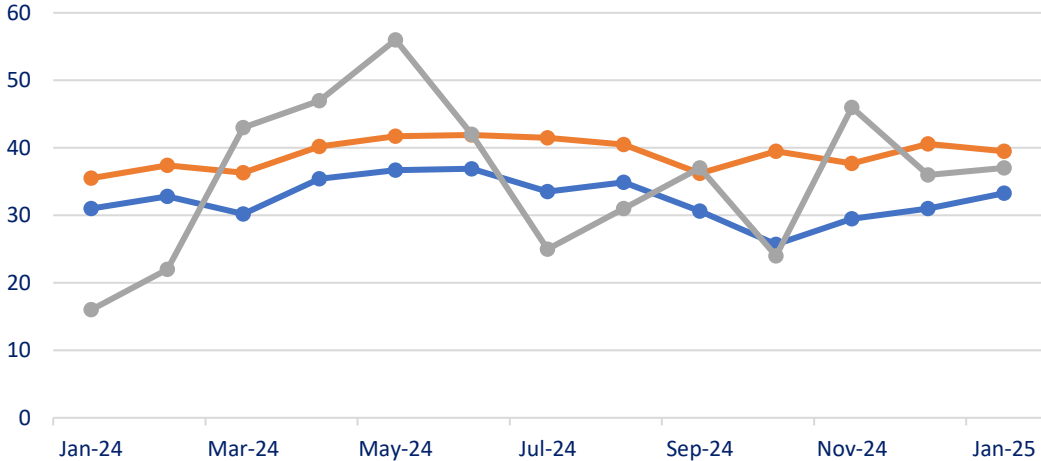
Due to H&S reasons, we ask that pregnant women do not attend these sessions.

If you plan to bring teaching groups (or any other groups) please can you contact Kate Robinson (krobinson@harper-adams.ac.uk) in advance.

Future Farm Animal Performance in January 2025:

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



	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
● Avg Yield	31	32.8	30.2	35.4	36.7	36.9	33.5	34.9	30.6	25.7	29.5	31	33.3
● Avg Milking Yield	35.5	37.4	36.3	40.2	41.7	41.9	41.5	40.5	36.2	39.5	37.7	40.6	39.5
● SCC > 200	16	22	43	47	56	42	25	31	37	24	46	36	37

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	7,923	8,697	6,040
Milk/Cow/Year	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	6,244	12,302	13,115	9,861
Lactation Yield	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	6,097	12,279	12,995	9,698
305 Day yield	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	6,221	10,748	11,713	8,782
Protein/Cow/Year	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	211	384	430	334
Fat/Cow/Year	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	273	460	691	422
Ave. Protein %	<div style="width: 10%;"></div>	3.12	3.12	3.85	3.40
Ave. Fat %	<div style="width: 10%;"></div>	3.68	3.74	5.63	4.29
Mean Parity	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	1.99	2.69	3.53	2.74
Calv. Interval<385 %	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>	29.17	41.95	77.78	56.98
Ave. Lactation length	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	393	331	258	312
Ave. SCC	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	368	167	68	167
% Cows in Parity 1	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	44.96	29.55	10.49	29.53
Age 1st Calving	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	965	715	672	782
Ave. Calving interval	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	460	410	363	392
Ave. Dry days	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	76	57	29	55
Culling + Death %	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	52	27	18	31
Ave. No. Cows	<div style="width: 85%;"></div>	266	398	1,229	491

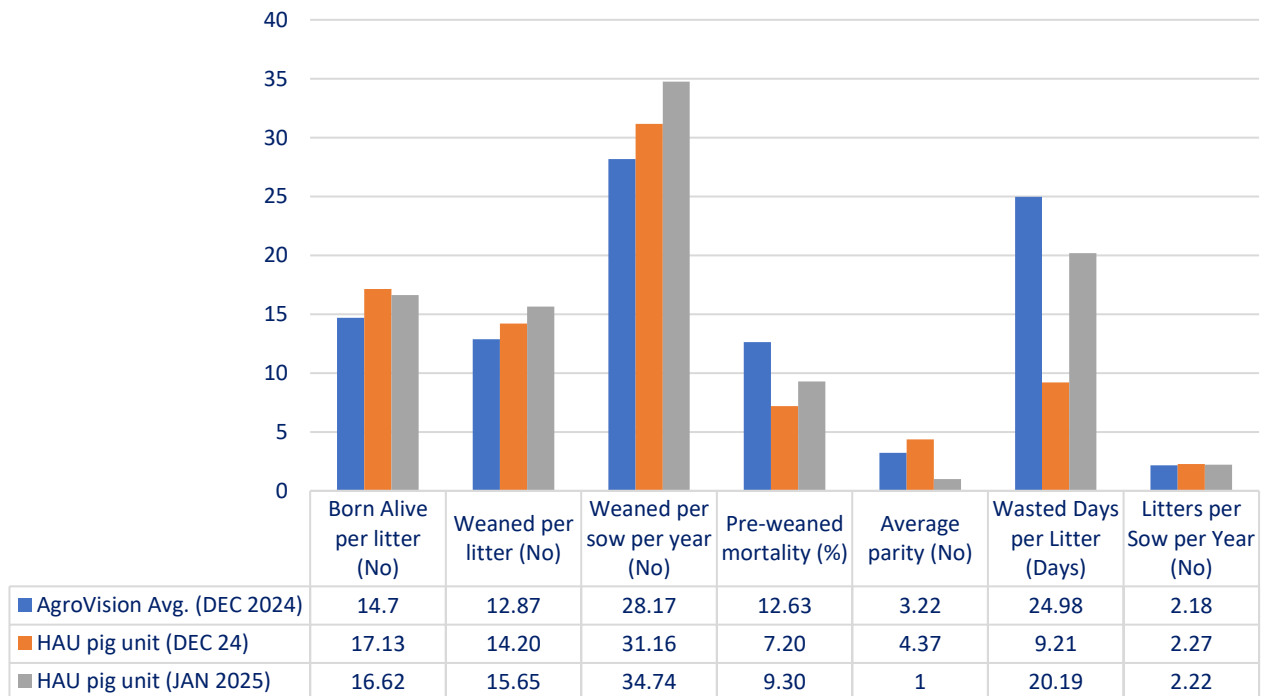
The Main dairy milk quality components in comparison to the Benchmark Muller average.

January 2025

	Main Dairy	Muller Average
Avg Bfat (%)	4.07	4.35
Avg Protein (%)	3.07	3.36
Avg SCC ('000/ml)	144	135.9
Avg BAC ('000/ml)	24	21.83
Therms (cfu/ml)	70	405
FPD (m*C)	527	

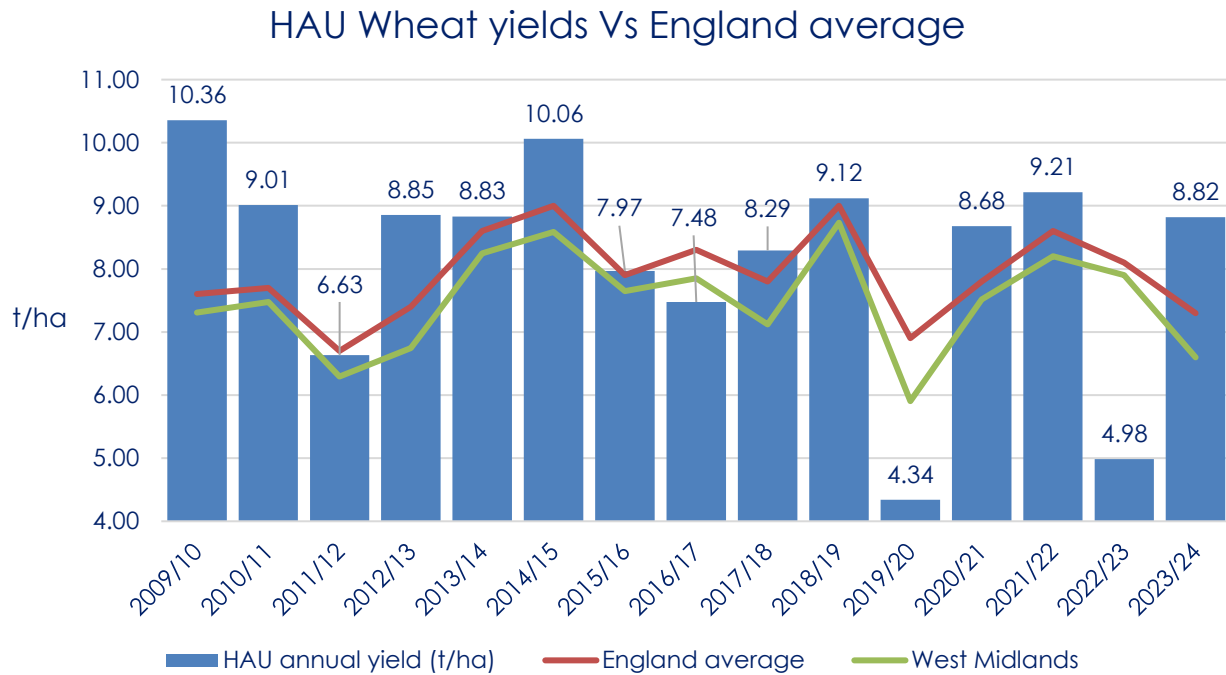
The Pig unit production performance in comparison to the AgroVision Benchmark average (Please note. The AgroVision Benchmark figures are produced on a quarterly basis, for this performance comparison the June 2024 report has been used).

Pig Unit Performance vs AgroVision Benchmark

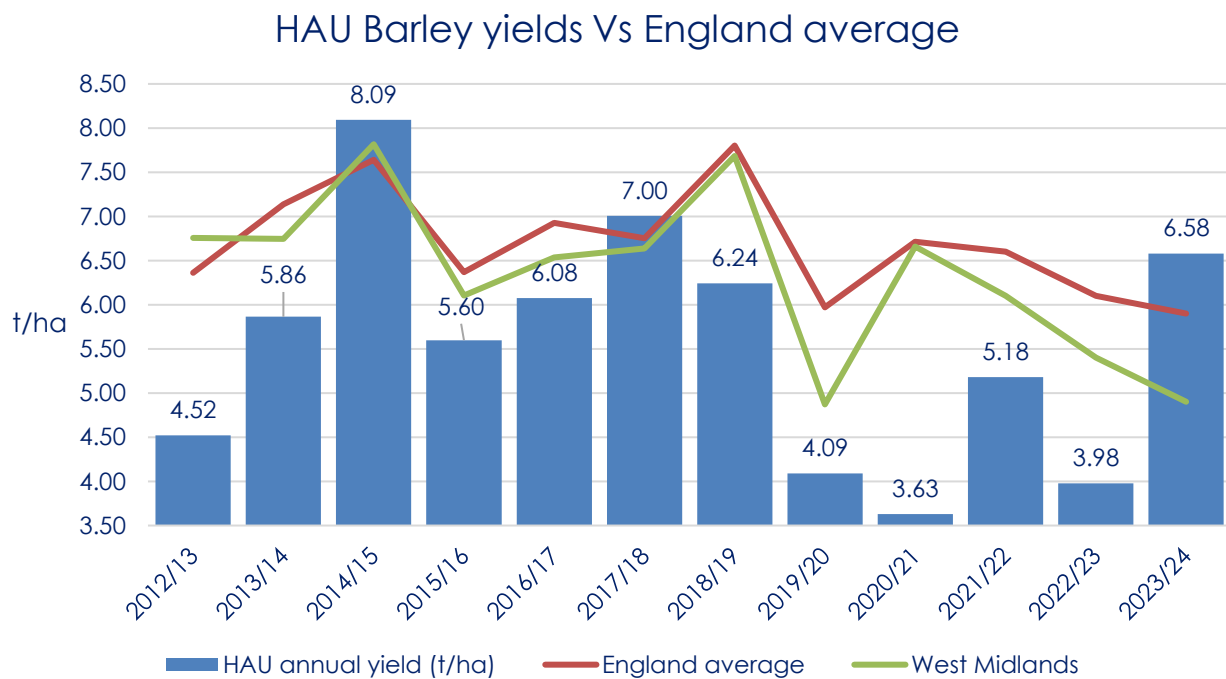


Arable Yields from harvest 2024:

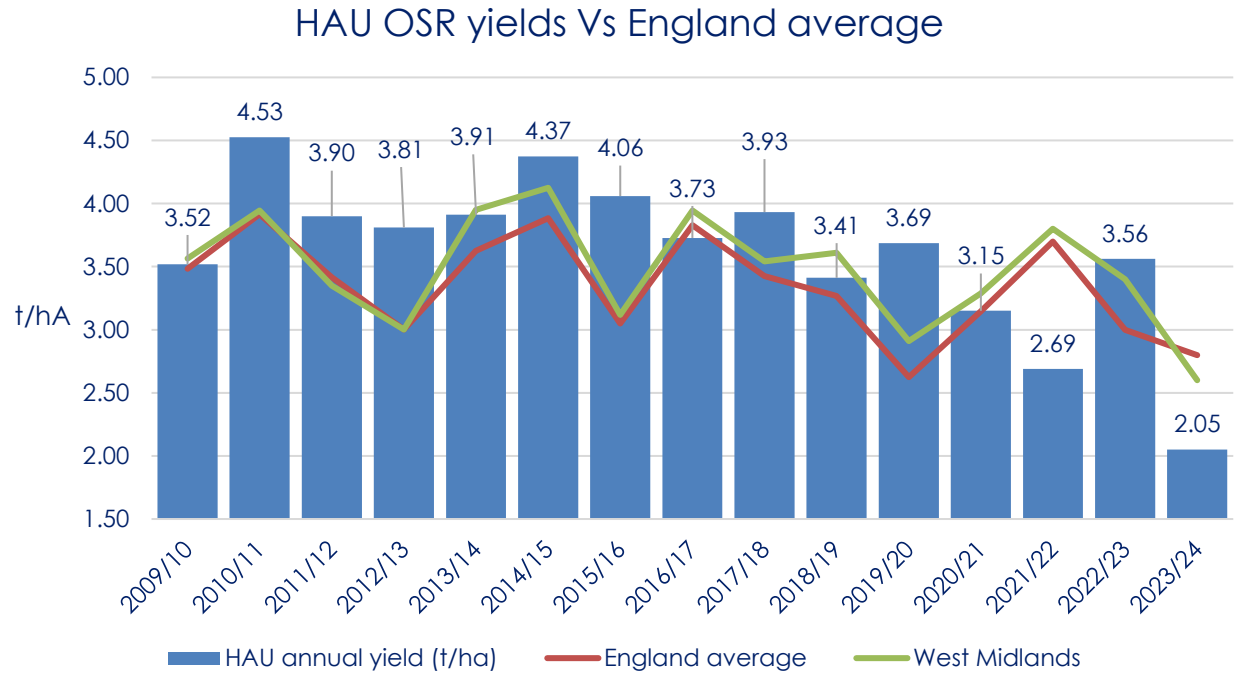
A comparison of wheat yields from England and West Midlands average (Please note. The average figures for England and West Midlands are produced from DEFRA).



A comparison of barley yields from England and West Midlands average (Please note. The average figures for England and West Midlands are produced from DEFRA).



A comparison of oilseed rape yields from England and West Midlands average (Please note. The average figures for England and West Midlands are produced from DEFRA).



Industry news

The Big Farmland Bird Count (BFBC) is underway, with farmers across the UK recording bird species on their land to assess the impact of conservation efforts. This initiative, organised by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) and sponsored by the NFU, highlights the positive effects of agri-environment schemes on biodiversity. However, while modern farming practices have led to some species thriving, such as carrion crows and buzzards, the Defra Farmland Bird Index shows a 61% decline in bird numbers since 1970.

The Science for Sustainable Agriculture (SSA) think tank argues that the 19-species list used to track bird populations is outdated and overlooks species benefiting from modern farming. Defra's chief scientist, Prof. Gideon Henderson, defends the list for consistency, but acknowledges overall bird populations have remained stable since 1997. SSA suggests other factors, like disease and climate change, also impact bird populations, not just farming practices.

Agri-environment schemes, such as the Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme, have shown positive results, with species like skylarks and yellowhammers benefiting. However, the RSPB urges more support and funding for these schemes to address England's nature emergency. The GWCT emphasises that farmers play a crucial role in nature recovery, with continued government funding necessary for biodiversity targets. A more inclusive, science-based approach to monitoring bird populations could lead to better policies that support both farming and wildlife conservation.

A new report from the National Preparedness Commission, published on 6 February, warns that the UK's food security is at risk and needs urgent reform to withstand global food shocks. Lead author Prof Tim Lang of the University of London argues that the post-War food system is outdated and no longer fit for purpose. The report suggests that civil food resilience requires more than just stockpiling and emphasises the need for robust infrastructure and support.

Key recommendations include introducing new legislation to formalise the state's obligation to provide food during crises, boosting domestic food production, and reforming food distribution systems. The report calls for better preparation against food shocks, including town-to-town learning exchanges and research on stockpiling and rationing.

NFU president Tom Bradshaw supports the report, noting that food security is vital for national resilience, especially after recent fresh produce rationing in supermarkets. Defra responded, emphasising their cross-government food strategy aimed at ensuring a resilient and sustainable food system for the future, while working with the food sector to achieve this goal.

The launch of the government's consultation on a Land Use Framework for England has raised concerns within the farming industry about its potential impact on food security and domestic food production. Defra's strategy aims to balance housing, renewable energy, nature restoration, and food production, but farming groups fear it could reduce farmland available for food production. Projections suggest up to 18% of farmland could be removed by 2050 to meet green targets, raising concerns as the UK's population grows.

NFU president Tom Bradshaw and the Tenant Farmers' Association (TFA) worry the framework could hinder food production, especially as farming is already facing economic pressures. TFA chief executive George Dunn highlighted the potential loss of agricultural land and called for a balanced approach that allows for land-sharing between food production and environmental goals.

Defra secretary Steve Reed assured that the framework would guide farmers toward sustainable practices without imposing rigid rules. However, farm leaders seek clarity to ensure food production remains a priority as the country works toward its environmental targets. The [consultation](#), open for 12 weeks, invites input from various stakeholders.

Did you know...

- Women in agriculture produce more than 50% of the world's food, and are responsible for some 60% to 80% of food production in developing countries ([Center for Food Safety](#)).
 - Women make up 55% of the farming workforce in England and Wales ([NFU online](#)).
 - Data from the Office for National Statistics for 2023 shows that of the 104,700 registered farmers in the UK, 22% are female ([HAU blog](#))
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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/>.