

HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY

# FUTURE FARM

SHROPSHIRE

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### **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:

**Springtime Live** – 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 @ Great Yorkshire Showground, North Yorkshire

**Spring Live!** – 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 @ South of England Showground, West Sussex

**South West Chicken Association Conference & Trade Fair** – 29<sup>th</sup> of April 2025 @ Sandy Park Conference, Exeter

# Local news

International Women's Day was celebrated at Harper Adams University on Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> of March. Tea/Coffee, cake and presentations celebrating inspiring women.

Colleagues were asked to nominate inspirational women at Harper Adams and the women at Future Farm were delighted to be nominated. The nomination was submitted by sector manager Kate Robinson, who wrote a wonderful description of why the women of Future Farm deserve to be recognised:

"The ladies in the future farm team make up 80% of the ruminant team and consist of one sector manager, 3 DSM's and 5 TSO's. They do a fantastic job which is still perceived to still be in a male dominated industry. Recently the team won a national farming competition called the RABDF/NMR Gold cup which has never been won by an institutional farm let alone a women led team...We still receive the odd comment about having women leading a farm team, but we always put a positive spin on it and promote equality and diversity in the agricultural industry. It is inspiring for our young female students to see women leading the way."

In addition to the group nomination, Kate Robinson and Grace Milburn were also nominated as inspirational women individually.

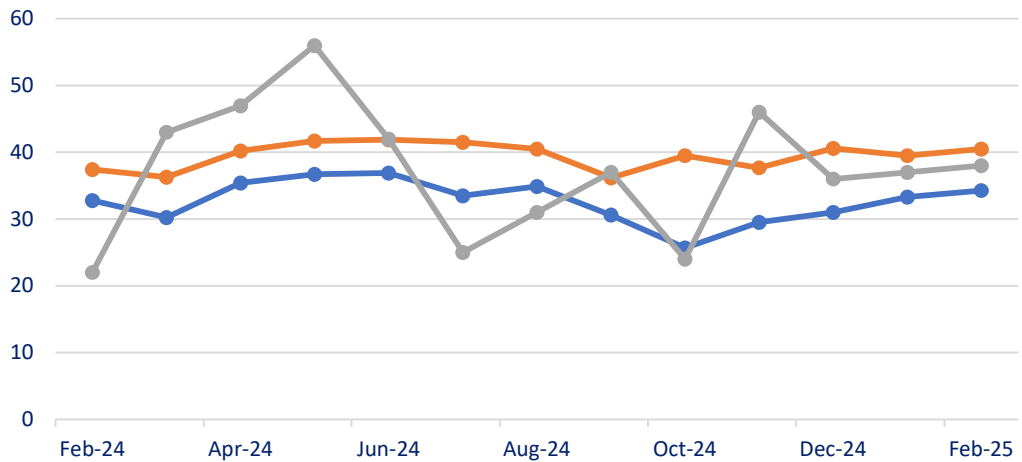
Congratulations are extended to all women who were nominated at the celebration.



# 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



|                       | Feb-24 | Mar-24 | Apr-24 | May-24 | Jun-24 | Jul-24 | Aug-24 | Sep-24 | Oct-24 | Nov-24 | Dec-24 | Jan-25 | Feb-25 |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| —●— Avg Yield         | 32.8   | 30.2   | 35.4   | 36.7   | 36.9   | 33.5   | 34.9   | 30.6   | 25.7   | 29.5   | 31     | 33.3   | 34.3   |
| —●— Avg Milking Yield | 37.4   | 36.3   | 40.2   | 41.7   | 41.9   | 41.5   | 40.5   | 36.2   | 39.5   | 37.7   | 40.6   | 39.5   | 40.5   |
| —●— SCC > 200         | 22     | 43     | 47     | 56     | 42     | 25     | 31     | 37     | 24     | 46     | 36     | 37     | 38     |

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

| KPIs                  | Worst' <-----> 'Best' | Worst | You         | Best   | Mean  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------|-------------|--------|-------|
| Milk/Cow/Year of life |                       | 4,094 | 7,978       | 8,765  | 6,043 |
| Milk/Cow/Year         |                       | 6,364 | 12,312      | 12,998 | 9,859 |
| Lactation Yield       |                       | 6,304 | 12,246      | 12,995 | 9,719 |
| 305 Day yield         |                       | 6,268 | 10,844      | 11,713 | 8,809 |
| Protein/Cow/Year      |                       | 215   | 382         | 426    | 334   |
| Fat/Cow/Year          |                       | 276   | 460         | 694    | 423   |
| Ave. Protein %        |                       | 3.13  | <b>3.10</b> | 3.85   | 3.40  |
| Ave. Fat %            |                       | 3.68  | 3.73        | 5.64   | 4.30  |
| Mean Parity           |                       | 1.99  | 2.75        | 3.52   | 2.74  |
| Calv. Interval<385 %  |                       | 29.17 | 41.52       | 77.78  | 56.95 |
| Ave. Lactation length |                       | 390   | 326         | 256    | 312   |
| Ave. SCC              |                       | 363   | 168         | 67     | 165   |
| % Cows in Parity 1    |                       | 45.08 | 27.75       | 9.25   | 29.55 |
| Age 1st Calving       |                       | 961   | 713         | 674    | 781   |
| Ave. Calving interval |                       | 459   | 411         | 363    | 392   |
| Ave. Dry days         |                       | 76    | 58          | 29     | 55    |
| Culling + Death %     |                       | 51    | 29          | 18     | 31    |
| Ave. No. Cows         |                       | 264   | 398         | 1,229  | 491   |

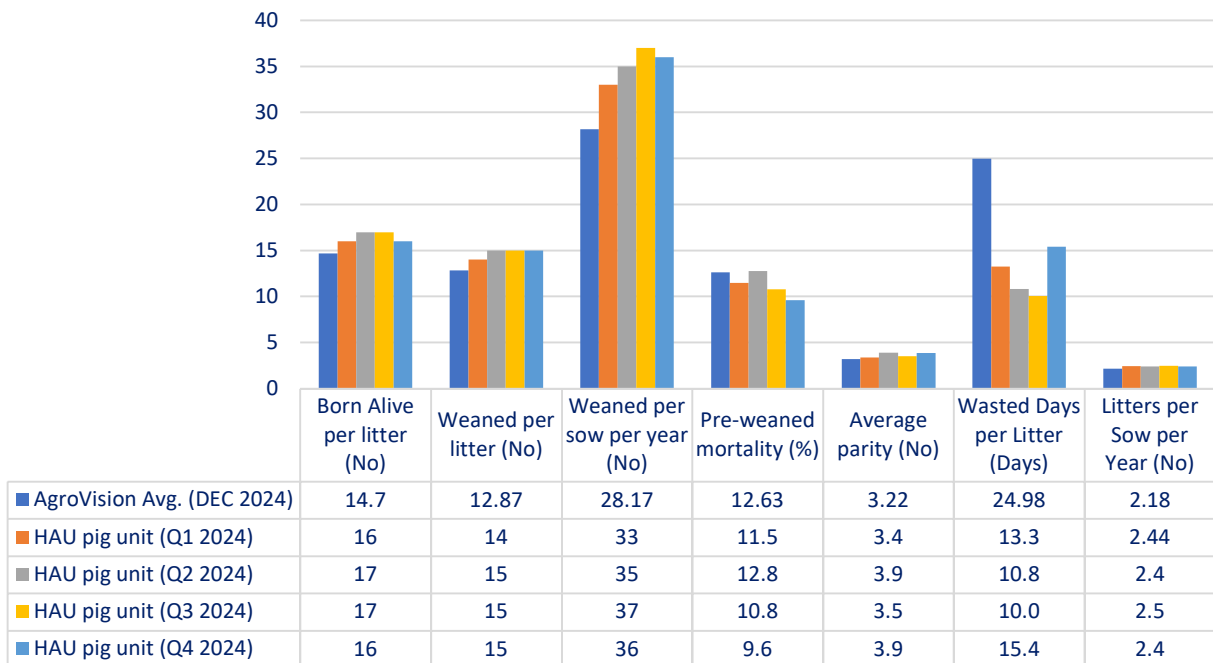
The Main dairy milk quality components in comparison to the Benchmark Muller average.

**February 2025**

|                   | <b>Main Dairy</b> | <b>Muller Average</b> |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Avg Bfat (%)      | 4.16              | 4.35                  |
| Avg Protein (%)   | 3.05              | 3.36                  |
| Avg SCC ('000/ml) | 128               | 134.7                 |
| Avg BAC ('000/ml) | 23                | 21.3                  |
| Therms (cfu/ml)   | 50                | 390                   |
| FPD (m*C)         | 526               |                       |

The quarterly 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 December 2024 figures have been used).

**Quarterly pig unit performance vs. Agrovision benchmark**



# Future Farm field and cropping list for cropping year 2024/2025:

The following pages contain the details of the crops we currently have in the ground, there are also details of previous crops and soil type, which is vital information to ensure the correct management of these fields. (Please note. The information produced was retrieved from Omnia)

| Field name           | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop            | Variety                | Previous crop | Soil type       | Subsoil type   |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Adney Brookside      | 3.89      | 25/09/2024  | Winter Wheat    | Champion               | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Adney Corner         | 16.34     | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Adney Dog Leg        | 3.26      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Adney Loaders        | 4.05      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Adney Middle         | 3.3       | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Adney Yard           | 5.98      |             | Uncropped       |                        | Uncropped     | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Adney Yard Strip     | 0.46      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin    |                        | Grass Margin  | Organic         | Sandstone/Sand |
| Back Lane            | 3.45      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| Back Lane            | 0.11      | 01/08/2024  | SFI Crop Action | AHL3-2023-Field Corner | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| Bag Paddock          | 0.87      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Bailey Hills North 1 | 8.98      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Bailey Hills North 2 | 10.73     | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Bailey Hills South   | 10.21     | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birchmoors 1         | 8.58      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birchmoors 2         | 2.02      | 01/08/2024  | Grass           |                        | Grass         | Peat            | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birds Nest           | 6.37      | 01/11/2024  | Winter Barley   | LG Caravelle           | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birds Nest           | 0.54      |             | Uncropped       |                        | Winter Wheat  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birds Nest           | 0.29      |             | Uncropped       |                        | Winter Wheat  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birds Nest Strip     | 0.29      | 01/08/2024  | Pollen/Nectar   |                        | Pollen/Nectar | Loamy sand      | Sandstone/Sand |

| Field name          | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop               | Variety                     | Previous crop | Soil type       | Subsoil type   |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Birds Nest Strip    | 0.33      | 01/08/2024  | Wild Bird mix      |                             | Wild Bird mix | Loamy sand      | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birds Nest Triangle | 0.25      | 01/08/2024  | Pollen/Nectar      |                             | Pollen/Nectar | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Birds Nest Triangle | 0.48      | 01/08/2024  | Wild Bird mix      |                             | Wild Bird mix | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Black Britch        | 6.74      | 15/09/2024  | Cover crop         | K98 Late Flowering Power MI | Winter Wheat  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Black Britch        | 6.74      | 15/04/2025  | Maize              | Unspec.                     | Cover crop    | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Black Britch Strip  | 0.52      | 01/08/2024  | Wild Bird mix      |                             | Wild Bird mix | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Black Britch Tri 1  | 0.17      | 01/08/2024  | Pollen/Nectar      |                             | Pollen/Nectar | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Black Britch Tri 2  | 0.34      | 01/08/2024  | Pollen/Nectar      |                             | Pollen/Nectar | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Black Britch Trial  | 3.28      | 18/09/2024  | Grass              |                             | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Blue Pits           | 1.84      | 04/11/2024  | Dried Winter Beans | Vespa                       | Spring Barley | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Blue Pits Triangle  | 0.49      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin       |                             | Grass Margin  | Silty clay      | Clay           |
| Bobs                | 8.64      | 01/08/2024  | Grass              |                             | Grass         | Organic         | Sandstone/Sand |
| Buttery Hill        | 8.97      | 15/04/2025  | Potatoes           | Unspec. GP 4                | Spring barley | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Buttery Hill South  | 1.82      | 01/08/2024  | Grapes             | Bacchus                     | Uncropped     | Sandy loam      | Sandstone/Sand |
| Cayton Ancellor     | 0.83      | 02/08/2024  | Grass              |                             | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Common Field        | 3.58      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat       | Champion                    | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |

| Field name        | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop               | Variety      | Previous crop | Soil type       | Subsoil type           |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Conquermoor       | 7.6       | 15/04/2025  | Maize              | Unspec.      | Winter Wheat  | Sandy clay loam | Clay                   |
| Cote Ussock       | 4.69      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat       | KWS Dawsum   | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Cote Ussock Strip | 0.21      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin       |              | Grass Margin  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Cottage Field     | 2.84      | 01/08/2024  | Grass              |              | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Crabtree East     | 9.54      | 15/03/2024  | Fodder Beet        | Unspec.      | Kale          | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Crabtree West     | 0.67      | 15/03/2024  | Fodder Beet        | Unspec.      | Kale          | Sandy loam      | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Dereks            | 6         | 01/08/2024  | Lucerne            | Unspec.      | Lucerne       | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Dereks Strip      | 0.59      | 01/08/2024  | Wild Bird mix      |              | Wild Bird mix | Sandy loam      | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Engineering       | 2.32      | 01/08/2024  | Grass              |              | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Far Broad         | 5.85      | 01/08/2024  | Grass              |              | Winter Rye    | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Far Broad Strip   | 0.26      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin       |              | Grass Margin  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Flat Nook         | 3.3       | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat       | Unspec. Feed | Uncropped     | Sandy loam      | Shallow over sandstone |
| Fourgates         | 5.86      | 07/02/2025  | Dried Winter Beans | Vespa        | Spring Barley | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Fourgates         | 1.24      | 01/08/2024  | Grass              |              | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Frank's           | 2.95      | 15/04/2025  | Maize              | Unspec.      | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Clay                   |
| Galas             | 2.41      | 30/10/2024  | Winter Wheat       | KWS Dawsum   | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |
| Galas             | 0.22      | 06/10/2024  | Grass Margin       |              |               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand         |



| Field name             | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop                | Variety     | Previous crop       | Soil type       | Subsoil type   |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Garden Field           | 3.9       | 24/08/2024  | Winter Oilseed Rape | LG Academic | Winter Wheat        | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Heaford Meadow         | 2.09      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat        | KWS Dawsum  | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Heaford Strip          | 0.3       | 01/08/2024  | Wild Bird mix       |             | Wild Bird mix       | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Hinks                  | 2.13      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Hinks                  | 0.28      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin        |             | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Horse Foxhole          | 5.39      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Horse Paddocks         | 1.92      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Intake                 | 4.99      | 01/11/2024  | Winter Wheat        | Champion    | Maize               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| L shaped               | 8.5       | 25/10/2024  | Winter Wheat        | Champion    | Potatoes            | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| L shaped strip         | 0.32      | 01/08/2024  | Pollen/Nectar       |             | Pollen/Nectar       | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| Large Marsh Commercial | 3.22      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat        | KWS Dawsum  | Winter Oilseed Rape | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Large Marsh Commercial | 1.17      |             | Uncropped           |             | Uncropped           | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Large Marsh Strip      | 0.33      | 02/05/2025  | Grass Margin        |             | Grass Margin        | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Large Marsh Trial      | 1.93      | 01/03/2025  | Dried Spring Beans  | Unspec.     | Winter Wheat        | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Large Marsh Trial      | 1.28      | 19/09/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Large Pit              | 4.04      | 01/08/2024  | Lucerne             | Unspec.     | Lucerne             | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |

| Field name           | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop          | Variety    | Previous crop | Soil type       | Subsoil type   |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Liberty              | 3.83      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Lins Leasow          | 5.23      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Longford Grass       | 6.18      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Longwithy            | 6.8       | 01/08/2024  | Lucerne       | Unspec.    | Lucerne       | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Lower New Works      | 4.03      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| Marlpit Leasow       | 7.77      | 18/09/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Marlpit Leasow Strip | 0.38      | 01/08/2024  | Wild Bird mix |            | Wild Bird mix | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Marlpit Strip 1      | 0.05      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin  |            | Grass Margin  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Marlpit Strip 2      | 0.12      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin  |            | Grass Margin  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Middle Leasow        | 2.06      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Middle Moor          | 9.89      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Rye    | Humbolt    | Spring Barley | Clay loam       | Sandstone/Sand |
| Middle Moor Strip    | 0.27      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin  |            | Grass Margin  | Silty clay      | Clay           |
| Near Broad           | 5.02      | 01/03/2025  | Grass         |            | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Near Broad Strip     | 0.31      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin  |            | Grass Margin  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Near Cott Leasow     | 4.16      | 01/03/2025  | Spring Barley | KWS Irina  | Maize         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Nearmoor             | 13.21     | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat  | KWS Dawsum | Uncropped     | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Nearmoor Meadow      | 6.37      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |            | Grass         | Organic         | Clay           |

| Field name          | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop          | Variety      | Previous crop       | Soil type       | Subsoil type   |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Nearmoor Strip      | 0.39      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin  |              | Grass Margin        | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| New field 1         | 5.16      | 01/08/2024  | Uncropped     |              | Uncropped           | Sandy silt loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| New field 2         | 3.48      | 01/08/2024  | Uncropped     |              | Uncropped           | Sand            | Sandstone/Sand |
| NW 1                | 6.9       | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| NW 2                | 3.9       | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| NW 3                | 5.13      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| NW 4                | 3.17      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| NW 5                | 3.92      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| NW 6                | 8.43      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| NW 7                | 4.29      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| Pit Ancellor        | 2.06      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Plantation East     | 9.89      | 02/09/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Plantation West     | 4.31      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Poorland            | 7.68      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat  | KWS Dawsum   | Winter Oilseed Rape | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Poorland            | 0.29      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin  |              | Winter Oilseed Rape | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Reservoir Field     | 1.6       | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Sandwells           | 11.17     | 01/03/2025  | Lucerne       | Unspec.      | Maize               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Shed field          | 5.46      | 01/08/2024  | Grass         |              | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Shed field triangle | 0.35      | 01/08/2024  | Pollen/Nectar |              | Pollen/Nectar       | Organic         | Sandstone/Sand |
| Swans Leasow        | 5.37      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat  | Unspec. Feed | Grass               | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |

| Field name               | Area (ha) | Sowing date | Crop                | Variety     | Previous crop | Soil type       | Subsoil type   |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Swans Neck               | 5.02      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Teal Pit                 | 5.74      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| The Chapel Field         | 6.33      | 15/04/2025  | Maize               | Unspec.     | Winter Wheat  | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| The Lawn                 | 0.75      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Tibberton Ancellor       | 4.45      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass         | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Tibberton Ancellor Strip | 0.1       | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin        |             | Grass Margin  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| Tibberton Grange         | 3.56      | 01/10/2024  | Winter Wheat        | KWS Dawsum  | Potatoes      | Sandy clay loam | Clay           |
| Top Adney Yard           | 9.75      | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Spring Barley | Clay loam       | Sandstone/Sand |
| Top Adney Yard Strip     | 0.61      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin        |             | Grass Margin  | Organic         | Clay           |
| Top Adney Yard Tri       | 0.16      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin        |             | Grass Margin  | Silty clay      | Clay           |
| Upper New Works          | 14.08     | 01/08/2024  | Grass               |             | Grass         | Clay loam       | Clay           |
| Upperwood Leasow         | 6         | 02/09/2024  | Winter Oilseed Rape | LG Academic | Winter wheat  | Sandy clay loam | Sandstone/Sand |
| 2774                     | 0.92      | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin        |             | Uncropped     | Clay loam       | Sandstone/Sand |
| 9627                     | 0.5       | 01/08/2024  | Grass Margin        |             | Grass Margin  | Organic         | Sandstone/Sand |

# Industry news

Uncertainty remains about the potential new farrowing system regulations that could require a shift from conventional to flexible farrowing systems, providing sows with more space and temporary confinement for piglet protection and safe working conditions. Pork sourced from Europe are already using flexible farrowing systems, so governing bodies are keen to implement this new system in the UK.

The UK pig industry, however, is taking a proactive approach. The National Pig Association (NPA) proposed a voluntary, industry-led transition to flexible farrowing systems, rather than legislation. Around 5,000 UK sow places have flexible pens installed, though no single solution fits all.

The NPA's proposal includes:

- A 20-year transition period, with no new conventional systems being installed
- A minimum pen size of 5.5 sq. m
- A maximum of 10 days confinement during farrowing.

A survey of NPA members found that 46% would leave the industry with only 5-10 years to transition, citing capital costs as a major concern whilst some producers are waiting for clearer technical specifications before investing. As upgrading existing buildings to contain pens of at least 5.5 sq. m could cost £3,500-£5,000 per sow place, while new buildings range from £5,000-£8,000, but installation costs vary with pen size and layout, which is still under research.

Flexible systems have been shown to improve sow activity and feeding, benefiting their longevity, with weaning being easier. However, minimizing piglet mortality from sow lay-ons remains a key focus. Whilst pre-weaning mortality is similar in both flexible and conventional systems, transitioning to flexible systems may cause a temporary increase in mortality. Many producers who have already transitioned to a flexible farrowing system report positive outcomes and are unlikely to revert to conventional methods, however initial investments required to begin the transition could be too risky for some producers.

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The NFU is calling for urgent action to protect rural communities from rising crime, including equipment theft, livestock worrying, and fly-tipping. Despite the UK government's rural crime strategy announced last year, the NFU demands more investment in rural policing, dedicated crime teams, and greater use of technology to prevent theft. Recent figures show over a million fly-tipping incidents in the past year, and livestock worrying cost £1.8m in 2024. The total cost of rural crime exceeded £50m in 2023. The NFU vice-president, Rachel Hallos, emphasized the need for tougher penalties, consistent sentencing, and more support for rural communities.

The UK imports around 60,000 tonnes (t) of sunflower seeds annually. Sunflowers, known traditionally as a small crop, are becoming more suited to the UK's warming climate. Varieties like ES Bella, that is successfully grown in northern France, are now thriving in south and central England. The UK could potentially grow 30,000 hectares (ha) of sunflowers to meet domestic bird-seed demand, and the UK market could expand further into biogas or oil production.

Sunflower prices align with oilseed rape values in Europe, and United Oilseeds, which launched the first UK sunflower marketing pool, anticipates a £450/t return for growers. Sunflowers yields typically range from 1.6t/ha to 3t/ha, with the possibility of up to 4t/ha, it could become a good break crop as they are a low-input crop with minimal requirement for herbicide use and nutritional needs. Sunflowers are eligible for payments of £45/ha through the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) related to CIPM4, however, payments through SFI may be at risk after Defra halted all new SFI applications.

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Farmers and environmental groups are unhappy after the government announced on March 11 that it would stop accepting new applications for the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme, due to budget limits. The SFI, part of the post-Brexit Environmental Land Management (ELM) programme, encourages sustainable farming practices, but those who haven't applied now face an uncertain future with no guarantee of similar support.

The CEO of the Nature Friendly Farming Network criticized the scheme's complexity and delays, with many farmers unable to access SFI due to its complicated design and slow application processing. The Countryside Regeneration Trust called the decision a "devastating blow" for farmers, particularly those working in small-scale, local food production. A spokesperson for the Wildlife Trusts warned that this sudden halt undermines trust in Defra's farming schemes and called for clearer management.

The RSPB expressed concern that the pause jeopardizes efforts to address climate and nature crises and called for reform to ensure long-term success. And the CEO of the Soil Association, warned that this move could harm the organic sector, causing a rise in imports and undermining both food security and environmental protection.

Future Farm applied for the SFI scheme when it was first introduced. Without the scheme the government support is not there. It is a devastating blow and will impact many farmers financially if this support continues to be limited.

## Did you know...

- Lucerne, also known as Alfalfa, is a leafy legume that can be used for soil fertility building and as a forage crop ([Agricology](#))
  - It has a high drought tolerance and a good resistance to lodging in heavy rain ([Agricology](#))
  - Lucerne shows good persistency and is ideally grown for a period of 2-4 years, it is slow to produce biomass but once fully established it can yield up to 15t DM per ha ([Cotswold Seeds](#))
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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](mailto: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/>.