

# Future Farm update



Welcome and enjoy this newsletter giving you an update of Future Farm!

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

# Industry events and news

## Upcoming events:

**Pig and Poultry Fair** – 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ NAEC Stoneleigh

**Balmoral Show** – 15<sup>th</sup> till 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ Eikon Exhibition Centre, Lisburn

**Devon County Show** – 16<sup>th</sup> till 18<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ Devon County Showground

**Essex Young Farmers' Country Show** – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ Boyton Hall, Roxwell

**Shropshire County Show** – 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ West Mid Showground, Shrewsbury

**Hertfordshire County Show** – 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ Hertfordshire Showground, Redbourn

**Staffordshire County Show** – 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May @ Staffordshire County Showground

**Suffolk Show** – 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May @ Trinity Park, Ipswich

**Royal Welsh Sustainable Grass & Muck Event** – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 @ Aberystwyth University Farm

**Ballymoney Show** – 31<sup>st</sup> May and 1<sup>st</sup> June @ Ballymoney Showground

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## Top news stories affecting Future Farm (news stories found on the Farmer's Weekly website and DEFRA's blog):

### **Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) including the Animal Health and Welfare grant:**

The Animal Health and Welfare grant through the Farming Equipment and Technology Fund (FETF) 2024 is now open for applications. There are three types of grants on offer to help buy equipment or technology to:

- Improve productivity
- Manage slurry
- Improve animal health and welfare

The FETF grant goes towards the cost items on a list that help to improve animal health and welfare. Applications must be between £1,000 and £25,000, where a percentage of the cost of the item will be paid by the grant. The fund is competitive and the application score can be increased by providing evidence that you have discussed your application with a vet. The deadline to apply for this fund is midday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024, however, Defra are planning on providing 2 more opportunities to apply for productivity, slurry and animal health and welfare grants later this year.

## **Update to SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive):**

Defra has responded to industry concerns by announcing a cap on the amount farmers in England can claim on some environmental incentives. New applicants will only be able to take 25% of their land out of food production and into six SFI actions:

1. IPM2: Flower-rich grass margins, blocks or in-field strips
2. AHL1: Pollen and nectar flower mix (grown as blocks or strips)
3. AHL2: Winter bird food on arable and horticultural land (grown as blocks or strips)
4. AHL3: Grassy field corners or blocks
5. IGL1: Take improved grassland field corners or blocks out of management
6. IGL2: Winter bird food on improved grassland (grown as blocks or strips)

The rest of the SFI actions will remain uncapped. The Defra farm minister's (Mark Spencer) focus is to cap certain SFI actions to ensure farmers are producing enough food for the nation. Action is being taken to ensure at least 60% of the food consumed in the UK is produced by the UK, which has pleased the Tenants Farmers Association (TFA), as the update demonstrates a land sharing approach between producing food and environmental outcomes.

## **Red tractor axes plans for Greener Farms Commitment module (GFC)**

After major backlash from farmers, Red Tractor has decided to axe the voluntary, bolt-on environmental module. The backlash occurred because farmers feared if the GFC was introduced, then they would be forced to give away natural capital data for free to the benefit of others in the supply chain. The four main UK farming unions (NFU, NFU Cymru, NFU Scotland and Ulster Farmers' Union) and AHDB, issued their concerns in a joint statement earlier this month, urging Red Tractor to scrap its plans for the GFC.

The concerns raised by farmers about the effect of GFC, initiated the Assured Food Standards (AFS), which promotes and managed the Red Tractor Scheme, announcement on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, agreeing to discontinue the module. AFS chairwomen released a statement, highlighted the error that had been made but detailed that the module was developed with the best of intention to demonstrate sustainability, in a single, practical and consistent way.

## **What does this mean for Future Farm?**

All these news articles represent a need for Future Farm to adapt and evolve to the new challenges in the farming industry. It is important we, like any other farm, apply for all funding streams that are relevant to us.

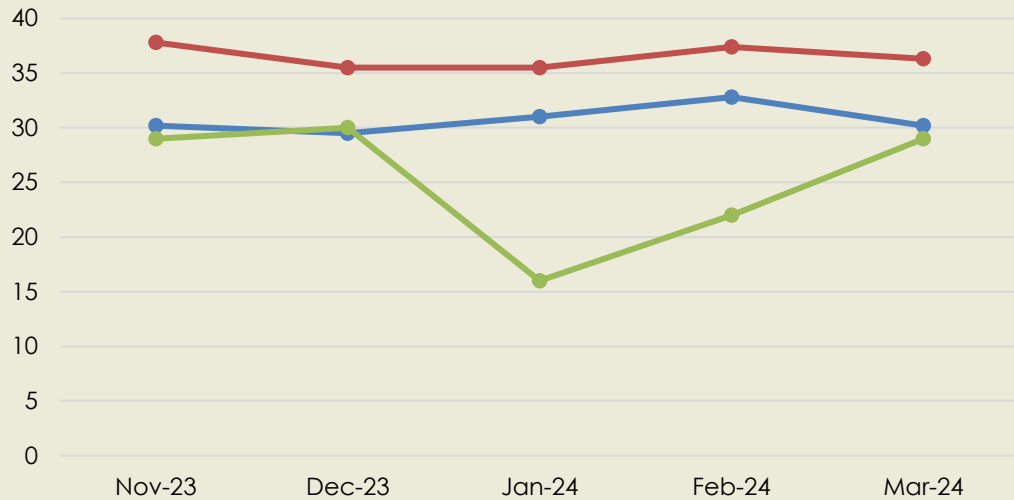
The update to the SFI is an important concept to be considered. The capped percentage allocated to the six SFI actions needs to be implemented to prevent farmers from transforming productive land into environmental land. At the Future Farm we strive for balance; we want to ensure we are utilizing our most productive land to feed our animals but also identify the less productive land that can be transformed and maintained into environmental land, acknowledged as SFI actions.

The news of Red Tractor axing the GFC module was not unexpected, there has been tremendous backlash and worry from it. As a Red Tractor farm, we also experienced similar worries, but we hope as the error has been recognized and highlighted, and a new module will be developed with everyone in mind.

# Future Farm Animal Performance in March 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

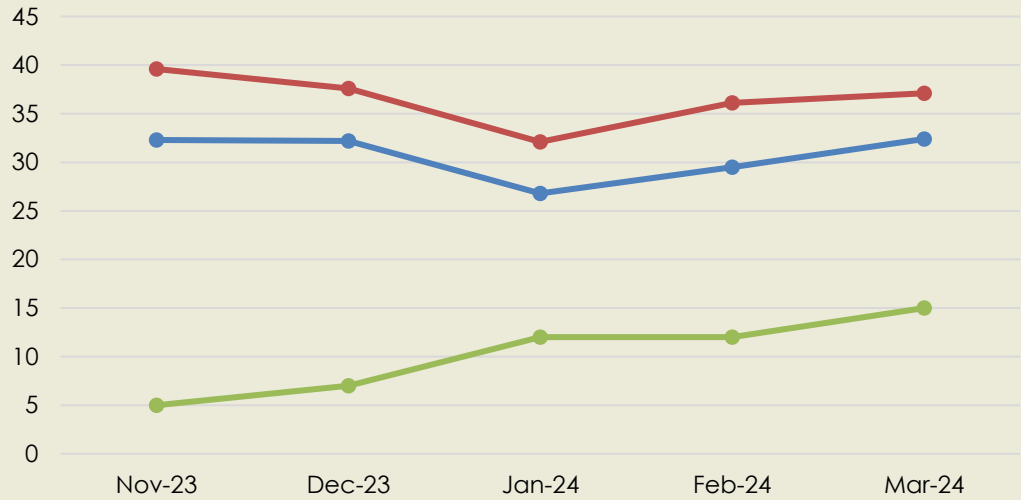


	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
Avg Yield	30.2	29.5	31	32.8	30.2
Avg Milking Yield	37.8	35.5	35.5	37.4	36.3
SCC > 200	29	30	16	22	29

Benchmark		New	Export		
NMR14: Holstein herds > 300 cows		Benchmarks	Export		
Drag a column header here to group by that column					
KPIs	'Worst' <-----> 'Best'	Worst	You	Best	Mean
Milk/Cow/Year of life		4,083	7,281	9,194	6,041
Milk/Cow/Year		6,168	11,194	13,575	9,831
Lactation Yield		6,016	11,450	12,571	9,626
305 Day yield		5,731	9,895	11,889	8,900
Protein/Cow/Year		215	359	447	333
Fat/Cow/Year		245	428	623	416
Ave. Protein %		3.12	3.21	3.78	3.39
Ave. Fat %		3.64	3.82	5.27	4.25
Mean Parity		2.09	2.63	3.59	2.74
Calv. Interval < 385 %		29.50	53.44	78.63	57.12
Ave. Lactation length		376	350	242	309
Ave. SCC		334	101	88	166
% Cows in Parity 1		44.80	28.41	10.11	29.32
Age 1st Calving		940	736	670	775
Ave. Calving interval		469	393	364	392
Ave. Dry days		72	46	42	55
Culling + Death %		49	27	19	31
Ave. No. Cows		309	369	1,229	501

The Smart 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 - Robot Dairy



	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
Avg Yield	32.3	32.2	26.8	29.5	32.4
Avg Milking Yield	39.6	37.6	32.1	36.1	37.1
SCC > 200	5	7	12	12	15

Benchmark		New	Export		
NMR11: Holstein herds <= 100 cows		Benchmarks	Export		
Drag a column header here to group by that column					
KPIs	'Worst' <-----> 'Best'	Worst	You	Best	Mean
Milk/Cow/Year of life		2,129	<b>9,342</b>	6,670	4,550
Milk/Cow/Year		3,296	9,710	11,067	7,169
Lactation Yield		3,603	<b>12,708</b>	11,759	7,821
305 Day yield		3,190	<b>9,893</b>	9,865	6,804
Protein/Cow/Year		115	318	375	242
Fat/Cow/Year		142	341	470	302
Ave. Protein %		3.15	3.28	3.71	3.38
Ave. Fat %		3.25	3.51	5.34	4.21
Mean Parity		1.88	3.49	4.60	3.05
Calv. Interval <385 %		13.04	47.22	67.06	47.94
Ave. Lactation length		567	344	207	341
Ave. SCC		904	488	57	205
% Cows in Parity 1		54.17	<b>2.70</b>	10.64	26.54
Age 1st Calving		1,351	<b>701</b>	737	893
Ave. Calving interval		729	415	378	416
Ave. Dry days		120	59	33	58
Culling + Death %		90	19	7	26
Ave. No. Cows		30	45	115	75

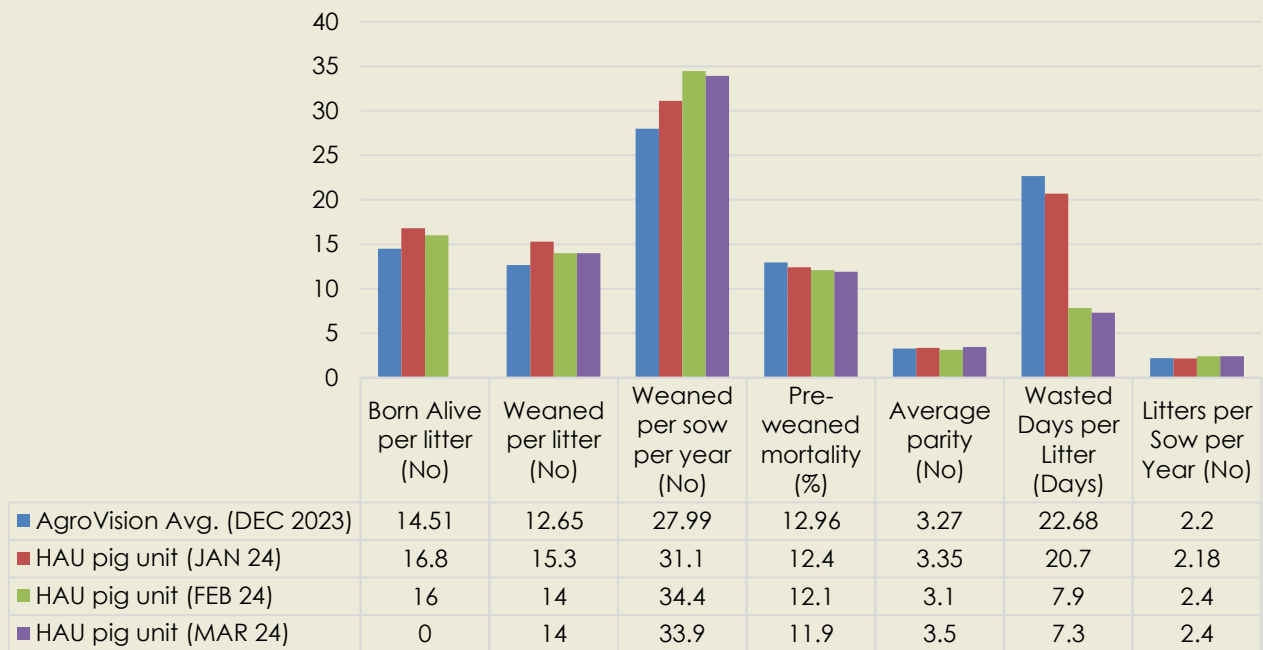
The Main dairy and Smart dairy milk quality components in comparison to the Benchmark Muller average

**March 2024**

	<b>Main Dairy</b>	<b>Smart Dairy</b>	<b>Muller Average</b>
Avg Bfat (%)	4.12	4.31	4.29
Avg Protein (%)	3.23	3.27	3.33
Avg SCC ('000/ml)	91	190	142.8
Avg BAC ('000/ml)	23	17	20.28
Therms (cfu/ml)	240	500	393
FPD (m*C)	526	525	

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 December 2023 report has been used).

**Pig Unit Performance vs AgroVision Benchmark**



# Farm operations maps:

The Farm Operations sector have been busy updating the Harper Adams University boundary map and cropping map for year 2023-2024. It is important that these maps are updated regularly, as they become an important management tool for future cropping years and applying for government schemes.

Please find below the boundary map for Harper Adams University fields:

[HAU Boundary Map - A3](#)

Please find attached the 2023-2024 cropping map:

[HAU Cropping Plan 23-24 - A3](#)



# Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) agreement

Our application for SFI has been approved and we have recently received our "Agreement Document", which details the sum to be paid to the farm for delivering the SFI actions selected during the application process.

The below table sets out a summary of payments the farm is set to receive for complying with the agreement:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Total area (hectares)/ length (metres)</b>	<b>Payment rate</b>	<b>Total annual agreement grant payment</b>
AHL2	Winter bird food on arable and horticultural land	0.62 HA	£853.00/ha	£528.86
AHL3	Grassy field corners or blocks	2.58 HA	£590.00/ha	£1,521.26
AHL4	4m to 12m grass buffer strip on arable and horticultural land	1.06 HA	£515.00/ha	£547.96
IPM1	Assess integrated pest management and produce a plan	N/A	£1129.00	£1,129.00
IPM3	Companion crop on arable and horticultural land	6.65 HA	£55.00/ha	£365.75
MPA1	SFI Management Plan	50 HA	£20.00/ha	£1,000.00
NUM1	Assess nutrient management and produce a review report	N/A	£652.00	£652.00
NUM2	Legumes on improved grassland	60.59 HA	£102.00/ha	£6,180.67
SAM1	Assess soil, produce a soil management plan and test soil organic matter	346.85 HA	£6.00/ha	£2,081.08
SAM1A	Assess soil, produce a soil management plan and test soil organic matter	N/A	£97.00	£97.00
SAM3	Establish and maintain Herbal leys	37.66 HA	£382.00/ha	£14,384.48
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£28,488.06</b>

# Future Farm Awards

The NMR herd competition results were announced this month, and both milking herds (Main and Smart Dairy) at the Future Farm, were successful at achieving a combined total of 8 awards. Ruminant Sector Manager, Kate Robinson, congratulated everyone for their hard work and determination in the following statement:

“Credit to you all for another year of improvements and continuation of excellent performance and management of both herds. It is a cross sector alliance that keeps striving towards exemplary herd performance... receiving acknowledgement for what we do is testimony to you all for the hard work and years of focused precision breeding.”

The awards achieved by the dairy sector include:

## **Main Herd**

1<sup>st</sup> Family Group ‘Clary’

2<sup>nd</sup> Hygiene Cup

3<sup>rd</sup> GLW pair of 50 Tonne of milk Cows

3<sup>rd</sup> Super Cow- Harper Adams Alltime Edelgard

3<sup>rd</sup> Large Herds

## **Smart Dairy**

1<sup>st</sup> Predicted Genetic Improvement

2<sup>nd</sup> Super Heifer- Harper Adams House Eclipse

3<sup>rd</sup> Small Herds

This is an incredible achievement and is a testimonial to all the hard work and dedication that happens at Future Farm, we are very proud of the progress that has been made since Future Farm was formed and we hope this progress continues and is recognized by the industry.

## Did you know...

- The UK produces 7.8 million tonnes of wheat for breadmaking annually, and the average person buys 43 loaves per year ([Bayer](#))
- A large tractor can do in a day what used to take 100 people a week ([Bayer](#))
- Food and farming provides jobs for more than 4 million people in the UK ([NFU](#))
- Cows have almost an all-around view with a visual field of 330°. They can see the colours yellow, green and blue whereas red is hard for them to see.



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## Staff vacancies

### Monogastric sector:

1 x Pig Unit Technical Scientific Officer position – for more information [click here](#)

### Ruminant sector:

3 x Dairy Technical Scientific Officer positions – for more information [click here](#)

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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/>.