



Wiltshire Farmer uses **DAIRY *insight*** to Improve Farm Performance



Whenever Wiltshire dairy farmer, Richard Gordon wants to make any changes on farm, Kingshay **DAIRY *insight*** publications are his first port of call.

Since signing up as a Kingshay member around 9-years ago, Richard has used Kingshay's independent, technical resources to make informed decisions about how to extend buildings, design loose housing, change ventilation and put in cow tracks.

"Where else do you go that's got a wealth of dairying knowledge that's not necessarily trying to sell you something," he says. "When I put up a building I looked at the Kingshay **DAIRY *insight*** publications - it's information and ideas."

Dairy Manager Costings and Offer Valuable Insight for Organic Farm

The ability to benchmark the business against other, similar organic systems using **Kingshay's Dairy Manager** is hugely valuable for Wiltshire farmer, Richard Gordon.

"You need to know your cost of production. We're organic so trying to benchmark yourself against others is quite difficult," he says. *"It's about knowing where you are and where you're going and if you're going backwards or forwards."*

As a member of the "Southern Organic" Special Interest Group on Dairy Manager, Richard is able to compare himself to similar businesses. He uses this information to flag up areas for improvement and monitor any changes that are made at Court Farm, Collingbourne Ducis, Marlborough.

"This year, we've looked at feed costs, milk from forage and costs of making silage," says Richard, who runs 300 spring and autumn block calving cows in partnership with his brother, Chris. Cows yield 6,500 litres a head a year.

The **DAIRY *insight*** publications, which provide up-to-date, technical information on specific topics, have also proved useful when making changes on farm. This has included loose housing set-up, track choice and trough design. In addition, Richard says Kingshay's monthly **checklists** are particularly useful.

"The monthly list is bullet points so you can skim through and say, I've done that or not done that. It's a snapshot of what you should be doing. It's very useful," he explains.

Richard has also taken advantage of Kingshay's **soil testing service**, which he used extensively about 2 to 3 years ago when sampling a large part of the farm.

He adds: *"The problem with organic is you need a derogation to put anything on, so you need the information to justify it. You need detailed soil analysis and Kingshay's is the easiest and simplest to get hold of."*

Having been a Kingshay member for some years Richard has recently moved over to Kingshay's new **DAIRY *insight*** service, which includes his costings and membership in one package. This is also available on a smartphone app.

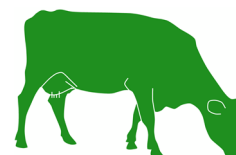
Richards says: *"It's cheaper now to me, as I was paying for the costings and the **DAIRY *insight*** . Now it's just one bill and it's easier."*

CASE STUDY

Key Facts:

300 Organic Cows

-
British Friesian,
Swedish Red,
Holstein & Jersey
crosses.



6,500 litres a cow per
year



50:50 Autumn/Spring
Block Calving



To sign up for
the
DAIRY *insight*
SERVICE
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Tracking Performance and Driving Improvements with **DAIRY insight**



The Ford family are making the most of every aspect of **DAIRY insight**, the new Kingshay membership service, to help track performance and drive improvements on their 600-cow herd.

Since John Ford signed up to Kingshay in the nineties, the family have used their membership to keep abreast of the latest research findings and to benchmark performance.

The family team of John, wife Helen and son and daughter-in-law Matt and Liz, use **Kingshay's Dairy Costings Service** through their ForFarmers account manager. Every month, they sit down with Steve Fuller to monitor key performance indicators such as margin over purchased feed, milk from forage and feed costs.

Dairy Manager Herd Costings

Matt says: *"The costings are a brilliant thing to keep an eye on your progress through the year. And I like being able to look back year-on-year as you can see the long-term progress you're making. Benchmarking is very useful. You don't get to see that kind of (farm comparison) information unless it's anonymised."*

Dairy Manager is proving particularly valuable as the business made the move from a split calving block to an autumn system. Having changed block this year, their figures are now benchmarked in the Kingshay "Autumn Calvers Special Interest Group", enabling them to compare margin over purchased feed (MOPF) with herds on a similar system.

Matt comments: *"By using margin over purchased feed on a pence per litre basis, it gives us a benchmark to see how we're doing"*.

Matt believes this is one of the ways he will be able to improve his position in the MOPF rankings. *"It will be gradual improvements and attention to detail. It's buying the food right, buying forward and making the most efficient use of that feed - so not over feeding, making the most of the forage we've got and grazing,"* he explains.

DAIRY insight and Research

Kingshay's independent on farm research and bi-monthly **insight** publications - which are available to members, have also proved useful resources when making management decisions.

For example, the [Cubicle Modification Farming Note](#) and the [Cow Comfort Report](#) have been used as a guide to help set-up cubicles at the right dimensions to suit the farm's Holstein herd.

"I referred to the guidance notes for positioning the neck rails," says Matt. *"We did a lot of adjustment when the note first came out and we will use it as a reference point going forward when we put new cubicles in."*

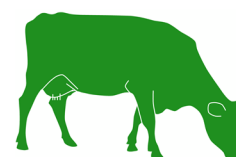
The Fords also introduced red clover silage leys, 7 to 8 years ago off the back of a Kingshay report into forage options. These mixes are now regularly used as part of a reseeding strategy. *"It's definitely reduced the amount of fertiliser put on silage ground,"* adds Matt. Kingshay's 'high palatability' **grass seed mixes** are also used.

Matt believes that because that all research and technical guidance is evidence based it is one of the main selling points of Kingshay, *"The fact they're independent is good too. At least you know it's impartial and they explain what's working on the ground,"* he says.

CASE STUDY

Key Facts:

600 Cows



8,200 litres per cow per year



Achieving 3,000 litres from forage.

(Long-term target: 4,000 litres)



Autumn Block Calving



To sign up for the **DAIRY insight SERVICE** contact **Kingshay**

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